

2017 QIP Planning and Direction—

QA6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities



Strengths

Families think....

- I have seen the teachers with other parents asking questions and updating them with information about their children.
- There is a diverse cultural group of children who all have different needs and are supported.
- Children with allergies are well cared for and parents are often spoken to before special treats are given e.g. damper day.
- The facebook page had been a good way for me to talk about what happens at preschool with my child.
- I love borrowing books from the preschool library.
- I think the learning journey folder is amazing and added to often.
- I love to look through my child's scrap book.
- My child's statement of learning was detailed and the photos make it really personal. I feel like you really know my child. Thankyou.

Children think....

- I love being star of the day.
- I talk on the microphone to share my special news.
- My mum came to our special damper day. It was yummy.
- We do gardening and I try new foods but some I don't like.
- My Nan helps me to borrow books to take home.
- I like looking in the Learning Journey Folder with my mum.

Strengths

Educators think....

- We foster positive relationships with families, beginning with the intention to enrol process and transition day prior to their child starting preschool
 - We ask families for regular feedback, including offering ideas for learning, through the use of our family input table and communication notes which are accessible at all times
 - We communicate with families in a variety of ways including: the Learning Journey Folder, Parent Information Board, newsletters, notes in pigeon holes, Family Input table and face to face communication which can be either formal or informal
 - We maintain positive relationships with families through communicating regularly and working together
 - We have created a letterbox as a way for families to easily communicate information to staff without disrupting learning time
 - We have created a Facebook page as another way of communicating with families. Here we add photographs, reminders and general information
- We work closely with a range of other professionals that attend our site frequently to offer extra support to families and children with additional needs
 - A family friendly version of our QIP goals is sent home for families
 - Our QIP progress wall displays our progress throughout the year for families and other visitors to the site
 - We strive to involve families in our service through incursions, special events and celebrations
 - We respect the values and beliefs of families. Celebrating the fact that each family is diverse
 - We support children's transition to reception by working closely with Elizabeth Park Schools staff and other local primary schools in the Northern area
 - We organise 1 incursion and 1 excursion per semester for children to experience a range of learning

Strength Summary

Standard 6.1. Respectful supportive relationships are developed and maintained

At Elizabeth Park Preschool, educators have created an enrolment process which is supportive of families. The first step in this process is for one of our educators to meet with the family prior to their child beginning preschool. At this time, families are asked to complete an intention to enrol. This process is flexible to suit individual needs. Families can attend during operating hours or outside if needed and if unable to attend, this process can also be completed over the phone. This gives educators a chance to talk directly with the family and develop an understanding of their child's individual needs. We explain to families that their child's details will be placed on a waiting list and when they should expect to be contacted regarding the next step in the enrolment process. Most years at Elizabeth Park Preschool known families return to enrol younger siblings and in this is evidenced with 20 out of 55 enrolments for 2017 coming from families who have had siblings attend the preschool in previous years (6.1.1).

Some children may be eligible for early entry, as detailed in our enrolment policy. Early entry is available to children who identify as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander and children under the Guardianship of the Minister from the time of their third birthday. Children with additional needs are also offered extra preschool sessions in the term before they are due to commence preschool if numbers permit to do so (6.1.1).

Families are contacted via telephone to confirm the next step in the enrolment process and check that their postal details have not changed since completing the intention to enrol. From here, a letter is sent home to families, formally offering their child a place at Elizabeth Park Preschool. The letter includes a tear off slip for families to respond to the offer and we ask this to be returned by a specific date (6.1.1).

We hold a Transition Day in Term 4 for children who are due to start at the beginning of the following year (as per DECD Single Intake Policy). Families attend this day with their child and collect their enrolment forms, obtain an information pack about our site, confirm their session preference, meet the educators and familiarise themselves with the facilities. Children are able to explore the environment and this offers staff another opportunity to get to know the children and families prior to their child starting. Our site Speech Pathologist is also invited to attend Transition Day as she is able to provide information to families about the unique speech program we have at our site and schedule meetings with those that may require this type of support. We ask BSSO's to attend if we have non English speaking families to support them with a smooth transition day (6.1.1).

In our enrolment packs we include an "All About Me" form which we ask families to complete and return. This details information about their child's strengths, interests and family life. These forms are used to assist educators in initial planning and provide talking points for conversations when getting to know children and their families.

