

Quality Area 4

Staffing Arrangements

Ooranga is committed to supporting all its employees to ensure the workforce is suitably qualified, motivated and experienced for the mission of supporting individual child development through the provision of high quality, mobile early childhood services to rural communities. The core values of Ooranga identify that ethical, warm and respectful relationships with children, their families and wider community are vital to enhance a child's learning and development.

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Responsibilities

This policy is to be implemented by all Ooranga staff.

Service Philosophy

Ooranga has developed a holistic service philosophy with a vision where young children flourish within their local community. This philosophy was developed in conjunction with all staff and the Management Committee, to represent all communities where Ooranga operates. In addition, Ooranga has developed a Preschool Philosophy as part of the organisation's Quality Improvement Plan.

Qualifications and Roles

Ooranga employs a number of permanent early childhood educators with a range of qualifications including Early Childhood Teacher, Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care and Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. Ooranga also employs a Toy Librarian, an Administrator and Executive Officer and has a volunteer Management Committee, comprised of a minimum of 7 Ooranga members.

Each preschool venue is staffed by a Coordinator (Person in Charge) and at least one other Educator. The Playgroup Coordinator is assisted by two Playgroup Educators while the Toy Librarian is supported by the two administrative staff located in the office. All educators must have a valid Working with Children Check and current First Aid/Asthma and Anaphylaxis/CPR certificate. Ooranga will provide student placement opportunities where appropriate for individuals undertaking early childhood or related studies.

Ooranga nominates educators for the regulatory roles of Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader. The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader have obligations under the National Law and National Regulations to ensure child safety and delivery of a quality educational program. Educators in these roles visit all preschool venues during operation at least once per term to make observations, provide guidance and feedback to educators. All educators have a responsibility to ask for support when they require clarification or assistance regarding service delivery outside of preschool visits.

Ooranga is managed by a volunteer Management Committee, comprised of Ooranga members located across the region, who act as stewards of the organisation. All Committee members must have a valid Volunteer Working With Children Check and Police Check. The Committee meets once a month during school terms and is supported by the Executive Officer, who is delegated daily management of the service. Administration support is

provided by a permanent full-time staff member.

Operating Hours

Ooranga preschool venues operate during the school terms on the nominated days between the hours of 9:00am and 3:00pm except for Currabubula which operates from 9:15am to 3:15pm. The playgroup van has a fortnightly schedule of 10 different venues for two-hour sessions.

Toy Library operates 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday including all NSW term breaks and closed during the Christmas / January school holidays.

The Ooranga office is open from Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm.

Code of Conduct

Ethical conduct guides the behaviour and decisions within the early childhood education setting and is founded in respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and staff, and the wider community. Ooranga has adopted the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics (2016) alongside the service philosophy and an Ooranga Code of Conduct to guide acceptable behaviors and attributes for all staff and volunteers.

All staff and volunteers will be familiar with the ECA Code of Ethics and philosophy and will work together in the best interests of the children and families, acting in a manner that will enhance the standing of the early childhood sector. The Ooranga Code of Conduct provides additional direction for all staff to support a positive working environment.

Presentation

All Ooranga staff should maintain a professional appearance and comply with dress standards. Closed in shoes with good sole grip should be worn to protect feet and reduce risk of falls or slipping. Hats and tops with collars are to be worn according to the Sun Protection Procedure. Staff may have the Ooranga logo embroidered on their shirts at the organisations expense. Magnetic name badges will be provided to permanent staff. Staff will model good personal hygiene and not wear untidy track suit pants, ripped jeans or short skirts or shorts. Staff are encouraged not to wear long, dangly earrings to reduce risk of being ripped out by accident.

Staff Meetings

Staff meetings occur once a month, during term time, to discuss service operation. With many part-time staff that work remotely during service operation, staff meetings are imperative for team cohesion and continuous improvement of the organisation.

