

# Partnerships with Families

## Self-Guided Learning Package

This resource was developed by Community Child Care (CCC) with funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (2008-12).

The Inclusion and Professional Support Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

## About Self-Guided Learning Packages

---

Self-Guided Learning Packages can be completed in your own time and convenience and offer an alternative to attending training sessions. This package aims to develop skills and knowledge that will be valuable to you in providing quality education and care programs. Packages are often used for professional development by staff teams, networks and other groups of children's services professionals. You can work through the package with colleagues by reading the package together, discussing the information and collaborating to complete the one assessment task.

Gowrie Victoria Leadership and Learning Consultants are available to support you while working through the package. Feel free to phone or email if you require any assistance completing the tasks within the package. Phone 1800 103 670 (freecall) or (03) 9347 6388 or email [psc@gowrievictoria.org.au](mailto:psc@gowrievictoria.org.au)

---

# Partnerships with Families

---

You have chosen to complete the 'Partnerships with Families' package. The aim of this package is to assist new and experienced Educators to develop successful partnerships with families in their service, for the benefit of the educators, families and most importantly the children.

## Introduction

---

Families come in many forms and early childhood educators need to develop partnerships with all families utilising their service, if they are to provide high quality care and education. The EYLF (2009, p13) states in Principle 4 'Respect for Diversity,' 'Respecting diversity means within the curriculum valuing the practices, values and beliefs of families.' It is important for early childhood educators to understand the diversity of family types and cultures. Family members may include Mothers, Fathers, Grandparents, extended family members, siblings and foster children, amongst others.

Principle 1 of the VEYLDF is Family Centred Practice. 'Professionals engage in family-centred practice by respecting the pivotal role of families in children's lives' (2009, p10). An important part of engaging in family-centred practice is developing partnerships between Early Childhood Educators and families of the children in care.

A positive partnership with families is essential to providing high quality care and education. Waters (1996) accurately describes a partnership with families as a team working for mutual benefit and the good of the children. Through the development of such a partnership, educators learn to effectively communicate with the wide range of families they come into contact with, and children benefit from the understanding that occurs between them.

Principle 2 of the EYLF is Partnerships. 'Learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when Early Childhood Educators work in partnership with families' (EYLF, 2009, p12).

Working with children requires the professional Educator to actively view the child in association with the family. The child needs to be viewed within the context of their family. The Educator needs to be aware and respectful of the culture, values and concerns of the family. In order to be responsive and effective, the child's needs, interests and the context must be considered by the Educator. This is most effectively achieved when Educators utilise a range of strategies that proactively include the family, welcome families and plan programs that both reflect and invite parent input.

## Why is a Partnership with Families Important?

---

The National Quality Standard's area 6, 'Collaborative partnerships with families and communities', describes collaborative relationships between families, Educators and services are 'fundamental to achieving quality outcomes for children' (Draft Guide to the National Quality Standard Education and Care Services - Centre-based and family day care, 2010, p103).

Primarily, the importance for Educators forming a partnership with the families of children in their care can be explained by the following:

### **We are caring for other people's children**

While this may at first seem a simple phrase, it is significant and should serve as a reminder to educators who sometimes act as if the children in their care live only at the child care service, and that little else exists in their lives other than their time spent there.

Educators should always remember that families are handing over to you one of the most precious things in their lives. For some, using children's services may not have been a choice they were (at first) happy to make, so they will be understandably nervous and apprehensive about leaving their child. Even those who have happily chosen to access child care will be concerned about how their child will get on. While these feelings may only be obvious in the families' attitudes and behaviour in the early stages, to some extent the thoughts will always be there. Therefore, treating your relationship with the families as an equal partnership, for the ultimate benefit of the children, will help to maintain positive relations and set the families' minds at ease.

By getting to know children and their families, Educators can use a positive partnership with families to support the learning outcomes for children. Through a collaborative approach with families and Educators, program planning and reflecting on children's learning experiences is enhanced, which will further benefit the partnership with families and children.

There are further additional benefits, include job satisfaction for Educators, stability of workforce for services, opportunities for educators and families to learn from each other and benefits for the community.

