

Children's Services Policy Booklet

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Preamble

CatholicCare Children's Services place a great importance on practices that will support children's health, safety, wellbeing and learning within our services. We have in place policies that guide our practices.

This booklet contains some of these policies and procedures. It is important that you read them thoroughly. After you have done so, keep the booklet nearby so that you can refer back to it when necessary. If you have any questions about the content please feel free to speak with any of the educators or the service Coordinators.

The policies and procedures in this booklet are regularly updated so that they are inclusive of the latest recommendations and research. We also like to have your feedback so that we can ensure we are taking your opinions into consideration. If you have any feedback on any of the policies please speak to an educator or send your feedback in writing to the service email address.

Glossary

ACECQA

Australian Children's Education and Care Services Quality Authority

Additional needs

A range of conditions requiring specialist support, particularly those that impact children's learning, well-being and physical development, i.e. physical or intellectual disability, communication disorders, autism, behavioural issues (Owens, 2009).

AHRC

Australian Human Rights Commission

Approved provider

Child Care Benefit approved child care services operating under the Child Care Management System. This applies to services operating for more than 8 hours per day.

Behaviour

The way in which one acts or conducts themselves, especially towards others

CatholicCare

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay

Collaboration

Parents and educators working together to make the experience more meaningful for

Curriculum

In the early childhood setting curriculum means 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development'. (*Belonging, Becoming Being - Early Years Learning Framework*)

DEC

Department of Education and Communities

ELC

Early Learning Centre

ELCC

Early Learning and Care Centre

Excursion

An excursion is any visit outside of the service's boundaries. This may include to an attraction, e.g. aquarium, play centre, or it could be to a local park, library or school grounds.

Excursion Leader

This is the designated person who will be in charge whilst on the excursion. They should be involved in all aspects of planning to ensure they understand the risk assessment and the subsequent decisions. In FDC, the FDC Educator is the excursion leader.

EYLF

Early Years Learning Framework

DEC

Department of Education and Communities

Equity

Treating people fairly regardless of individual differences and making sure that they are not disadvantaged because of these differences (Tansey, 2006)

FDC

Family Day Care

IHC

In Home Care

Inclusive language

Use of language that does not prejudice, stereotype or discriminate people

Incursion

An incursion involves a third party attending the service to provide a particular organised experience for the child in attendance. Generally this involves a company, however may include parents bringing in pets to teach the children about e.g. snakes, turtles, dogs.

Non Routine Excursions

A once off planned outing and one which a children's service would not normally attend regularly, i.e. not on a daily, weekly or monthly basis

OSHC

Outside School Hours Care

Play Based Learning

Defined by the EYLF and My Time, Our Place as a foundation for learning, where children have the opportunity to organise and make sense of their world through play based activities.

Reflective Practice

Children's Services' Staff commitment to regularly reflect on CatholicCare Children's Services philosophy, ethics and high standards of professionalism.

Respect for Diversity

Recognition and acceptance of differences in culture, socio- economic backgrounds and beliefs

Responsible person in charge

This is the Certified Supervisor that the Nominated Supervisor has determined to be in day to day charge in their absence.

Routine Excursions

An outing to a venue the children's service frequently attends.

Rights

Things every child should have or should be able to do (AHRC, 2015)

UNCRC

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Written permission

Written permission is ideally a signed note supplied in advance. However in case of an emergency or last minute change to collection arrangements, a text message to the service's mobile phone or email will suffice.

Statement of Philosophy

At CatholicCare Children's Services, management, staff, educators, parents, children and families endeavour to create an environment that reflects CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay's values of: respect, hope, commitment, professionalism, excellence, and social justice. CatholicCare Children's Services are committed to providing a nurturing welcoming and aesthetically pleasing environment for children and their families. Children currently attending have indicated that they value the play based and creative activities provided for them.

Relationships

Forming respectful relationships with children, colleagues and families is an essential part of working within the Children's Services. We believe that this involves creating a culture whereby staff and educators place importance on the processes of collaborating, listening and valuing difference. It is where warm, safe relationships develop and children are nurtured in a positive way.

We will place importance on collaboration and participation by:

- Having everyone (staff, educators, families and management) participate in sharing ideas and information so that there is a common understanding about the way in which we work with children
- Involving children, staff, educators, families and management in decision making and recognising individual skills and interests

We will ensure that we "listen" to others by:

- Placing value on everyone's point of view
- Attempting to "hear" the messages that others communicate and supporting different ways of communicating
- Being open, honest and sensitive in the way in which we communicate

We will value differences by:

- Affirming and appreciating the uniqueness of each individual. This includes differences in ability, opinions, interests, ethnicity, background, socio economic status, religion and family structure
- Placing importance on the way in which differences contribute to the richness of the program

Learning

Learning takes place when experiences are meaningful, real and engaging. This means placing importance on the day-to-day experiences of being together, playing, interacting and doing, as well as, on the spontaneous and unexpected events that often occur. We believe that the staff and educators have an important role as facilitators of learning. This role includes setting the scene for how we "see" the learner, providing experiences, encouraging play, creating a social context and documenting the life of the program. We will also follow the principles outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework and My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care.

We will "see" the learner as someone who is competent, able and eager to learn by:

- Allowing them to make choices about the ideas they wish to explore and the processes they use to explore them
- Giving them opportunity to participate in planning the program
- Acknowledging and valuing the knowledge, theories and experiences that they bring with them

We will provide experiences that are relevant to everyday lives by:

- Giving everyone opportunities to investigate real problems and questions

- Giving children authentic choices
- Providing for the interests and passions of the learner

We will value the way in which children learn through play by:

- Providing resources that act as a provocation for play
- Allowing children to use play as a way of expressing themselves and of exploring and trying out ideas
- Encouraging children to try new things and to develop independence and confidence

We will value the social context of learning by:

- Acknowledging that all of our child care settings provide a space for adults and children to learn from and with each other
- Allowing children and adults to negotiate the program and the experiences in which they want to be involved
- Providing time for children and adults to work together, carry out ideas and pursue interests
- Providing children and adults with opportunities to develop and explore relationships and respect for others

We will use documentation as an important part of the program by:

- Constructing documentation that acts as a memory of children's and adults' explorations, relationships and life in the programs
- Having it as a tool to reflect on the experiences, interactions and relationship building that have taken place in the programs
- Using it to communicate with families and others about children's abilities, interests and achievements
- Involving everyone in its creation, including children and families

Environments

Because children will spend many hours in their child care program we believe that the environment plays an important role in children's well-being. It should be aesthetically pleasing, rich in possibilities for children to express themselves creatively and a place that belongs to everyone who uses it.