Once enrolment forms are returned, our staff enter the details onto the DECD Early Years System. This creates an identification number for the child and enables us to begin booking children in to sessions based on the families preference. At this time we also complete preschool access profiles and refer children that may be eligible for additional support (6.1.1).

Strength Summary

Standard 6.1. Respectful supportive relationships are developed and maintained (Cont)

We strive to develop positive relationships with families from initial contact. We understand that starting preschool is a big step in every child's life. For some children, it is their first time to be outside of the home and can be stressful for families so we strive to be as accommodating as possible. For example, if a child is having difficulty settling in to the new environment we work with the families to support them as best we can. This might mean that a family member needs to stay a bit longer and settle their child in, gradually reducing the time as the child becomes more comfortable or having a specific activity to begin the session each day as part of their routine. We normally ring the family and let them know their child has settled and often send a photo of them playing from the preschool phone (6.1.2).

Educators are constantly encouraging families to share their expertise, skills and knowledge with the children. We support families to complete the Volunteer Training Session ran by the school leadership team so they can support us in the preschool. In the past we have welcomed families to do cooking, gardening, bathing their baby, sharing cultural artefacts, teaching us the Kaurua language and playing an instrument (6.1.2).

Positive relationships with families are maintained through greeting families upon arrival, communicating regularly through formal and informal conversations, phone calls, newsletters, our parent/caregiver information board, Facebook page, family input table, letterbox and notes sent home via children's pigeon holes. We aim to learn the names of all parents/caregivers to address them in person which supports a sense of belonging and that we show interest. Families are also encouraged to be involved in the preschool by participating in a number of special events and celebrations. These include Special Person's Day, library book borrowing, SAKG celebration day, puzzle sharing, Christmas Concert and Graduation. We always have a fantastic turn out of families on our special family days. Often the children send home invitations which makes the invite personal. In 2016 we held an Olympics Day and encouraged the families to become involved. Many came dressed up in green and gold with face paint and participated in an egg and spoon race. The children were delighted with the participation from families. We advertise volunteer training for families who are interested in helping with incursions and excursions. We also invite families to join our Governing Council which is advertised through newsletters and our parent/caregiver info board (6.1.2, 6.1.3).

Educators organise 1 incursion and 1 excursion per semester so that children gain valuable experiences within the preschool and wider community. This is programmed into our educator roles and responsibilities and ensures that all teaching staff are contributing to ideas and experiences. We are lucky enough to have a wetlands located within walking distance to the preschool and this is a very popular place for the children to visit as one of our local excursions. (6.1.2) We have also organised a range of incursions for children which have included Special Persons Day, Mud Day, Night Kindy and Mini Olympics. (6.1.2)

The children helped staff to create a Letterbox for families to post information to staff (6.1.2) This provides families with another method of communicating to staff without interrupting children's learning time. The letterbox is particularly useful for information that is important but not urgent, for example returning of annual surveys. Staff check the letterbox regularly so that any communication can be responded to quite promptly. Family feedback forms have been included in the foyer area which cover topics of learning interests, volunteer training interest, questions/suggestions & making meeting times. These feedback forms make it quicker and easier for families to write on and post in the letterbox provided. (6.1.2)

Strength Summary

Standard 6.1. Respectful supportive relationships are developed and maintained (Cont)

Families are provided with more detailed information about their child's learning through the Learning Journal Folder. This is added to daily where information regarding children's play and learning is displayed. Individual and group stories are included, photographs, anecdotes and plans in line with EYLF outcomes, principles and practices (6.1.3) Families are also given the opportunity to provide feedback through the Learning Journey Book. Each term families are asked to make suggestions about learning topics for the upcoming term (6.1.2). We ask families for specific input each week at our Family Input table and this may be in the form of a questionnaire, yes or no vote or questionnaire. DECD Family surveys are sent home in Term 3 and the responses from these are used to inform and improve site practice.

Families are kept updated through the Parent/Caregiver Information Board. Information regarding timetables, up-coming events, illnesses, theme focus etc is kept relevant at all times. The board is centrally located by the television and while waiting for their children to finish group time, families can be observed looking at the board. A new success is we display a whiteboard outside of the preschool entrance which has updated messages and reminders added daily. We write detailed sentences about individual children's learning/interests/observations. Families have commented that they love to read the board on arrival to collect their child. Children often write and draw on the board themselves. We have a checklist on the back to ensure all children are written about. On occasion we ask families to write on the board to and provide feedback. (6.1.3).