### **A partnership from the families' perspective**

Partnerships between families and early childhood educators may sometimes seem one-sided, that the educator appears to be doing all the work. This may be due to one or more reasons:

- Some families may not see the importance of developing a partnership with their child's educators;
- Raising children is a lifetime commitment for families whereas educators are employed to do a job
- Families have many responsibilities and concerns, of which their child at the centre is just one, whereas educators' primary interest while at work is the children in their care;
- When offered opportunities to have input into the way the service operates, or to meet with their child's educators, some families may seem uninterested or even insulted. This may actually be because they feel it is not their place to tell you how to do your job, you are the professional
- Many families constantly feel inadequate in their role, and their contact with their child's educators may compound this feeling, when they see how (relatively) easily 5, 10 or more children are managed;
- Families may be unaware of the ways they can be more involved in their service, or the needs of the service;
- The busy lives of families often mean that they have limited time to communicate effectively with their child's educators.

Educators who have an awareness and understanding of these realities will be better able to manage their relationship with families in the long term. On the other hand, those who have unrealistic, high expectations of families will be more likely to create difficult, prickly relationships that ultimately have an adverse effect on the children.

Of course, it is reasonable to expect that families make some commitment to forming partnerships with the educators of their children. However, it is also reasonable to assume that some may need to be informed or convinced of the benefits of doing so. Educators can draw attention to the tangible outcomes of educators-family member chats in the morning (eg. parent chatting about the weekend's events, leading to changes in the program to reflect the child's interests), the benefits of a communication book (eg. educator can explain at length the significance of a child's painting), or spend a few minutes in the room in the afternoons (eg. therefore becoming more able to see the service from the educator's perspective).

### Self Help Question 1

Identify and write down a recent example where your expectations of a parent differed from their actions (e.g. their indifference towards the child's work contained in their child's portfolio, which you thought they should show more appreciation for). How did you feel? Imagining yourself as the parent, why do you think their actions were different from what you expected?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Positive outcomes for children

Ultimately, it is hoped that the children are the main beneficiaries of a positive partnership between families and early childhood educators. After all, children's services exist to provide care and education for children, and it is assumed that everybody wants the best for them.

Even from the youngest age, children are sensitive to the world around them, particularly the actions, behaviours and moods of significant people in their lives. When a child's family and her/his educators display warmth, respect and friendliness toward each other, children will experience a sense of security and belonging. For the newly enrolled child, it will help to ensure a speedy and successful settling in period. For the child who has been in care for a period of time, it will be a constant source of reassurance, that the educators are trustworthy and dependable.

When children are aware that their families and their educators have an easy, friendly and respectful relationship, they are more likely to enjoy attending the children's service. Even a child who firmly does not want to attend will find it harder to resist when she/he sees that families and educators enjoy each other's company, get on well and are united in their efforts to make the placement of the child a success.

Through the partnerships between families and services, the children will have improved access to their community. Outcome 2 of the EYLF states 'Children are connected with and contribute to their world' (2009, p25). Children are more likely to learn about the various cultures, heritage, backgrounds and traditions, and so learn to accept and appreciate the similarities and differences, through this access.

### Positive outcomes for families

Families want the best for their child. A positive partnership with the Educators of their child will help to ensure that this is so. A partnership will provide the opportunity for them to influence the program, inform Educators about their child's likes and dislikes, interests and abilities, and establish pathways for ongoing two-way communication. They will be comfortable and confident to raise issues, using the existing relationship as a basis and seeking negotiation.

Partnerships enable families to appreciate the deeper motivations of the Educators, the difficulties of providing care in a group situation, and the knowledge and experience of the Educators. When families are treated as partners rather than adversaries, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging to the service, and to respect and trust the work of the service and Educators.

Families will have improved knowledge of events and groups within their community as a result of the communication that partnerships bring. This provides a sense of 'connectedness' and belonging to the community.

### **Positive outcomes for Early Childhood Educators**

A partnership with families can reap many rewards for Early Childhood Educators. In general terms, Educators will gain increased job satisfaction when they have the trust, respect and appreciation of the families. When income is modest and the opportunity for advancement is hard to come by, these are some of the elements that give meaning and worth to the work of caring for children.

From day to day, the ability to easily speak to families about both innocuous and awkward issues with equal confidence makes Educators' jobs easier and eliminates a major stumbling block to providing successful child care. Even when difficult issues do arise, these can be turned into learning opportunities for both parties. (Refer to Principles, p9 and Practices, p10 of this package.)

Educators will also gain important interpersonal skills from their dealings with families. Learning how to interact in various ways with people from a wide spectrum of society, while maintaining a consistent level of respect, empathy and understanding, is a refined skill that can be applied to many situations.