We will attempt to create an environment that places importance on aesthetics by:

- Organising spaces so that they feel pleasant and welcoming to be in
- Arranging spaces that can be explored with all the senses
- Valuing that which is beautiful
- Having resources that reflect the people that live in the environment

We will aim for a place of creativity by:

- Having spaces that are rich in possibilities
- Forming spaces where children can explore and research alone and with others
- Giving children open access to resources which they can use to express ideas and try out theories.

We will try to create a place that belongs to everyone who uses it by:

- Ensuring that it is physically and emotionally safe
- Allowing adults and children to influence the way in which spaces are organised and to leave reminders of their explorations, ideas and theories
- Giving children opportunities to be alone and to work in groups
- Connecting children and adults to ideas about sustainability of the environment
- Making it accessible to the community in which it is located.

Advocacy

Being an advocate for the rights of children and families is an important part of our work in Children's Services.

We will advocate for the rights of children by:

- Being aware of the way in which the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child impacts on the work of the Children's Services
- Always treating children with dignity and respect and speaking out when we see that this is not happening
- Having a good understanding of child protection legislation and the services available to support children

We will value and support the role of families in children's lives by:

- Including them in the decisions we make that affect their children's time in the child care program.
- Adhering to *CatholicCare Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour Policy*

We will take account of current recommendations for children's services by:

- Having a good understanding of legislation and best practice and keeping up to date with literature and research related to working with young children and children of school age.
- Being involved in professional development that helps us to reflect on and improve our practices.

Guiding principles

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay has a set of values that underpin the values of the organisation and are a guide to the philosophy for all of our children's services.

1. Respect
2. Hope
3. Commitment
4. Professionalism
5. Excellence
6. Social Justice

Scope

All Children's Services staff, family day care educators, volunteers, students, families and children

Related policies

- *CatholicCare Mission, Vision and Values*
- *CatholicCare Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour Policy*

Related links and references

- Australian Government. (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Commonwealth of Australia
- Australian Government. (2011). *My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia*. Commonwealth of Australia
- Early Childhood Australia. (2009). *Code of Ethics*. Early Childhood Australia; Deakin West, ACT
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (1990). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. United Nations
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>
- (2010) *Code of Ethics Brochure*. Early Childhood Australia
http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/code_of_ethics_-_brochure_screenweb_2010.pdf

Children's Arrival and Departure Policy

Policy statement

CatholicCare Children's Services aim to ensure the safety and protection of all children. In doing so, we have procedures in place for the arrival and departure of children at the service, including the required signing in and out of children.

Purpose

1. To ensure children are only released into the care of a parent or the parent's authorised nominee in line with relevant regulatory and legislative requirements.
2. To fulfil CatholicCare's record keeping obligations in line with relevant legislation and the conditions of being an *Approved Provider*.

Guiding principles

1. A child may only be collected by a parent, (except a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child), a legal guardian, or those listed as approved nominees within the child's enrolment form, and other responsible persons nominated by the parent on a case to case basis, where *written permission* is given.
2. If the responsible person is under 18, expressed written consent must be given by the child's parent. Under no circumstances will CatholicCare Children's Services release a child to a person under the age of 16 years old.
3. Written permission is ideally a signed letter provided to the service in advance however in the case of an emergency or unexpected last minute change to collection arrangements, a written message to the service's mobile phone or email will suffice.
4. Children must be signed in and out at time of arrival and departure.

Scope

Parental rights to collect children do not include a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child.

The responsibilities of 'staff' are applicable to CatholicCare staff only and DOES NOT include outside agency staff, students and volunteers.

The registered educator is the only person who can receive a Family Day Care child into care and must be there to hand over the child at the end of the day. No other member of the household or visitor can perform this duty. However, in emergencies or by prior arrangement, Coordination Unit Staff may be present at the Educator's home to perform this duty. Parents will be notified of such arrangements.

Procedures

1. Arrival to and departure from the centre

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Practise good road safety procedures when outside the service
- Ensure their child is brought to, and collected from the centre by the parent or their authorised nominee. The parent or authorised nominee must sign their name and the time of arrival and departure on the attendance record when dropping off and collecting the child.
- Ensure the person dropping off and collecting the child makes contact with an educator before leaving.
- Ensure the authorised nominee collecting a child from the centre is 18 years or over, except with the expressed written permission of the parent. Under no circumstances can the person collecting the child/children be under the age of 16.
- In the enrolment form, provide a list of nominees whom they authorise to collect their child. Educators cannot send a child home with someone who is not listed on the enrolment form as authorised to collect them or without prior *written permission* from the parent.
- Provide *written permission* of anyone collecting their child/children who is not listed on the enrolment form. If written notification is via email or text, parents must give the person's full name and a description of what they look like. They must ask the adult collecting to bring photo identification which will be requested by the educator to verify their identity.