The preschool has purchased a mobile phone as an additional communication device. Many families prefer to send an SMS when their child is going to be absent. Families have found this resource to be useful and are using it on a regular basis. Educators also send photographs of individual children home to families to encourage attendance.

The preschool has developed a Facebook page which families can also use to ask questions, comments or provide feedback. We post reminders about upcoming events and activities on the page. The families are very positive about the preschool phone and Facebook page. We get several likes and comments to the page weekly and in person families comment on how successful the page is and how it keeps extended family connected to their child's learning e.g. grandparents, separated parents. We have a Facebook policy all families need to abide by and although it is an open page all photos of children are blurred for confidentiality purposes. Families also use the Facebook Messenger as another method of contact with educators as they can ask a question or let us know information easily (6.1.3).

In the event that families should have any concerns, educators aim to deal with these promptly and professionally. The Parent Complaint Compliance Policy and Resolving Concerns for Parents and Caregivers policies guide staff in the manner in which to deal with concerns (6.1.3).

Standard 6.2. Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.

Each family's beliefs and values are recognised and respected by staff. Educators value the expertise of families and understand that they are the most influential teachers of their children. Therefore they share in the decision making process about their child's learning and wellbeing. This is maintained through formal and informal discussions and questionnaires required annually by DECD (6.2.1).

Strength Summary

Standard 6.2. Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected (Cont.)

The preschool has established a library borrowing system to support families to read with their children at home. The library is advertised through the Learning Journey Folder and newsletter and is available from Term 2 onwards. The library is located in the preschool entry and instructions on how to borrow are displayed in the area. EALD families are encouraged to use the service through BSSO support. Many families access the library books and families have made positive comments about this system (6.2.1).

A family friendly version of our QIP goals is sent home to families so that they are aware of what we are working towards each year. We also display our QIP goals in the preschool for families and other visitors to our site. We have a QIP progress wall where our progress is displayed. This enables families to watch the progress made throughout the year and we advertise this through our newsletter. QIP Family questionnaires are sent home asking families for their beliefs on our preschool's strengths. In 2016 approximately 10 surveys were returned. The responses from these questionnaires were added to the family strength part of QIP document.

Educators make themselves available to families at the beginning and end of each session, to provide feedback, answer questions and discuss children's general progress and wellbeing. Families often contact preschool educators via telephone if they are unable to attend the centre in person (For example, some children are picked up and dropped off by the local childcare centre). Educators are often asked questions in relation to aspects of parenting, for example; about eating, sleeping and toileting. On a few occasions educators have made families/carers a routine chart to help the family successfully get their child to preschool on time. Due to the positive relationships established, Educators are able to have supportive conversations regarding such issues and are able to point families to resources or local agencies for further assistance. We also display information regarding community services that are available such as CaFHS, local library information, parenting groups, child development magazines and CAMHS in the preschool so that they are easily accessible to families (6.2.2).

Educators organise to meet with families in the event that any assessments should need to take place. At this time, parental consent is given and opportunities for further discussion may take place. Educators create Independent Learning Plans for children which are developed in collaboration with families. These are completed for all children with additional needs and all Indigenous children. Once written, a copy of the plan is sent home to families for feedback (6.2.2)

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Strength Summary

Standard 6.2. Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected. (Cont)

We support parenting and family wellbeing by displaying information regarding community services that are available such as CaFHS, local library information, parenting groups, child development magazines and CAMHS (6.2.2)

Standard 6.3. The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.