Discipline of Children

Ooranga strives to provide an environment where all parents/carers, staff and children feel safe, cared for and relaxed and which encourages cooperation and positive interaction. Rules will be clearly established with children based on safety and respect for others to help create a caring environment. Positive behaviour will be encouraged by role modelling, redirecting children to other activities, showing appreciation for appropriate behaviour and building on each child's strengths and achievements.

Ooranga encourages a positive approach to conflict resolution and behaviour management to enhance a child's self-esteem, confidence and develops a child's awareness of the organisations conflict guidelines. Staff will listen, observe, record and examine the conflict to identify triggers for escalation of behaviour and implement changes as required into future programs. Staff will acknowledge each child can react differently through emotion, be considerate and encourage effective communication and a sense of justice for the child.

Telephones

As a mobile service and working in rural and remote areas, remaining in contact for work health and safety is a priority for early childhood staff. Each Preschool and Playgroup Coordinator is issued with a mobile telephone as a point of contact for families, staff and other service providers.

Educators are required to respond to telephone calls and messages during the normal operating hours of their preschool venue, including 30 minutes prior to open and after close. Contact with educators outside of the normal hours of operation is encouraged to be made via the Ooranga office.

Staff may use work phones for personal calls, however are asked to keep them at a minimum during service periods when caring for children. Staff must keep personal mobile phones in their personal belongings during service periods.

Staff Grievances

Ooranga values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community in helping to create a service that meets regulation and the needs of enrolled children and their families. We encourage open communication through opportunities to respond and feedback on the program. A component of this feedback is the ability to put forward a complaint and have this managed appropriately with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement.

Staff are encouraged to use the Grievance Procedure in the event they need to make a complaint. Staff are encouraged to attempt to resolve any conflict independently. If unsuccessful or unable, staff must lodge a Grievance form with the Executive Officer. If the complaint is in regard to the Executive Officer, staff may lodge a form with the Ooranga Vice President (who acts as Staff Liaison Officer). All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible and remain confidential to those involved.

Harassment Free Workplace

Ooranga will foster an environment of mutual respect equity and recognition of educator skills and strengths. This will be facilitated through the service philosophy and by adhering to the ECA Code of Ethics and Ooranga's Code of Conduct. Ooranga endeavours to define expectations and guidelines for behaviour through clear job descriptions, policies and procedures.

Ooranga will encourage feedback and respectful, open communication to create understanding between educators and management. Ooranga will not tolerate harassment or bullying, defined as repeated unreasonable behaviour by an individual towards a worker which creates a risk to health and safety (*Fair Work Amendment Act 2013*). Staff are encouraged to raise any grievance or concern regarding harassment within the workplace using the Grievance Procedure.

Induction & Professional Development

Induction of new staff is important for a smooth transition for the individual in addition to existing staff, children and families using Ooranga services. This process is documented.

Ooranga will support staff to access relevant professional development opportunities both to enhance early childhood skills and knowledge but also as reward and recognition of alignment with the service philosophy and sound work performance. The organisation will pay for maintenance of mandatory qualifications (WWCC, First Aid etc) and other professional development on a needs basis, identified through regular consultation with staff and requested training opportunities.

Family Friendly

Ooranga endeavours to foster flexibility to achieve a better balance between work and family responsibilities for all staff. Any educator with preschool aged children may enrol their child at a venue where they regularly work, subject to payment of normal Ooranga membership and preschool fees. The child may travel in Ooranga vehicles fitted with appropriate car restraints supplied by the staff. Staff are encouraged to use Carers Leave if they have a sick child and not bring their child into the workplace.

Staff are welcome to bring their child/ren along to the staff meetings and into the Ooranga office, however the parent must supervise and be responsible for their child's behaviour to minimise any disturbance to other staff or members.

Related Documents

Other relevant policy documents; Relationships with Children Policy, Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities Policy, Leadership and Service Management.

Relevant procedures; Emergency and Evacuation, Grievance, Hygiene and Infection Control, Leave Procedure, Orientation and Induction Checklist, Risk Management., Sun Protection, Volunteers and Students, Work Health and Safety.

Regulatory References: Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2019; Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, including termination of employment or cancellation of Ooranga membership.