Educators are required to:

- Check sign in records. If a child has not been signed in, educators are to fill in the time of arrival, and sign the child in. If possible, request a counter signature when the parent next attends the service.
- Greet the child and parent on arrival and farewell them when they leave. Arrival and departure times are a perfect opportunity to briefly discuss relevant information regarding the child's well-being.
- Check the enrolment form if an adult other than the child's parent/guardian arrives to collect, to ensure they are on the authorised nominee list.
- If a once off *written permission* has been supplied by the parent;
 - Ask to see the person's photo identification
 - Take a copy of the identification or record the ID details
 - Note the date and time the identification was checked
 - Attach a copy of the *written permission* with the copied ID and place in the child's file
 - Ask the parent to fill in an updated authorisation form if that person will be collecting the child again in the future.
- Keep the child in their care until *written permission* can be sought from a parent if someone other than the parent or an authorised nominee arrives to collect a child.
- Refer to *Workplace Drugs, Alcohol and Other Substances Policy and Procedure* if a parent or authorised nominee arrives to collect a child and is suspected to be under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol.
- If an unauthorised person, including a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with a child, attends the service to take a child and refuses to leave the premises the local police department will be called by the Nominated Supervisor OR *Responsible Person in Charge* OR Family Day Care Educator. The *Responsible Person in Charge* or Family Day Care Educator will endeavour to contact the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible thereafter.

2. Court Order

Parents have joint legal responsibilities for their children unless there is a court order determining otherwise.

If there are current court orders determining parental access of children;

- The Coordinator will:
 - Obtain a copy of the court order.
 - Place a copy of the court order on the child's file.
 - Develop a procedure to ensure ALL educators, including FDC Educator, are aware of the contents of the order and abide by the conditions of said court order.

3. Late collection of children

Supervision of children before the official opening time is not possible as the centre is not licensed to operate before this time. Parents/guardians must:

- Abide by the centre hours of operation.
- Pay a late fee if their child is collected after hours. If a parent/guardian is consistently late collecting their child/children, their place in the centre could be in jeopardy. Emergency situations such as public transport strikes and traffic accidents are taken into account. However, parents must make all possible effort to collect their children on time.

4. Uncollected children after closing

In the instance that a child has not been collected after the service has closed, staff will:

- Make every effort to contact the parents as a first priority, and thereafter the authorised nominees listed on the enrolment form. Staff will continue to do so regularly with intermittent pauses to allow for a return call.
- Notify the centre's Nominated Supervisor. The Nominated Supervisor will guide the staff regarding procedures, and depending on circumstances may involve contacting the local police department after a reasonable time has lapsed without any contact from parents, legal guardians or authorised persons. With the exception of FDC, ensure at least 2 staff members remain on the premises (one of which must be either the Nominated Supervisor or a Certified Supervisor) while a child is still in the premises.

5. End of day checks

At the end of each day staff will inspect that all children have been collected from the centre. Staff will:

- Physically check the building (including unused playrooms, toilets and cot rooms) and grounds to ensure all children have been collected
- Complete and sign the safety checklist
- Check the attendance records to ensure all children have been signed out. If a child has not been signed out and no educator can verify seeing the child leave with an authorised adult, educators will telephone the parent to check on the child's whereabouts. If a parent cannot be contacted, do another physical check of the premises, record that the check was carried out and advise the Nominated Supervisor of the situation.

Related form

- *Enrolment Form*

Related policies

- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *Workplace Drugs, Alcohol and Other Substances Policy and Procedure*

Related references

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (current version from 1 March 2016)*
- *Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010.*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration Act 1999)*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*

Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

Policy statement

CatholicCare's Children's Services aim to protect the confidentiality of all persons who are associated with the Children's Services. In doing so we aim to ensure confidential information is only provided to those authorised persons who are directly related to the functions of the service and who require the information for authorised purposes. In doing so, staff and educators will adhere to all principles contained in *CatholicCare Australian Privacy Principles and Confidentiality Procedure* and *Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour Policy*.

Procedures

Information will be collected that does not unreasonably intrude upon an individual's personal affairs. Please also refer to *CatholicCare's Personal Information Collection Notice and Consent Form*. This includes information which may include but are not limited to the following:

Information that will be collected about children and parents

- Enrolment forms with all details completed
- Care requirements
- Details of the period during which the child is in care within the service
- Observational records of children: This includes records of children's progress and participation in the program. They may include written records, photographs and collections of children's art work. For younger children it may also include notes about their eating, sleeping and toileting. Refer to the *Curriculum Planning Policy* for further information.
- Daily attendance records
- Details of any Court Orders affecting the custody of the child of which the Coordinator is aware.
- Any letters of referral, assessments, reports or programs sent to the service from other services

Information that will be collected about staff and educators

- Name, address and contact number
- Qualifications, experience
- Period of service
- Information required by authorised authorities

Information that will be collected about family day care educators

- Name, contact number and geographical position
- Length of service
- Family structure
- Age range and gender of children being cared for
- Details of environmental factors (position of home, pets, swimming pool)
- Records that are required to be kept by relevant authorised authorities

Access to records

In order to maintain confidentiality, information contained in records is only divulged to the following:

- Within the necessary scope of education and care or medical treatment of the child to whom the information relates.
- A parent of the child to whom the information relates. This does not include information contained in a staff record.
- NSW Department of Education and Communities authorised officers
- Other prescribed bodies, as required by legislation.
- Other professionals, e.g. Allied Health Professionals or Inclusion Support Staff, from time to time will request for information in relation to their client. No information would be released without the expressed written consent of the person, or the person's parent or legal guardian.
- In Family Day Care, the Family Day Care Coordinator and Children's Services Manager.

Students and volunteers will have limited access to information about children. This information consists of the children's names, date of birth, country of origin and home language. Access to any other information will only occur with written consent from parents.

Apart from those mentioned above, no other persons are to have access to records of families at any time. All persons who do have access to records must note that any information contained in these records is strictly confidential.

Completing reports about children

When completing reports such as the Incident Injury Illness and Trauma report, the names of children other than the child to which the injury or incident occurred will not be used. Nor will these names be given verbally to the injured child's parents. The incident report must not be released to any parents other than the injured child's parents.

Authorisation for collection of photographs

During the enrolment process permission will be sought for taking and using children's photographs. Staff must know the names of children for which authorisation has or has not been granted and for which purposes the photographs can be used. Special permission must be sought if photographs are to be used for any purposes other than those listed in the authorisation on the enrolment form.