### **Positive outcomes for services**

With increased partnerships between Educators and families, services will notice quality programs being delivered, increased job satisfaction, resulting in higher levels of motivation and educators' retention and lower absentee rates. In turn, the decreased rates of absenteeism will result in lower costs for staffing, such as employing agency staff. Home based care services will experience increased retention of their sub-contracted Educators and higher numbers of new Educators providing care and education through their service.

Additionally, as the service's needs become known by families through the partnerships, services will see greater numbers of families happy to assist the service, such as participating in working bees and fundraising.

### **Positive outcomes for communities**

Partnerships between families and Educators will have benefits for their communities. These partnerships will provide links to more areas of the community, resulting in improved interaction between the community and the service. The wider community will be aware of the work of the service and are more likely to assist in a myriad of ways, such a person coming to speak to the children or donations of goods which the service can use directly or for fundraising purposes.

The wider community will also benefit as families interact within their community as a result of their improved knowledge of the events and programs their community offers. This has a dramatic impact on the wellbeing of the community.

## Partnerships with Families – Principles and Practices

---

### Principles

There are some principles on which partnerships with families are based. These are:

1. All families and services want the best for their children.
  2. All children have the right to the opportunity to reach their full potential.
  3. Families are the first and continuing educators of their children.
  4. Effective services provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment.
  5. Families and schools value quality teaching and respect Educators' professional expertise.
  6. Families and services value the diversity of families and use this as a resource for building partnerships and communities.
  7. Family-service partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust.
  8. Leadership is critical to building, maintaining and renewing partnerships.
  9. Family-service partnerships improve student motivation and learning.
  10. Family-service partnerships strengthen the connections between services and their communities.
  11. Partnerships can involve all organisations that support families and services.
- (Family-School Partnerships Framework: A guide for schools and families, 2008)

### Practices

The first and most important step Early Childhood Educators can take in seeking to develop a partnership with families is to know themselves better. In the same way that Educators may wonder why families have developed their particular attitudes and practices towards child rearing, Educators can reflect on their own attitudes and practices.

Early Childhood Educators cannot hope to meaningfully interact with families, seek to understand their motivations and relate on an equal footing unless they actively examine their own motivations at the same time. To not do so would be to assume a position of superiority, or professional detachment, surely impossible when dealing with young children and families. All Early Childhood Educators have a responsibility to work to a professional standard, but it is unrealistic to expect that they are able to separate their professional and personal selves.

The rationale is that if Educators are at least partially able to identify and understand what their basic assumptions about childrearing are, and why they accept that these assumptions are true, it is more likely that they would be able to understand those of others. All Early Childhood Educators have gathered their assumptions from a variety of sources, to a greater or lesser degree, their families' childrearing practices, their own parenting experiences, their education and work settings, and everyday experiences up to the present. Most of these sources will have been the same for the families, with the possible exception of education and work experience specific to children's services.

When Educators do begin to identify where their assumptions have come from, they will be more able to approach families with added insight and awareness. By showing families that they are 'human,' shaped by their upbringing, life experiences and education, Educators are placing themselves on an equal footing and offering a person-to-person rather than family member-to-professional relationship. Families will then be happier to discuss their beliefs and assumptions as a comparative exercise, rather than feeling the spotlight is solely on them.



A group induction meeting, usually in the evening or perhaps on a weekend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let families know that children are welcome (and ensure it's not too late for them to attend). This is a great opportunity to see how the families and children interact.</li> <li>• Use the meeting to introduce aspects of using child care that families may be unfamiliar with (e.g. different clothes for different seasons, meals, routines that are followed, etc)</li> </ul>
Visits prior to starting child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage families to relax, sit down and let their child explore the environment at their own pace.</li> <li>• Talk about aspects of the program, particularly what you are doing when the families are visiting, and how it benefits the children.</li> </ul>
Orientation visits, lasting from 1 to 4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the families to stay as long as they wish (and mean it!)</li> <li>• Use the opportunity to chat to the family member/s about their child's home life, and how home is different from and/or similar to the service.</li> </ul>

**Self Help Question 3**

Examine your service's enrolment form. How successful is it in obtaining information that is useful and important in your everyday work with the children? How can you improve the form?

---



---



---



---



---



---

**Maintain the relationship**

The effort that is put into getting to know a family in the early stages of their child's enrolment should be maintained and extended once they are settled at the service. Unfortunately, it is often the point at which Early Childhood Educators forget to pay attention to what families have to say, provide them with support to make them feel comfortable at the service and actively share information about their child. The busy, sometimes hectic nature of the children's service is usually the cause, but it must not become an excuse for the relationship to lapse into little more than 'hello' and 'goodbye' at each end of the day.

