

Please Note: Brimbank Preschool Association Inc. is referred to as BPA in this document.

RATIONALE & UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY

Successful early childhood education and care programs are built on the co-operative and supportive relationship between parents and staff.

We need to share information about the children and plan care-giving routines and learning experiences based on agreed goals. This can be as simple as parents informing educators what solid foods a baby is trying at home or sharing “news” such as the family’s weekend activities. In turn, educators understand that parents like to know “about their child’s day”. Only by sharing information about the children’s development and behaviour at home and at a service can we come close to seeing “the whole picture of the child” and understanding the child’s needs and how best to meet those needs.

Parents are urged to offer suggestions and express concerns. They can talk to a staff member in person; or telephone a service Nominated Supervisor to share concerns and ideas.

When communicating with centre staff we ask that parents consider the following points:

- (a) All centre staff are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of our children as well as staff themselves. Parents should therefore ensure that their interactions with staff do not create unnecessary stress and anxiety.
- (b) The priority for centre staff is the welfare and education of all children in the centre. Centre staff are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. Normal service standards suggest that an acceptable response time for emails is 2 working days. Responses are not expected outside normal working hours or during centre holidays unless it is an emergency.
- (c) The time available for parents to meet with staff is limited and must be scheduled at a time that is not disruptive. Parents should be mindful of the teacher’s time and their commitment to other families at the service. We ask that parents when requesting a meeting that they communicate the reason and allow the teacher time to prepare, unless there is a genuine emergency that needs to be discussed. We ask that parents be mindful of the frequency of requests for feedback and/or meetings with staff.

METHODS

Families differ in their preferred communication methods. Different issues also require different forms of communication. For these reasons, the centre has developed a parent-staff communication plan.

Parent Enquiries

When parents contact a service (through telephone, email or visit), the staff member dealing with the enquiry, provides general information regarding service operation, answers parent’s questions and talks to the parents about the family’s needs, as well as gaining general background information about the child. The staff may also refer parents to BPA’s website: www.bpachildreasureservices.com.

On Enrolment and During Orientation

Educators and staff members answer parent questions. They look at the Enrolment Details Form with the parents and explain how and why it needs to be completed. Staff make parents aware of the service policies and procedures and advise that they can be viewed at any time. Parents are invited to visit a service at any time and participate in the service program.

Parents are issued with an Information Book which includes a copy of the service philosophy, centre procedures and *BPA Staff & Parent Communication Plan*. BPA policies and procedures are available for viewing both at the service and on the BPA website.

Feedback from Parents

Parents are encouraged to provide constructive feedback, either formally or informally throughout the year.

Daily Informal Communication

Naturally, parents and educators pass on information and have friendly conversations at arrival and departure times. However, as these are sometimes busy moments, daily communication also occurs through a service communication book, journal, program plan, electronic media (ie. Flexibuzz, Educa, Facebook) or notices displayed at the service. This information covers the child's learning experiences, friendships and routines. Parents are welcome to telephone a service through the day and make a time to talk to educators. Additional information is occasionally placed in the child's pocket/pigeon hole eg. notes re fees, special events.

General News About A Service, Upcoming Events and Current Topics of Interest

A service newsletter is published and distributed to families on a regular basis.

Parent Group Meetings and Gatherings

Parents are encouraged to join a service Parent Committee or Community Participation Group (CPG). The role of the Parent Committee/CPG is to be involved at the kindergarten level so that parents, the kindergarten, community and most importantly the children benefit from this input. A Parent Committee/CPG member will get to enjoy the social aspect of meeting with others from the local area and working on a common goal – supporting the children and the service

One of the main challenges is to fundraise for the service. Government funding and fees do not include monies for significant equipment purchases, major equipment upgrades, or Christmas presents for the children etc. It covers the general day to day expenses such as salaries, utilities, minor equipment repairs and replacements, art materials, membership costs etc.

The service will also organise social gatherings, working bees etc. throughout the year, where staff and parents can socialise, communicate and learn about the child and family related subjects.

Individual Child Development, Care Arrangements, Health and Behaviour

Parents have the opportunity to report on their child's development, progress and behaviour within the home context and staff share information about the child's experiences at a service. Goals and objectives for the children are developed by parents and educators collaboratively. Parents may arrange a meeting with educators at a mutually convenient time to discuss their child's progress. Educators also contact parents if there are any concerns about children eg. their behaviour, development or health. Educators contact parents by telephone to discuss the child's wellbeing, inform them of illness, serious injury and to verify arrangements for collection of a child. Educators sometimes call parents to let them know of any special or meaningful events in their child's life eg. first step, words spoken.

Children with Medical Conditions

Prior to commencement at a service, staff will organise a meeting with parents who have identified their child as being diagnosed with a medical condition (ie. Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Allergies etc) to discuss the specific needs of the child. Parents will be required to provide the service with a medical management or action plan which has been completed by a medical practitioner. A risk management plan and communication record will then be developed in consultation with the parents to ensure the child's health, safety and wellbeing are protected whilst at the service. Parents will be provided with a copy of the relevant BPA policy which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party – BPA as the Approved Provider, the service Nominated Supervisor, staff and parents. Parents are encouraged to communicate regularly with staff in relation to the ongoing health and wellbeing of their child and the management of their medical condition.

Court Orders

Similar to the above, prior to commencement at a service, staff will organise a meeting with parents who have indicated that there are current custody court order in place relating to their child. Parents will be required to provide the service with a copy of the most current court order. A risk management plan and communication record will then be developed in consultation with the parents to ensure the child's health, safety and wellbeing are protected whilst at the service. Parents will be provided with a copy of the relevant BPA policy which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party – BPA as the Approved Provider, service Nominated Supervisor, staff and parents. Parents should communicate any changes to the circumstances surrounding the court order as soon as possible.

Other Communication Methods

Notices, posters, photo displays, emails and electronic media formats are other ways a service communicates information to parents. Services address the diverse communication needs of parents through the use of documents in other languages and bi-lingual resources, people and services. Parents are also able to share their ideas and concerns via email, a note, letter or card.

EVALUATION

Through parent surveys, meetings and discussions, a service communication plan and methods are evaluated to check that they are effective, comprehensive and relevant.

OTHER BPA POLICIES THAT MAY BE RELEVANT TO PARENTS CONDUCT

- *Code of Conduct*
- *Parent Code of Conduct*