Other procedures

- Records will be kept confidential and access by outside parties is restricted unless required by law or allowed by parental consent.
- Records will be kept in a secure place that prevents unauthorised access. Electronic files with information about families, staff members or educators will have restricted access. Hard copy files will be kept in secure filing cabinets.
- Confidentiality will be maintained when discussing matters with staff, educators, families and other agencies. Discussions about children's development, behaviour or circumstances will take place in locations where privacy can be maintained.
- Educators and staff will maintain privacy and confidentiality when talking with families about their children. For example, discussions of a sensitive nature will take place in a private location within the service i.e. **not** in the foyer or hall way.
- When personal information is sought, families, educators and staff will be informed of the reasons.
- When staff or educators become aware of any personal records that contain inaccurate or misleading information it will be corrected.

- Staff and educators will be made aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to subpoenas, restraining orders, taxation, Child Care Benefit and records required by government bodies.
- A child's enrolment at the service will not be confirmed to anyone without the consent of the child's parent or guardian.

Related policies and resources

- *Australian Privacy and Confidentiality Procedure*
- *CatholicCare Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour Policy*
- *Curriculum Planning Policy*
- *Client Privacy and Confidentiality Brochure*

Related Act and legislation

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (current version as of 1 March 2016_ (Reg. 181, 182)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 - Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) 2000*

Curriculum Planning Policy

Policy statement

Families and educators will work in partnership to support children's development and learning in a nurturing and supportive environment. In doing so we believe that learning takes place when experiences are meaningful, real and engaging. This means that we will place importance on the day to day experiences of being together, playing, interacting, communicating and doing, as well as, on the spontaneous and unexpected events that occur. The educators have an important role as facilitators of learning. This role includes setting the scene for the curriculum, providing experiences throughout the day, documenting life in the service and evaluating what has taken place. The curriculum will also be underpinned by [*Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework \(EYLF\)*](#).

Procedures

1. Planning the curriculum

1.1 Educational Leader

The appointed Educational Leader (as per [Regulation 118](#)) will lead the development and implementation of the educational curriculum. This person will help to guide other educators in planning, implementing and reflecting on the children's educational program and curriculum.

1.2 Setting the scene

Educators will carefully plan their environment with the aim of making it attractive and interesting. In doing so, they will plan for the types of resources, equipment and furniture that will be included in the environment and for the aesthetics of the space. Therefore planning will take account of the:

- Type of resources that will be made available to children, how they will be arranged and how children will access them,
- Ways in which furniture will be organised and maintained in the environment,
- Ways in which spaces will be made attractive and pleasing and how children's work will be displayed and valued,
- Type of strategies educators will use to involve children in choosing resources and creating an aesthetic environment,
- Ways in which the environment reflects the diversity of cultures within the community, and
- Ways in which the environment makes children feel comfortable and at home.
- Ways that invite opportunities for individual, small group and whole group learning

2. Experiencing the day

Educators will plan experiences based on the interests and abilities of the children and the events, topics and questions that are relevant to them, their families and the community. In doing so, educators will plan for the experience itself as well as for their own role within it. In other words educators will engage in intentional teaching - thinking about their own role in children's play, planning the way in which they will introduce ideas that are relevant to the children and planning opportunities for knowledge building and sustained shared thinking. Therefore planning will involve:

- **Facilitating the flow of the day**

Educators will value each part of the day. In doing so, they will create predictability in the day while allowing for flexibility.

- **Building on children's ideas**

Educators will encourage children to share their ideas and allow them to find ways of pursuing them in the curriculum. Educators will also use spontaneous teachable moments to scaffold children's learning.

- **Engaging with children**

Educators will consider the ways in which they talk with children, become involved in their play and facilitate projects.

- **Building relationships**

Educators will consider the strategies they use for building relationships with children and families and for helping children to build relationships with each other.

- **Being a protagonist**

Educators will plan for the ways in which they encourage children to explore new ideas. This includes introducing new resources, sharing new interests and discussing relevant events in the community. It also means purposefully and thoughtfully planning ways in which to extend and challenge children's learning and thinking.

3. Documenting the life of the curriculum

Educators will use documentation as an important part of the curriculum. It will be used for creating a history of children's time in the service, assessment of learning, recording the experiences children become involved in and generating a tool to help educators, families and children reflect on their experiences. Educators will do this by:

- Constructing documentation that acts as a memory of children's and adults' explorations, relationships and life in the service.
- Having it as a tool to reflect on the experiences, interactions and relationships that have taken place in the curriculum.
- Using it to communicate with families and others about children's abilities, interests and achievements.
- Involving everyone in its creation, including children and families.

The types of documentation kept by educators will include:

- A routine or flow of the day. This must be displayed for families and visitors to read.
- Records for each child that include stories, anecdotes and examples of their work. These records will provide a picture of the child's thinking, theories, interests and progress in the curriculum.
- Records of the experiences and projects children and adults become involved in.
- Planning for the environment and for future explorations.
- Critical reflections on the experiences provided for children, the relationships between educators, children and families and the engagement of educators in children's play and experiences.

4. Reflecting, theorising, assessing and valuing (evaluation)

Educators will critically reflect on the work they do with children and families in order to build on their own understandings. These reflections will be documented and used in critical ways for:

- **Learning about children**

Educators will use assessments of learning including, their observations and documentation to help them learn about children's thinking, relationships and the understandings they have of themselves and the world. Educators will use the Learning Outcomes in the EYLF as key reference points to assist with their reflections and assessments.

- **Learning about ourselves as teachers**

Educators will use their observations and documentation to critically reflect on their relationships with children and families and to evaluate the types of teaching strategies they are using. In doing so, they will assess the impact of their teaching strategies on the way in which each child is learning and participating in the curriculum.

- **Learning about the environment**

Educators will critically reflect on the way in which they are using the environment as an important part of the curriculum. This includes the way in which resources are used, cultural identity is reflected in the environment, sustainability issues are addressed and children's achievements are valued.

- **Valuing children's abilities and competencies**

Educators will use their observations and documentation to increase their understanding of children's abilities and competencies.