In the initial stages of enrolment, families are primarily concerned with whether their child will settle happily into the service. Once this has been achieved, they will be interested in consolidating their relationship with their child's Educators, so that they can get to know the people who are spending a lot of time with their child a little better. Others may not be as aware of how crucial this is; nevertheless, they still want the best for their child. The Early Childhood Educator's responsibility is to encourage the families to get to know aspects of those caring for and educating their children, which may impact on their work, such as whether they play musical instruments, recreational interests, or other information that they are happy to make known. Of course, it is unnecessary (and in some cases unprofessional) to share personal information that has no relationship to your work. As a general rule, use the same criteria to decide what you would speak to families about as you would to consider what might be useful to know about the families' home lives – basically, anything that helps you to provide better care for the children.

For some Educators dealing with many families, the prime issue in maintaining the relationship with families may be one of remembering names. If this is the case, in the early stages of enrolment, a simple solution is to ask families how they would like to be known. Write each person's preference on a list with their child's name next to it, and place the list discreetly inside a cupboard in the room. When you or other

Educators forget a family member's name, simply go to the cupboard and subtly check their name so you can use it when addressing them. This avoids embarrassment and pays families the simple but important respect of referring to them by name. After a short while you will learn the names and need to only occasionally use the list. Relievers, temporary educators and students can also use the list to quickly associate children's names with their family members.

### **Build trust and mutual respect**

'Respect is an essential ingredient of partnership; if it is missing, there is no hope of a partnership'  
Stonehouse (1994).

It is important for both Early Childhood Educators and families to feel they are trusted and respected by each other. Educators need to feel trusted by families that they are acting in the best interests of their children and providing a high quality service. Educators must earn this respect, and the ultimate evidence of the quality of their work is the children. Even though families will differ in their judgement of what makes a quality service, every person raising a child wants their child to be happy, healthy and appreciated for who they are. Even when children are unsettled in the orientation period, or have unhappy days, families will still trust in and respect the abilities of their child's Educator, as long as communication is maintained, small improvements are made and noted regularly; and consistency between home and the service is ensured as much as possible.

Families need to feel that Educators trust them to know what is best for their child and will be consulted regularly when issues arise. Families also need to be respected for the often difficult work of parenthood they have undertaken, usually juggling many competing concerns and contradictory cultural expectations they encounter in the family and the outside world.

Early Childhood Educators should particularly avoid passing judgement on families, for the decisions they make (particularly on behalf of their children) and the lifestyles they lead. For while some families may challenge Educators' tolerance and make their work difficult, it is always important to attempt to see situations from the families' perspective, and view your own attitudes as culturally based. As your own thoughts and actions seem 'normal' to you, in the same way the families feel they are 'normal'. In cases where you feel strongly that families are acting unacceptably in some way, it may be helpful to check with one or more of your work colleagues to verify your feelings and gain a wider perspective.

### **Focus on common goals**

When challenging circumstances arise, there may be very little about which Educators and families both agree. At these times, it is crucial to remember that both parties agree on one thing: wanting the best for the child. What this means in practice may be hotly contested; however, if you can maintain your focus on the child, especially through these difficult times, rather than retreating to defensive positions, you will be more likely to succeed. Your common goal of achieving the best outcomes for the child will be your starting point.

From the core focus on the child, you may be able to move forward to other issues of general agreement. It is important to recognise these, to avoid the perception that there is nothing on which you agree. There may be points on which you both are happy to agree to disagree, when it is clear at least that the outcome will be equally positive for the child (for example, a child sleeping on a bed at home and a floor mattress at the service). At other times, time must be set aside for families and Educators to meet and exchange views fully, so that each understands the other's point of view. A third person can help in these situations to clarify each point and reflect opinions back for confirmation or clarification.

Remember that many families may feel an unequal power relationship exists between themselves and their child's Educators. Educators may need to state explicitly what families can do (i.e. to influence the centre's policies, programs, menu, etc), in order for them to see that they have some power to effect change. This shared decision making can result in unexpected and positive changes in services.

## Maintain open, honest, frequent and two-way communication

'In genuine partnerships, families and Early Childhood Educators:

- Value each other's knowledge of each child
- Value each other's contributions to and roles in each child's life
- Trust each other
- Communicate freely and respectfully with each other
- Share insights and perspectives about each child
- Engage in shared decision-making' (EYLF, 2009, p12).

