

2.21 Children's Participation and Decision Making

Policy Statement

We have a commitment to ensuring that children are able to develop a sense of agency through making and influencing decisions that may affect their world. This will be undertaken through children's meetings, surveys, newsletters, noticeboard or general conversations. The service respects the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, encouraging children, employees and families to be collaborators and shared decision makers in the program at our Service. We believe that children who are capable of forming views should be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity and that children have the right to freedom of expression through any media of their choice.

It is essential that all educators, management and other stakeholders who make decisions have a clear understanding of the views and wishes of the children in order to effectively inform the decision-making process.

Procedures

Involving children in the decision-making process of the service contributes to the outcomes for children as articulated in the 'My Time, Our Place' Learning Framework for School Age Care in Australia.

The Service will:

- ❖ Ensure Children are consulted about the environment and program in which they participate
- ❖ Ensure different communication strategies of children, such as body movement, gaze, facial expression, the manipulation of objects and talk or conversation are used to support child-initiated activities and programs;
- ❖ Ensure children participate in decision making processes;
- ❖ Record and document children's drawings, conversations, and ideas
- ❖ Ensure children's views are actively sought and discussed with their responses and perspectives planned into the program with respect and authenticity.

Educators will:

- ❖ Ensure child-initiated, shared decision making happens across all aspects of the Service;
- ❖ Empower children to access and learn from their own life experiences as well as those of their peers and adults around them;
- ❖ Be active listeners, observers, scribes and sounding boards for children;
- ❖ Respect the age and stage of the children during decision making. Educators may use different levels of participation as appropriate:
 - Child initiated, shared decision making with adults;
 - Child initiated and directed – adults provide a supportive role;
 - Adult initiated shared decision making with children.
- ❖ Consult children about how their input will be used and advised of the outcomes of the decisions made;
 - Ensure children have a voice in their level of participation including:
 - Areas of interest they would like to explore;

- Where and how they would like to play, with others, or alone;
 - What they would like to use;
 - The adults with whom they feel comfortable and secure;
- ❖ Whether they need to use the toilet or hand washing facilities.

References

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Regulations 2011

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)

UN Convention on the rights of the Child

Relevant Policies: Respect for Children, including children with Special/Additional Needs, Children's Media Viewing, Interactions with Children, Educational Program Planning, Educators Practice, Homework, Excursions, Physical Activity, Creative and Expressive Arts, Water Activities and Safety, Cooking with Children, Keeping of animals, Menu Development, Role and Expectations of Educators, Employee Code of Conduct, Communication with Families, Information Handling (Privacy and Confidentiality).

Date of Development	Reason for Modification	Date Ratified	Date of Review