5. Including families

As much as possible, educators will aim to involve families in curriculum decision making. They will do this by:

- Talking with families and gaining their feedback about their child's interests, relationships with peers, involvement in experiences and progress in the program.
- Encouraging families to make suggestions about relevant experiences for children.
- Asking families for their feedback on the curriculum as a whole.
- Making families aware that they are welcome to spend time observing and participating in the program whenever they wish.

Related policies

- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Statement of Philosophy*

Related resources

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 73, 74,75,76, 81, 99, 118, 155, 156, 157*
- *Belonging, Being and Becoming- Early Years Learning Framework*
- *The National Quality Standard QA 1, 5, 6*

Excursion and Incursion Policy

Policy statement

CatholicCare Children's Services aims to ensure the safety, supervision and care of children at all times. When organising excursions educators will:

- Adhere to regulations as laid down in the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Ensure written authorisation is obtained from families before undertaking the excursion.
- Plan excursions that are appropriate to the age and interests of the children.
- Ensure that all excursions are planned and implemented in the best interests of the children.

Procedures

1. Determining suitable excursions

When determining an excursion, the Excursion Leader will consider the following:

- Any previous excursion evaluations to a particular venue including previous incidents, injuries, and feedback. Where previous unforeseen situations arose, the excursion leader will consider and document ways to minimise the risk within the risk assessment.
- Age and abilities of children.
- Interests of the children.
- Relevance of the excursion to the overall program.
- Cost of the excursion to families
- Safety issues
- Access to toileting facilities
- Age appropriateness of playground equipment

2. Planning for the excursion

2.1 Risk assessment

1. When planning to undertake the excursion the Excursion Leader must carry out the following:
 - Visit the excursion venue, planned locations for meal breaks and visit any public transport embarkation and disembarkation stops.
2. Obtain any existing risk assessments developed by the venue.
3. Conduct a risk assessment that identifies and assesses the risks to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of any child participating in the excursion. It must also identify the measures to be taken to minimise any identified risks. The Excursion Risk Assessment Form must be used for this purpose, and will contain the following information:
 - The destination and proposed route to and from the destination.
 - Identification of water hazards, if any and any risks associated with water based activities.
 - Means of transport to and from proposed destination.
 - Number of children and adults involved in the excursion.

- With due consideration to identified risks, the number of adults who could provide adequate supervision in proportion to the number of children, including adults with specialised skills, e.g. educators with first aid qualifications or adults with lifesaving skills.
 - Proposed activities to be carried out during the excursion.
 - Proposed duration of the excursion.
 - Proposed itinerary and timetable.
 - Proposed contingencies for the weather.
 - Proposed clothing and equipment needs, as well as other items that should be taken to the excursion such as service mobile phone and list of emergency contact telephone numbers.
4. Consider any clothing or equipment needs of the children.
 5. Submit any risk assessments to the Area Coordinator or FDC Office or Children's Services Manager prior to the excursion

2.2 Adult to child ratios for excursions

Name of service	Number of adults	Number of children
OSHC or Vacation Care	1	8
ELC: children under 3 years of age	1	2
ELC: children who are 3 years of age or over	1	4
Family Day Care:	1	4 (Pre-school age or under) 7 (including school age)

Please note the following:

- Above ratios are per CatholicCare Children's Services benchmark, and the ratio may be increased depending on circumstances and the needs of the group attending the excursion, as per risk assessment.
- Volunteers and students must never be alone with child/children, including during toileting and hand washing and must be over 18 years of age to be included in ratios.
- For **Early Learning Centres routine excursions conducted on school grounds only**: adult to child ratios will be determined following the risk assessment, although there will be at least 1 adult for every 10 children.
- Only children in our Outside of School Hours and Vacation Care services are permitted to be taken on swimming excursions.

2.3 Considering transport

Transporting of children during the excursion will be done in a safe manner using the following guidelines:

- Educators from ELC and OSHC do not transport children in private cars. FDC educators are permitted to do so.
- The Excursion Leader will ensure that any bus that is hired for the excursion is registered and has third party insurance cover and indemnity
- Appropriate restraints that are suitable for the child's age, size and physical abilities will be used during the journey for vehicles with 12 seats or less.
- Seating capacity of the vehicle will not be exceeded
- Based on the above risk assessment, if public transport or a hired bus is used the Excursion Leader must assess the following as part of the planning procedure:
 - All educators and volunteers must know the procedures for supervising and assisting children to board and alight the transport

- All educators and volunteers must know the procedures for supervising and assisting children while on the transport
- All educators and volunteers must know the procedure for supervising and assisting children to cross roads and negotiate crowded areas.

2.4 Written authorisation to be obtained from a parent or legal guardian

Written notice of the excursion will be given to the families well ahead of excursion day. If a family decides that they do not want their child to participate they are entitled to withdraw their child from the service on that day with no penalisation or fees required. The excursion will be conducted regardless. Written notice of the excursion will include the following details:

- The child's name
- The purpose of the excursion
- Date of the excursion, except for routine excursions which require only one authorisation at the beginning of the school year or on the date of the child's commencement at the service
- Time period children will be away from the service
- Activities to be carried out during the excursion
- The destination
- Number of adults to accompany and supervise children
- Anticipated number of children to attend
- Names of educators with first aid qualifications who will be attending the excursion
- Itinerary and timetable
- Contingencies for the weather
- Clothing and equipment needs
- Contact telephone numbers
- Means of transport
- Food required
- Notification that a risk assessment has been performed and can be emailed to them upon request prior to the excursion

2.5 Excursion authority forms

Non-routine excursions: The Excursion Leader will obtain a signed authority form from a parent which is dated and gives permission for the child to attend the excursion. A separate authority must be obtained for each excursion and each child. The authority form must contain the information listed in the point above. The proforma for a Non- Routine Excursion Authority Form must be used.

Routine excursions: The Coordinator will obtain a signed authority form from a parent which is dated and gives permission for the child to attend the excursion. The routine excursion authority form must contain the information listed above, and is only required to be provided once in a twelve month period. The proforma, Routine Excursion Authority Form, must be used. A new authority must be obtained at the start of each school year or if any details related to the organisation of the excursion change.