Communication with families can take many forms. The following are some examples, but Educators should not be limited to this list:

- **Acknowledging a family member's presence** is a straightforward yet highly important action that all Educators should follow. Every family member should be acknowledged when they enter their child's room, preferably with eye contact and use of their name (see above, Maintain the relationship). This indicates respect, puts all families on an equal footing and provides a starting point for further conversation.
- **Doorstep conversations** are always invaluable, as one party can quickly and easily pass on information about the child that will give the other party a basis on which to relate to them. At a minimum, families can at least pass on to Educators how the child is feeling, and whether any significant events have occurred since last attending the service. Similarly, Early Childhood Educators can provide families with a brief overview of the child's day and make particular mention of noteworthy issues.
- **Using a whiteboard** is an easy to maintain tool for recording non-sensitive information about all of the children in a single day. It can be used to detail routine events such as meals, sleep times and toileting, and eliminates the need for Educators to remember such details (ensure privacy regulations and guidelines are followed).
- **Using a communication book** is a useful tool for keeping families up to date with their child on an ongoing basis. Using the book, both Educators and families can write about current or one-off events, trends in the child's interests and development, and anything else that 'paints a picture' of the child and the child's day. The book can also be used to remind families of upcoming dates and other non-urgent information, and insert photos and other items of interest (ensure privacy regulations and guidelines are followed).
- **Regular family-Educator meetings** (i.e. anywhere from once per year to monthly) are invaluable opportunities for Early Childhood Educators and families to discuss the child's progress, preferably while the child is absent, and without the distractions that prevent in-depth discussion in the child's room. A thorough discussion often uncovers details about the child that one party may have assumed was already known by the other.

### Self Help Question 4

A casual conversation about the weekend's events reveals that the family attended a country show, where the child was particularly interested in the animals, farmers and farm equipment. What could you do in the program to incorporate that knowledge, both for the benefit of that child and the other children in the room? How could you share the information about including that in the program, with the child's family?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Opportunities for family members to participate in the service/program

There is a difference between involvement and participation in a program. Whilst some family members may have direct involvement in management committees or other administrative or fund raising roles, it is important that all families have the chance to participate in the program. Participation does not necessarily mean being in the room with the children, although this is strongly encouraged, so that families gain a first hand idea of what happens and how the program works. Participation also provides the opportunity for families and children to share an experience together from time to time and a point for conversation and reflection between families and children later at home.

Additional strategies that can be implemented to encourage parent participation:

- Families can be invited to share ideas or thoughts about the program. They may have ideas for some activities, resources or experiences that reflect particular interests or experiences in their own childhood or culture.
- Families may be encouraged to send along particular materials or resources from their own culture or interests that their child or other children may wish to use for play. This is often discouraged, but encouraging families to provide additional materials is a great way to add resources to the program and also, ensure families and children feel their interests are being valued.
- Some families may like to write down ideas of what they think will be of interest or value to their child in the program. This does not mean that Educators are required to implement all ideas, but it provides opportunities for families to make suggestions and helps reflect the message that their interests and their child are valued. Having the opportunity to contribute ideas to the actual program is an important strategy that helps those families who wish to, provide input into the program.
- Ask a parent to donate an hour once a term to spend some time sharing with children something of interest. They may be a musician, or have a particular skill they can share with the children in a special one-off project.
- Invite families to provide photographs of their family or take some photographs of the family and child engaged in the program. With their permission, the photos can be displayed on a noticeboard and regularly updated and/or kept in an album for families and children to refer to over time as new events are documented (e.g. new babies, birthdays, holidays, cultural celebrations, incursions/excursions, new program activities).
- Provide a regularly maintained community information board to inform families about local events and happenings. Families may also wish to advertise items via the community information board.

### Self Help Question 5

Identify what you believe are the key strategies that encourage active participation for families. List three strategies and write one paragraph for each, noting what the strategy is and why it is important.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Provide a list of five local events or happenings that could be placed on a community information board for your program.



- Learn to say the child's and family's name correctly, rather than anglicising it for convenience;
- Provide culturally diverse food;
- Provide information in community languages and/or access bilingual educators to support children and parents where possible.

