



FAMILY AND STAFF COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

Policy Hierarchy link	Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 168; 173; 176 National Quality Standard: 7.3		
Responsible Officer	Vice-President, University Services		
Contact Officer	General Manager – j.carlisle@unsw.edu.au 9385 1708		
Superseded Documents			
File Number	Contact the Records & Archives Office .		
Associated Documents			
Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date
2.1	Early Years Management	10 August 2015	10 September 2015

1. Purpose and Scope

Open and respectful communication is critical in providing a service for families and staff that meets the needs and reflects the rights of all.

We value the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community in helping to create a service that meets regulations and the needs of educators, enrolled children and their families. A component of this feedback is the ability to put forward a complaint and have this managed appropriately with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement.

We aim to provide opportunities for consultation, evaluation and review of the service operation and delivery of the education and care program, to develop a process for making and managing complaints, to communicate the option and process of making a complaint and to handle complaints diligently and confidentially.

It is acknowledged that under some circumstances, the most suitable resolution may be to cease the enrolment of a family or child of a centre.

This procedure applies to all Early Years staff, enrolled families, UNSW staff, volunteers and the wider community.

2. Definitions

3. Procedure

3.1 Family and Staff Communication

1. All individuals are to be respectful and inclusive in their interactions. The centres will offer many forms of communication between the centre, family members and staff.
2. The centre staff will involve families in decision-making wherever possible. They will accept individual and cultural differences in families. They will support families in caring for their children. They will know the limits of their

own expertise and be ready to refer parents to someone with more knowledge. They will communicate respectfully with families.

3. Families will work with staff respectfully, communicating with
4. Families will note that each educator is always responsible for a group of children.
5. Whilst educators are working with the children, their first priority is the safety and wellbeing of each of the children in their care.
6. If required, time to meet to discuss private or in-depth matters will be arranged with families at a time convenient to both parties in order to respect children's rights in their learning environments.

3.2 Feedback

1. Feedback from families is encouraged and appreciated. Centre staff will take feedback into account in ongoing educational planning and quality improvement of the centre.
2. Communication will be open, honest, respectful and confidential.
3. Our service will offer a variety of ways to provide feedback which may include:
 - a. Communication books
 - b. Educational program - will have a section dedicated to comments or feedback on the program and activities
 - c. Formal feedback and comments
 - d. Surveys
 - e. Family meetings
 - f. Brief conversations at pick up and drop off times, email and phone-calls.
4. Families will be informed as to how their feedback has contributed to improvements in the service through conversations, information notice board displays, emails, and/or newsletters.

3.3 Complaints

The Nominated Supervisor will:

1. Develop a process for managing complaints. This process includes:
 - a. Receiving complaints;
 - b. Addressing and investigating complaints;
 - c. Documenting complaints.
2. Communicate information on the process to families.
3. Provide contact details for putting forward a complaint.
4. Ensure every complaint is managed and is an opportunity for quality improvement.
5. Discuss the process for managing complaints with the educators and other centre staff.
6. Provide or arrange training on complaints management.
7. Always consider the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults involved in the centre.
8. Where required engage an external mediator.

3.3.1 Information for families

1. Families may make a formal complaint about aspects of our service. No person will be disadvantaged in any way as a result of that complaint.
2. Complaints should be forwarded to:

The Nominated Supervisor or in the absence of the Nominated Supervisor,
the UNSW Early Years General Manager

In the event that neither of the above persons are available the complaint will be directed to the next senior staff member of the centre and/or another Early Years Management team member.

3. The complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Any educator or staff member involved in handling complaints will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed.
4. The complaint will be documented by an educator or staff member. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriate person for investigation. This will include the Nominated Supervisor and the Approved Provider. Records of the complaint actions and resolutions will be filed.
5. Actions to address the complaint will be determined. Once the outcomes or resolutions are agreed on, all persons involved in the original complaint will be notified and informed of any actions for improvement that will take place as a result of the complaint within 4 weeks notwithstanding this time frame, may need extending for extenuating circumstances.
6. The Department of Education and Communities, Early Childhood Education and Directorate will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation within 24 hours of the complaint being made. Families will be advised throughout the reporting and resolution process.

3.3.2 Information for educators and staff

Please note - this is not a grievance procedure. Matters of staff grievance should be dealt with under the UNSW Grievance Policy relating to staff.

1. Educators and staff may make a formal complaint about aspects of our service.
2. Educators may make a formal complaint about an interaction between themselves and a prospective family or one enrolled at the centre.
3. No person will be disadvantaged in any way as a result of any complaint.
2. Complaints should be forwarded to:

The Nominated Supervisor or in the absence of the Nominated Supervisor,
the UNSW Early Years General Manager

3. The complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Any educator or staff member involved in handling complaints will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint

needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed.

4. The complaint will be documented, and placed on the complaints register. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint. This will include the Nominated Supervisor and the approved provider.
5. Actions to address the complaint will be determined. Once the outcomes or resolutions are agreed on, all persons involved in the original complaint will be notified and informed of any actions for improvement that will take place as a result of the complaint within 4 weeks, notwithstanding this time frame may need to be extended for extenuating circumstances.
6. The Department of Education and Communities, Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation which alleges that the safety health or wellbeing of a child was or is affected, or that the service has broken the Education and Care Services National Law within 24 hours of the complaint being made.

4. Review & History

5. Acknowledgements

NSW Ombudsman (2004) 'Effective Complaint Handling'. NSW Ombudsman

NSW Ombudsman (2009) "Complaint Handling Kit". NSW Ombudsman

<http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints> Accessed 11/8/15

Appendix A: History

The authorisation and amendment history for this document must be listed in the following table. Refer to information about [Version Control](#) on the Policy website.

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Vice President, University Service	11 November 2013	11 November 2013	
2.0	Early Years Management	20 November 2014	20 December 2014	
2.1	Early Years Management	10 August 2015	10 September 2015	