Note: Authorisations need to be kept on the child's enrolment record.

3. Conducting the excursion

Every educator and volunteer attending the excursion will be trained, briefed and asked to sign that they understand the results of the risk assessment.

In the excursion backpack the Excursion Leader will pack the following:

- A list of children attending the excursion
- The contact details of parents, guardians and emergency contacts, for every child attending the excursion.
- A mobile telephone on the excursion and provide the number to the Area Coordinator, Outside School Hours Care.
- A first aid kit on the excursion and ensure at least one primary contact educator with approved first aid qualifications must accompany the excursion.
- Information, medication and health action plans for any children attending the excursion who have specific health needs.

The Excursion Leader will ensure the following remains at the service:

- A list of the children attending
- Leave a notice at the centre which includes the following information:
 - Itinerary and timetable
 - Contact telephone number
 - Method of transport
 - Number of adults accompanying the children
 - Name of the person attending the excursion who has first aid qualifications

4. Excursion evaluation

After every excursion the Excursion Leader will gather the thoughts and reflections of the educators as a record of how the excursion went. This will include any accidents, incidents, unplanned situations, child/parent feedback and overall enjoyment of the planned activities. This will be filed in an Excursion folder along with the information given to families and the risk assessment.

This evaluation will inform future excursion planning.

5. Incursions

As per excursions, incursions require careful planning and consideration prior to implementation. The Incursion Risk Assessment must be completed prior to hosting the incursion.

When determining an incursion, the Coordinator will consider the following:

- Any previous evaluations of the incursion including previous incidents', injuries, and feedback. Where previous unforeseen situations arose, the Coordinator will consider and document ways to minimise the risk within the risk assessment.
- Age and abilities of children.
- Interests of the children.
- Relevance of the incursion to the overall program.
- Cost to the families
- Safety issues
- Suitability of the incursion to the physical environment and group care settings

Related forms and resources

- *Excursion Risk Assessment*
- *Incursion Risk Assessment*
- *Excursion Authority Form*
- *Non- Routine Excursion Authority Form*
- *Routine Excursion Authority Form*

Related policies

- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *First Aid Action Policy*
- *Incident, Injury and Trauma Policy*
- *Food Handling and Hygiene Policy*
- *Hygiene and Infection Control Policy*
- *Interaction with Children Policy*
- *Managing Asthma, Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy*
- *Medication Policy*
- *Sunscreen Policy*

Related links and references

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (current version as of 1 March 2016)*
- *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law 2010*
- *ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit*

Family Feedback, Complaints and Grievance Policy

Policy statement

CatholicCare Children's Services aim to have in place a process whereby families feel comfortable to give feedback and participate in the evaluation of the service. This includes having clear procedures for parents to make complaints and participate in their resolution.

Procedures

1. Communicating feedback about the service

Ongoing feedback about the service is welcomed and sought from families. This includes feedback about any aspect of the curriculum, program and administration of the service. This will be sought from families in the following ways:

- By having daily conversations about the curriculum, program and service.
- Carrying out formal surveys seeking feedback on particular aspects of the curriculum and program.
- Asking for input into policies and procedures.
- Holding formal meetings where information is shared and feedback sought.

See the *Family Participation and Collaboration Policy and Procedure* for more information.

2. Communicating concerns and grievances

If families have any general complaints or general concerns about any aspects of the service, they are encouraged to follow procedures outlined below (please also see *CatholicCare's Complaints Management Brochure*):

- Speak with the child's educator. Families are encouraged to raise any concerns as soon as they arise so that these can be quickly resolved. All complaints are heard and taken seriously by CatholicCare Children's Services.
- If no satisfactory resolution has been achieved after speaking to the educator, arrange a time to speak with the Service Coordinator.
- If families are still unhappy with the way their concern has been dealt with then they may choose to contact one of the following:
 - **CatholicCare Children's Services Manager or their delegate**
Phone: 9481 2600
 - **CatholicCare Executive Director or their delegate**
Phone: 9481 2600

- If families feel that the complaint still has not been resolved after following above steps, they may contact any of the following independent outside Agencies:
 - **Department of Education and Communities (DEC) - The Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate**
Phone: 1800 619 113
 - If the complaint is about child protection matters:
NSW Ombudsman's Office
Phone: 9286 1000 or 1800 451 524
www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

2.1 Notifiable complaints

If families make complaints that are notifiable to DEC, i.e. non-compliance issues or concerns about the safety, health or well-being of children:

Staff will:

- Notify the Children's Services Manager or their delegate as soon as practicable.
- Record details of the complaint on the *Complaints Form* and the *Complaints Register Form*, and if applicable on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* and *Major Incident Injury Trauma and Illness Record*.
 - Action and respond as appropriate.

The Children's Services Manager or delegate will:

- Notify DEC within 24 hours of receiving the complaint.
- Follow *CatholicCare Complaints Management Procedure*.
- Acknowledge complaint in writing.
- Conduct an investigation and action and respond as appropriate.

2.2 Complaints dealing with allegations against staff

Staff will follow the procedures according to the *CatholicCare Child Protection and Allegations against Staff, Contractors, Foster Carers, Family Day Carers, Educators, and Volunteers in Relation to Children and Young People under Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act 1974 Policy*.

2.3 Complaints dealing with possible child protection matters

Staff will follow the procedures according to the *CatholicCare Child Protection and Risk of Significant Harm Policy*.

3. Evaluating the service

Information received from family feedback and through the complaints procedure is also used to evaluate the service. An analysis of the feedback and the outcomes of complaints are done:

- In a manner that is appropriate and not prejudicial to the rights of children and families, i.e. discuss with other staff, systemic issues and risks which need to be rectified during team meetings.
- By forwarding documentation that details the complaint to CatholicCare management, for investigation and action as appropriate.
- By discussing systemic issues and risks which need to be rectified, where appropriate, at educator supervision meetings.