We work closely with a range of professionals to engage with families and provide additional support for children who require it. This includes but is not limited to speech pathologists, special educator, social workers, guidance officer and local support agencies such as Novita, Autism SA and Talking Matters. This is done through emails, meetings, phone calls and student review team meetings which happen three times per term. Educators also refer children to appropriate organisations such as Child Development Unit or Child and Youth Health and Autism SA for assessments as required. We have a special area of the preschool dedicated to enabling visiting professionals to work one on one with children in a quiet space (6.3.1) Health checks, Aboriginal hearing assessments and Ages and Stages assessments are offered on site each term when required (6.3.1)

We enjoy interacting with the school community on a regular basis and this supports children to form relationships with leadership, teachers and gain an understanding of the school community. We invite year 7s in once a week to run daily fitness with our children. This may look like a health hustle or learning ball skills. Occasionally classes will join us for the afternoon and read to our children. We join the school for special events including Harmony Day, Sports Day, Reconciliation Day etc and often an older class will buddy up with us for support. We attend performances in the gym as most of them are cultural related and tie in with our preschool term focus (6.3.1)

Families are invited to attend a transition meeting with leadership staff at the school. In this meeting leadership go through the transition visit timetable, enrolment pack information and provide families opportunity to ask questions. This is to establish relationships with school staff, develop a sense of belonging. This supports Reception teachers to develop relationships with children prior to them commencing school. The transition process assists children in becoming comfortable with school and to reduce anxiety. For those children attending independent schools, we send a copy of each child's end of year report and are happy to exchange information via telephone. In the past we've also had teachers come and visit at our site to spend some time getting to know their upcoming students and have an informal chat with our staff. Children with special needs are offered additional transition visits and often we start meeting as early as term 3 while the child is still in pre-school with leadership, preschool staff, agencies involved and the family to set out a plan and goals on how to successfully support the child starting school. We discuss what resources etc can be put into place early so all involved are on the same page to support a smooth transition. (6.3.2).

Bilingual support is offered to children termly on a needs basis. This enables families to feel connected to the preschool community. Interpreters are also organised for any meetings that require it. Families are provided ample opportunities to talk with educators on a daily basis and time is also made for families who need support to contact services or assistance in filling out paperwork (6.3.3)

Strength Summary

Standard 6.3. The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing. (cont)

Preschool Educators have liaised with Leadership in promoting the introduction of Playgroup on site. The goal of playgroup is to support families and offer opportunities to connect with school staff and each other. Educators advertise playgroup to families through the newsletter, word of mouth and Learning Journey Folder. This can assist families in keeping connected to the school community (6.3.4).

The school's end of year concert is a fantastic community event. We prepare an item and invite families to attend. It is at the Starplex complex in Gawler and has become a rather big event.

We welcomed a parent volunteer who has put in his own time to move our fence to create our new nature play area and help plan out a useable, fun space. Our garden specialist has been helping the children with the garden beds and preparing them for planting. We have reached out to two Men's Sheds who have kindly been making us items for our Nature Play area. The children have been very engaged in their new play opportunities. We have been donated planks of wood, two sinks and many tree stumps. We were also donated bread crates and milk crates from our local Foodland (6.3.4).

Each term we hold a special day. Often this is to raise money for local charities. Last term we held a 'dress up in red' day for SIDS. We have also raised money for the RSPCA and local families within our community going through a difficult time e.g. a student at our school with terminal cancer (6.3.4).

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Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
Our mid year context of learning statement needs to be updated to include literacy and numeracy indicators.	Create a newer version which is family friendly, easy to read and includes indicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet as team and discuss what to include Add photographs for family enjoyment Link tick boxes to EYLF Add lit and num indicators Pass through leadership Look at how other sites do theirs 		Term 2 2017
Progress Notes:				
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	

Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
A permanent whiteboard needs to be fixed on to the front of the preschool to give staff another area to communicate with families.	Preschool will have two communication whiteboards- 1 permanently fixed and one on wheels that can be taken in and out daily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase whiteboard Talk to groundsman about fixing to front of preschool Begin using for communication 		Term 2 2017
Progress Notes:				
Date: 20th Feb Whiteboard purchased and email sent to Groundsman in regards to installation.	Date: 2/5/17 New whiteboard was installed during the school holiday break.	Date:	Date:	

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Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
Staff having to get permission each time a child's photograph was to be used on Facebook post- time consuming.	Create a permission form which is to be included in enrolment packs that families can sign and covers all Facebook communications for that year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a permission form for families and send home with enrolment packs Collate forms on to a Facebook permissions list for easy reference Refer to list whenever making Facebook posts 		T1
Progress Notes:				
Date: 7/12/16 Permission form created and included in enrolment packs to be handed out at transition	Date: 31/1/17 Permission forms collated and made in to one list	Date: 21/2/17 List being stored with educator responsible for Facebook posts and referred to each week.	Date:	
Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
Progress Notes:				
Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	