

Early Learning

Community Partnership Policy

This procedure **MUST** be read in conjunction with *Uniting Collaborative Partnerships & Sponsorship Relationships Policy*

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning is committed to:

- Helping children, families and the community feel valued and understood.
- Consultations founded on respect and reciprocal relationships with children
- Supporting a collective approach to improve outcomes for children.
- Developing collaborative partnerships with all stakeholders.
- Facilitating respectful relationships that enable a coordinated approach toward service delivery.

The Convention of the Rights of a Child identify a number of rights which link to Partnerships:
Express their views freely on all matters affecting them
Participate fully in family, cultural and social life

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Family Violence found that “a child safe institution is one that seeks the views of children and takes into account their age, development, maturity, understanding and abilities, and the different formats and means of communication they may use.”

The Community Partnership Policy is also informed by the Consumer Partnerships Framework which outlines the following values for our Partnerships:

- Human rights and values based
- A safe environment
- Listening and learning
- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Purposeful
- Shared ownership.

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Executive Summary

Uniting takes a whole-of-organisation approach that celebrates diversity. Diversity respects and values the unique contribution people make because of their individual characteristics, background and perspective. Individual characteristics include, ethnicity, faith, age, ability, cultural background, language, socio-economic status, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation, socio-economic status, political or other beliefs, and visa or refugee determination status.

A collective approach to service delivery is required to enable quality learning, development and wellbeing outcomes for children. Further, children develop their identity within the context of their local community. Early learning services have a responsibility to encourage and model active community engagement for children to be citizens of the world. Building and maintaining reciprocal relationships with the local community will facilitate stakeholders to have a voice, so that service delivery can reflect the uniqueness of each individual local community, and incorporate families' expertise, culture, values and beliefs.

Community partnerships support stronger cross-disciplinary relationships enabling a targeted response to community strengths and needs. Collaboration benefits a more holistic service delivery with increased understanding of available family supports.

Current Environmental Context

Uniting Early Learning (as the Approved Provider) delivers a range of early learning programs and stakeholder involvement are reflective of the local service delivery model. Children will be provided with opportunities for meaningful involvement in the decisions that affect their lives, learning and wellbeing. A range of participation strategies are available to enable children and families to inform and be informed, consulted, partner, initiate and collaborate. Family engagement cultivates a holistic learning environment.

Attachment 20a: Responsibilities relating to the Early Years Management Partnership

Attachment 20b: Parent Partnership Group role

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Reference/Sources

This policy should be read in conjunction with;

Uniting Child Safety Policy – Uniting adopts the Uniting Church Australia National Child Safety Policy Framework, 2019 and the principles of this Policy Framework

- *Authentic Engagement: [The nature and role of the relationship at the heart of effective practice.](#)* T.G. Moore, 2017. Centre for Community Child Health. Keynote address at ARACY Parent Engagement Conference “Maximising every child’s potential. Melbourne, 7th June.
- *Children’s Services Amendment Act 2019,*
- *Children’s Services Regulation 2020*
- *Early Years Management Policy Framework Part 1 and 2* Department of Education and Training 2016
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: S3 (3), 168*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 75,*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6*
- *Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care Class 5 (October 2014).*
- *Consumer Partnerships Framework [\(via the Uniting Intranet\)](#)*
- *Consumer Partnerships Safety and Wellbeing Protocol [\(via the Uniting Intranet\)](#)*
- *Child Wise Take Out Notes – [Meaningful Engagement with children and young people](#)*
- *Child Wise - [Meaningful Engagement with children and young people-Checklist for planning consultation](#)*
- *Children’s Voices- [A principled framework for children and young people’s participation as valued citizens and learners](#)*

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on: 19/02/2021

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 19/02/2022

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Attachment 20a –Responsibilities relating to the Community Partnership Policy

Approved Provider

- Actively seek out and engage with children and families in decision-making
- Move towards children and families sharing power and responsibility for decision making
- Review data about local needs and consult with the local community.
- Engage with the local community to develop local strategies and ensure services are responsive.
- Advocate on behalf of children and drive access for all children to participate and partner with us
- Ensure all our partners have timely access to information in appropriate forms and through appropriate channels.
- Continuously improves through performance monitoring.
- Work closely with local stakeholders.
- Maintain strong relationships with local government and participate in all local planning and central enrolment processes (where appropriate).
- Maintain cooperative relationships with other Early Years Management organisations and stakeholders to coordinate services and best practice.
- Link with sector partners to maximise the participation of all children.
- Provide service delivery according to their regulatory obligations, funding and service agreements guidelines, policy framework.
- Strive to continuously improve the delivery of Early Learning Services
- Assume all responsibilities of an approved provider as specified in the relevant law and regulations.
- Manage compliance, industrial, financial and operational obligations required as an approved provider.
- Responsible for staff recruitment, management and development.
- Provide governance, leadership and management systems, procedures and practices.
- Strategically plan to ensure sustainable and financially viable service delivery.