Related policies

This policy and procedure is to be read in conjunction with the following CatholicCare policies:

- *Complaints Management Procedure*
- *Child Protection and Allegations Against Staff, Contractors, Foster Carers, Family Day Carers, Educators, and Volunteers in Relation to Children and Young People under Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act 1974 Policy*
- *Child Protection and Risk of Significant Harm (RoSH) Policy*
- *Children's Services Confidentiality and Privacy Policy*
- *Family Participation and Collaboration Policy and Procedure*
- *Incident, Injury and Trauma Policy*

Related forms and resources

- *Complaints Form*
- *Complaints Register Form*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*
- *Major Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*

Links and references

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (current version as of 1 March 2016)*
- *Ombudsman Act 1974*
- *NSW Ombudsman website: <http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/>*

Family Participation and Collaboration Policy

Policy statement

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay supports and encourages family participation and collaboration in its Children's Services. It is through this collaboration and partnership with families that we can make the experience of attending our service more meaningful for children. This policy and procedure is guided by the principles of "Belonging, Being and Becoming" in the Early Years Learning Framework and My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care. We aim to develop a relationship with each family, in order to:

- Support the child's developing identity by promoting a mutually respectful relationship with the child's family.
- Develop the child's confidence and enhance the child's contribution & link to the program by valuing the contribution and insight of their families.
- Enhance the child's well-being by sharing decision making with their families.

Procedures

Educators will invite families to participate and collaborate in the program through a range of opportunities. These include the following:

1. Holding informal discussions between educators and families

Educators will use arrival and departure times as a brief opportunity to talk about matters that are relevant to the child, e.g. activities, feelings, interests, friendships, special events. This is a good time to exchange ideas and perspectives in relation to the child's development and well-being. Parents must be encouraged to contribute their ideas and insights about their child.

2. Mutually agreed meeting times between educators and families

In order to not compromise the need to actively supervise children while they are in attendance at the service, a separate appointment time may be arranged for a detailed discussion with the child's family. Educators or families may request to meet at a mutually agreeable time.

3. Settling children into the program

New families are invited to spend some time with their child as the child settles in. This gives parents and children the opportunity to gradually get used to the new environment. Staying with the child also gives parents the opportunity to: observe some of the routines, meet other children and parents, watch interactions between adults and children, and ask questions.

CatholicCare Children's Services has an open door policy, and parents are always welcome to participate, contribute their expertise and collaborate with educators

4. Sharing information and making joint decisions

Information about the educational program is displayed at each Children's Service or Family Day Care residence, and is kept where it could be readily accessed by parents. Educators will discuss relevant information if a parent requests for information pertaining to their child's educational program, participation and educator assessments. Educators will encourage parents to use different communication tools to share information about the child, e.g. telephone calls, face to face meetings, communication books. Educators will always encourage families to participate in decision making.

5. Inviting feedback and input into policies and procedures

Educators will gather feedback and comments from families about the service's policies and procedures continuously. Feedback may include informal comments given during everyday conversations. At times, families will also be asked to formally comment on policies through surveys or at meetings.

6. Sharing information about the children's educational program

Educators will keep documentation about each Children's Service curriculum. They will regularly use this documentation to discuss the curriculum content with families. These discussions will provide an opportunity for families to share their input through comments, perspectives and ideas.

7. Sharing expertise and culturally relevant experiences

Educators will invite parents to share their expertise, including practices and information that are relevant to their culture, in order to enhance the educational program and all aspects of the service. E.g. an Aboriginal parent may introduce Aboriginal art or dance to the children, a parent may talk about a significant cultural celebration to the children, a parent with expertise in nutrition may provide feedback about menu planning or a parent who has an interest in art might do an art activity with the children or give suggestions about different art media to use with children.

8. Donating materials

Educators will ask families to donate materials that can be recycled. These will be used to provide opportunities for children to see the potential in recycled materials and engage in processes of re-creation and re-invention. These materials may include paper, boxes, bright fabrics and anything else that children can use in flexible and imaginative ways.

9. Participating in community get together

From time to time there are opportunities for a community get-together within the service, i.e. functions, barbecues or meetings. These events are an opportunity for families to meet up with each other and with educators in a relaxed atmosphere.

It is the intention of educators to acknowledge and draw on the insights that parents have about their children. By sharing information, ideas and insights educators and families can gain an increased understanding of children and enhance their learning opportunities.

Related policies

- *Statement of Philosophy*
- *Family Feedback, Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure*

Links and references

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (current version as of 1 March 2016)*

Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy

Policy statement

In guiding children's behaviour staff at CatholicCare Children's Services aim to support children to develop positive relationships and social skills. In doing so, staff and educators will work towards creating an environment where children learn strategies for cooperation and negotiation, develop a respect for the rights of others and enhance their self-esteem. Staff will also attempt to create a culture of fairness, social justice and compassion

Guiding principles

CatholicCare's Mission and Values strongly underpins our approach to guiding children's behaviour. This includes:

1. Our Mission *to serve in justice and love*
2. Our Values of
 - Respect
 - Hope
 - Commitment
 - Professionalism
 - Excellence
 - Social Justice

Scope

All staff, visitors, volunteers and students interacting with the children are required to work within the framework of this policy. If parents are concerned about another child's behaviour (other than their own), they must refer the matter to either the staff or educator.

Procedures

When working with young children, all staff members and educators must use positive techniques of guidance and support. Staff and educators aim to help children learn about problem solving skills, negotiation and respect for others. They will use strategies that include support for positive interactions with children, well planned environments and involvement of families in decision making.

1. Interactions with children

Staff and educator interactions with children should:

- Provide children with positive direction – e.g. Tell children what you want them to do rather than what you do not want them to do.
- Help them learn to articulate problems, think about possible solutions, choose a solution and carry it out.

- Support them to solve conflicts verbally and develop skills for difficult situations that require negotiation and problem solving. In doing so, help children to learn strategies for regulating their own behaviour in a way that is considerate of others.
- Where appropriate, involve them in setting clear and simple guidelines that can be easily understood. Discuss with children what happens when the guidelines are not followed through.
- Be encouraging and appreciative of their successes, interests and individual pursuits.
- Encourage them to seek support from staff and educators when necessary

Staff and educators must also model appropriate and equitable social behaviours.