### Communicating difficult issues

An issue of concern for many Early Childhood Educators is how (or whether) to pass on information to families about a child who regularly behaves inappropriately. Many Educators are acutely aware of the distress that is caused when families receive such news, and would rather avoid speaking about it or downplay the truth. As a general rule, it is most important to be open and honest with families, who deserve to know about their child's day. However, instead of leaving the family member concerned with the unfortunate news, be prepared to offer further support if it is required. For example, if you have had some success with managing the child's behaviour in certain circumstances, share your ideas with the family. If, on the other hand, you are at a loss as to how to manage the child, ask the family member/s if they have any ideas. Offer to meet with the family representative to discuss the child's behaviour, with a view to sharing ideas and coming up with a joint resolution. Avoiding discussion of difficult issues relating to children's behaviour will not solve the problem and it is likely that the families will have the same or similar problem at home. Sharing your difficulties with families openly and honestly will eventually lead to success.

Sometimes, issues of concern will never be resolved to the satisfaction of either Educators or families. When all has been done to foster an awareness of the perspective of others, outside observers have been involved and exhaustive meetings held, the only conclusion to make may be to accept that you will not always agree. Indeed, it may be that both parties are satisfied with such an outcome, and as long as the child's interests continue to be served, it may serve as a solution in itself.

#### Self Help Question 6

The family members of a child insist that she/he chooses her/his own clothes every morning, which you feel are often inappropriate for the weather. How would you let the family know your feelings about this, and encourage them to do the same? If it became obvious that you will not reach agreement in this instance, what compromise might you suggest?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Conclusion

---

Probably the best and the most difficult aspect of working with children and their families, is that they are all different. This fact provides Early Childhood Educators with both challenges and rewards. The challenges often make the work of Early Childhood Educators' difficult, perhaps giving the feeling that they are stretched 10 different ways by 10 different families. However, the rewards mean that Educators' skills and abilities are also stretched by their experiences, making them increasingly better able to deal with a diversity of issues in their work. Ultimately, cultivating partnerships with families provides rewards for Educators, families and especially children.

## References and Resources

---

- Allen, K. & Marotz, L.R. (2003). *Developmental Profiles* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed). New York, USA: Delmar Thomson Publishing.
- Baker, A and Manfredi-Petit, L. (1998). *Circle of love: Relationships between parents, providers, and children in family child care*. St Paul, MN, USA: Redleaf Press.
- Click, P.M. & Lynch, J. (1999). *Caring for School-Age children* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). New York, USA: Delmar Publishing.
- Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009). *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*. Barton, ACT: Author.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2010). *Draft Guide to the National Quality Standard Education and Care Services - Centre-based and family day care*. Barwon, ACT: Author.
- Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. (2010). *My Time, Our Place: Framework for school age care in Australia - Draft for consultation*. Barton, ACT: Author.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2008). *Family-School Partnerships Framework: A guide for schools and families*. Barwon, ACT: Retrieved from <http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/A1443756-85CE-4BDD-AED5-644A25C337F1/24590/FamilySchoolPartnershipsFrameworkFINAL.pdf>.
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2009) *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: For all children from birth to eight years*. Melbourne, Vic:
- Gonzalez-Mena, J. (1991). *Tips and Tidbits – a book for family child care providers*, Washington, DC, USA: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Harris, V. (1995). *Building partnerships with parents*. Brisbane, Qld: Lady Gowrie Child Centre.
- Stonehouse, A. (1994). How does it feel? Child Care from a Parent's Perspective. *One World for Children Training Newsletter*, 2002 (Winter).
- Waters, J. (1996). *Making the connection: Parents and early childhood staff*. Carlton North, Vic: Lady Gowrie Child Centre Melbourne.

## Assessment Task

---

1. Write a list of at least 10 questions suitable for inclusion on an enrolment form that will provide detailed knowledge of the child and the family. For each question you will ask, identify why this information is useful for the provision of care for the child.
2. Provide a detailed plan of a family/Educator session you currently organise: how often are they held? How long does each family member have to speak to you? What improvements can you make to the sessions in future?

OR

Provide a plan of a family/Educator session for your service in the near future. How will you let the families know about it? How will you allow the families to choose a time that suits them? What can you do to provide the opportunity for any members of the family to attend if they wish?

3. The children in your service have spent a long period of time on digging a wide hole in the sandpit, of which they are obviously very proud. One particular child's father arrives at the centre and reacts with lack of interest when his daughter shows him the hole.

Provide 3 suggestions of what you might do now and later to help the parent see the significance of this event for his daughter?

4. A grandparent approaches you about some problems the family has had with the child getting to sleep at night. While it is not a serious problem, the grandparent reports that the child asks to be patted, songs to be sung and generally for one of the family members to stay in the room. The grandparent wonders what the sleep time routine is at the centre, and whether it could be contributing to the child's behaviour.

How might you carry on a discussion with this grandparent, while maintaining respect and sharing your side of the story?