Responsible Person and educators

- Reflect the unique geographical, cultural and community context of the service.
- Welcome, reflect and draw on the many and diverse voices, priorities and strengths of the children and families at the service.
- Recognise the diverse needs and experiences of children and families- give all children the opportunity to contribute.
- Actively support families to build relationships with other families and with relevant community services to strengthen child, parenting and family outcomes.
- Draw on the knowledge of each child and family to provide thoughtful and tailored opportunities for participation in the service.
- Support the safety of all children and families who partner with Uniting.
- Explore opportunities to build trust and support children and families to contribute to the educational program in ways that celebrate and share their strengths, beliefs and culture
- Actively seek out and engage with children and families in decision-making.
- Move towards children and families sharing power and responsibility for decision making
- Review data about local needs and consult with the local community.

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- Engage with the local community to develop local strategies and ensure services are responsive.
- Advocate on behalf of children and drive access for all children to participate and partner with us
- Continuously improves through performance monitoring.
- Work closely with local stakeholders.
- Establish relationships with schools to support transition to school processes.
- inform children about their rights, including safety and participation.
- encourage children to voluntarily participate.
- Consult with children when planning, delivering, and evaluating the early learning program.
- Support children to express their views and take their views into account.
- Maintain children’s right for privacy and confidentiality.

Parents

Parent engagement builds positive, shared goal-orientated relationships, with parents being active participants in their child’s learning and connecting with the local learning community.

Parents and their broader family are invited to engage fully with the service.

- Facilitate their child sharing their strengths and interests with staff and suggest learning opportunities to build on these (or share on their behalf)
- actively engage in planning for their child’s ongoing learning and development in the service, at home and in the local community
- Participate in opportunities for social engagement, e.g. attend open nights, parent meetings and social functions.
- Provide additional support to program delivery, e.g. morning tea duty, fundraise, working bees.
- Assist with excursions and regular outings.
- Contribute to newsletters and notice boards.
- Provide feedback to inform early learning policy development.
- Contribute to the educational program at the service in a way that suits current commitments, availability and skills. E.g. helping the children with activities and games, reading to the children, cooking with the children.
- Take the lead in projects, where appropriate (i.e sustainability)
- Be involved in an advisory, consultative or decision-making role, e.g. participating in a Parent Advisory/Enrichment Group/Committee.
- Extend the kindergarten program by sharing occupations, interests or skills.
- Contribute and provide input to the service’s programs, philosophy, policies and procedures.
- Provide suggestions during self-assessment, planning for quality improvement and the development of the Quality Improvement Plan for the service.
- Contribute to the documentation of their child’s learning and goal-setting.
- Provide feedback about the experiences planned for their child.
- Have private discussions with the appropriate person about their child’s learning and wellbeing.
- Provide input into service routines, transitions and activities.
- Provide knowledge and understanding to influence their children’s experiences and learning.
- Provide feedback on the delivery of the early learning service

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Children

- Make the early learning space welcoming for others to engage and contribute
- Listen and learn from each other
- Respect each other's differences
- Share the power and decision making
- Be friendly and helpful
- Contribute to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the early learning program

Local Government

- Plays a key legislative role in strategically planning early year services in the local community.
- Represents the interests of the local community.
- Collects data and statistics that informs trends that impact on service delivery.
- In Victoria, develops the Municipal Early Years plan that outlines the priorities and direction of future plans for early childhood service delivery.
- In some cases, provides the infrastructure, financial support and central enrolment/ registration services.
- May facilitate early learning network opportunities.

State Government

- Supports the learning, development, health and wellbeing of babies and young children through services, legislation, education and care.
- Monitors the performance of Uniting as an EYM organisation (In Victorian funded services only).
- Works with key stakeholders to monitor the responsiveness and effectiveness of the system.
- Ensures the service is compliant in all areas to ensure children are educated and care for appropriately.
- Ensures the service meets all the National Quality Standards.
- Partners with external organisations to add value to programs and support the learning outcomes of learners.
- Provides a range of funding with the aim of improving service delivery, identifying vulnerability and promoting participation, particularly among children with a disability and Aboriginal children.

Commonwealth Government

- Responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality and affordable early child care and childhood education.
- Offers a range of payments and services to help families with the costs of child care.
- Administers the Child Care Subsidy.
- Implements the Australian Early Development Census.

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Attachment 20b – Parent Partnership Group role

- Provide a mechanism for parent input and feedback about service delivery.
- Contribute to Early Learning policy development and review.
- Develop further opportunities for families to be involved in program. E.g. In collaboration with the service, organise and facilitate social events.
- Provide a consultative role into future planning for service delivery.
- Facilitate fund raising opportunities
- Organise and conduct in line with Uniting policies, legislation and funding requirements.
- Provide monthly fundraising report to Uniting.
- Expend funds to support improvement in service delivery and maximise outcomes for children.
- Partner with Uniting in grant applications (where appropriate).
- Initiate and promote a local early learning community by organising and facilitating opportunities for social engagement.
- Decision making is done in collaboration with the Uniting Early Learning Coordinator.
- Support a culture that engages every family.
- Assist in the quality assessment process and improvement plan (where appropriate).
- Welcome and induct new Parent Partnership Group members.
- Provide a support mechanism for all new families.
- Build connections between the service and the community by supporting community events.
- Provide subject matter expertise (where relevant and appropriate).
- Organise and conduct working bees.
- Partner with Uniting to be an advocate for Early Learning.
- Negotiate any additional/alternative roles with Uniting.

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