Staff and educators will not use any form of physical, verbal or emotional punishment. This includes practices that humiliate, frighten, threaten or isolate a child. Children must not be required to perform unreasonable tasks with regard to their age and physical and intellectual development. Staff and educators must respect that all children are individuals and may respond differently in different situations. If strategies are not successful, staff and educators should seek advice from the Coordinator.

2. Environments

In order to support children to develop positive relationships and social skills staff and educators aim to create a supportive physical environment by:

- Having spaces that are uncluttered but with enough resources and materials to support children's play and explorations
- Ensuring that materials and spaces are well cared for and pleasant to be in
- Designing spaces so that children can easily work together in groups or find places to be alone
- Choosing resources that are interesting, attractive and challenging to children

3. Involving families

With the help of family members, staff and educators will develop a broader understanding of children's interests, development, friends and events which may influence their behaviour. In turn, staff and educators should ensure that parents are aware of the interests, relationships and experiences that children have while in child care. Staff, educators and parents should maintain communication on a daily basis. In doing so staff and educators should:

- Develop open two-way communication with parents regarding all aspects of their child's time in childcare. The use of interpreters if language barriers are hindering communication should be considered
- Involve families in making decisions about behaviour guidance strategies.
- Respect the values, customs and beliefs of families

4. When a child displays consistent challenging behaviour

There may be times when, despite using the strategies outlined above, a child demonstrates consistent challenging behaviour. In these instances staff and educators will:

- Review whether their expectations are appropriate for the child's level of development.
- Discuss the behaviour with the child's parents with a view to gaining other insights and collaborating on the strategies that staff and educators will use.

- Keep detailed observations of the child's day, including the child's interests, successes, interactions with others and behaviours in different situations
- Develop a behaviour support plan involving staff, parents and other professionals as required.
- Ensure the plan focuses on the positive – what the child does well and situations where they can be successful.
- Document the plan and ensure all staff and educators are aware of how to implement it. Include a method of evaluation and review date.
- Seek professional development and advice from other professional when necessary and to help develop specific behaviour support plans

5. When a child causes significant physical harm to others

- Remove the child from the situation or remove the other children from potential harm, depending on the event.
- Ensure the other person is comfortable and administer proper attention and care as needed.
- Record the incident in the Incident Book. In the case of Family Day Care, the incident must be recorded in the Educator's diary and reported to staff in the Coordination Unit. Any injury requiring treatment must be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*. See the *Incident, Injury and Trauma Policy*.
- Discuss the incident with the service Coordinator.
- Ensure that the incident is discussed appropriately with the family members of all children involved. When doing, so ensure that the *Confidentiality and Privacy Policy and Procedure* are respected.

Related policies

- *Statement of Philosophy*
- *Confidentiality and Privacy Policy and Procedure*
- *Incident, Injury and Trauma Policy*

Related forms and resources

- *Major Incident, Injury, Trauma or Illness Record*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*
- *Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011*

Inclusion and Equity Policy

Policy statement

CatholicCare Children's Services aims to provide a program that promotes inclusion, access and support for families. This includes upholding the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* Article 2 which states that "Parties shall respect and ensure the rights...to each child...without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status." In doing so, we endeavour to create a sense of belonging for all children, families and educators.

Procedures

In order to provide a program that promotes inclusion, access and support for all families, educators will consider their relationships with families, children and colleagues, the environment they create and the program that they implement.

Relationships

Families

Educators aim to:

- Be aware of their personal biases in order to be conscious about how the culture and diversity of others is included, represented, valued and respected.
- Learn about the culture and backgrounds of the families in order to inform their understanding and approach towards them.
- Try to understand differences and approach them with sensitivity.
- Provide written material in families' home languages where necessary
- Take time to understand any concerns, questions and requests that families may have.

Children

Educators aim to:

- Help children to feel a sense of belonging and to be involved in the service.
- Help children to be confident about who they are.
- Consult with families about the care of their child to ensure child rearing values and beliefs are taken into consideration.
- Make adjustments to the environment and routines where necessary.
- Ensure that children's individual interests and abilities are valued and catered for in the program.
- Include in the curriculum experiences that will help children to learn about human rights

Colleagues

Educators aim to:

- Respect and value differences in skills, knowledge and interests amongst themselves.
- Draw on each other's knowledge and strengths for the benefit of the service
- Be aware of and sensitive to the cultural beliefs and practices of others.

Environments

Educators aim to:

- Create a place that belongs to everyone who uses it by allowing children and adults to influence the way in which spaces are organised and the resources that are put into that space.
- Have resources that reflect the people that live in the environment.
- Create spaces that are accessible to everyone no matter their ability.

Curriculum

Educators aim to:

- Explore with children similarities and differences between families and people in the community.
- Ensure that resources depict the diversity within the community.
- Model inclusive language.
- Help children to be critical about what is fair and unfair in relationships.
- Give everyone opportunity to develop their own differences by valuing the richness that these differences bring to the curriculum.
- Allow children to pursue their own interests and to value the interests of others.
- Learn and use key phrases in languages other than English in order to value children's home languages.
- Where appropriate, and with the involvement of families, celebrate events that are significant and relevant in the community.

When required, we will access support from other agencies and engage in training to facilitate the inclusion of children with special support needs into the service. When necessary, interpreters will be accessed to support communication with families from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Related policies

- *Statement of Philosophy*
- *CatholicCare Equal Employment Opportunity, Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy*

Related legislation

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2013 (Reg. 92 – 96) Public Health Act 1991 (NSW)*
- *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2000 & Regulations 2001 (NSW)*

Related sources

- *Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity website (www.hreoc.gov.au) accessed on 6/11/2013.*
- *Guigni, M. (2008). Exploring Multiculturalism, Anti-Bias and Social Justice in Children's Services. NSW: Children's Services Central.*
- *Office for the High Commission for Human Rights. Convention on the Rights of the Child*