

## Quality Area 6

# Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Ooranga's vision is for young children to flourish in their local communities. Staff support this vision through the provision of high quality, mobile early childhood education services to small communities where no other early childhood education is available. Ooranga's core values identify the importance of the inclusion of all children and families, being respectful through interactions and an ongoing commitment to local communities.

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## Responsibilities

This policy is to be implemented by all Ooranga staff.

## Family Rights and Responsibilities

Ooranga respects the rights of children and families to have access to safe and positive learning environments. All people in the early childhood education environment need to be responsible for their own conduct, be respectful of the rights of others and use appropriate language. Upon enrolment, families will agree to abide by Ooranga policies and procedures, which all staff and members are also required to adhere to.

Poor behaviour towards any other person is unacceptable, including bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, actions that put another at risk of harm or threats of any kind. Should families fail to comply with these responsibilities, Ooranga may exclude them from services, however their children may not be excluded.

## Preschool Enrolment, Orientation and Transition

Ooranga staff aim to develop mutually respectful and supportive relationships with all families. Membership to the organisation is required for use of any Ooranga service, including Preschool, Playgroup and Toy Library.

The preschool enrolment and orientation process promote positive outcomes for children and meets legislative requirements as an approved provider of early childhood education. Families are invited to visit preschool venues to meet with staff and tour the facilities before enrolling their child and ask any questions regarding operation of the service.

All children must have completed enrolment forms with relevant supporting documents provided to the preschool staff or to the Ooranga office before attending preschool at any venue. A Preschool Parent Handbook is provided to all families upon enrolment which outlines general preschool service provision for families including fee payment information and items children must bring with them to preschool.

## Daily Requirements

The Ooranga office is also open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, to answer questions and respond to any concerns regarding any service.

### Toy Library

The Ooranga Toy Library operates Monday to Friday between 9am and 3pm.

### Playgroup

All supported playgroup sessions are 2 hours in duration and delivered in a range of community settings across northern NSW. A schedule of sessions is provided for each playgroup location and is available from the Ooranga office.

Children remain in the care of their family whilst attending playgroup. Families must accompany and supervise their own children whilst attending playgroup and toy library services, as these are not regulated childcare services. Refreshments should be provided by parents/carers for their child/ren along with any personal care needs.

### Preschool

Ooranga preschools operate from 9am to 3pm (except Currabubula which is open from 9:15am to 3:15pm). Families are asked to honor and respect these

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times to enable educators to prepare activities and complete pack up at the end of each day.

Families must sign their child in and out at the beginning and end of each preschool day. Children will not be allowed to leave the preschool premises with anyone other than a person authorised by a parent in writing unless educators are provided adequate notification of alternative arrangements. Children will only be released into the care of an authorised person aged over 18 years as identified on the child's enrolment form or by verbal consent from the parent, documented by two educators, with the authorised persons' identification to be sighted on arrival.

## Priority of Access

The Australian Government's Priority of Access Guidelines state three levels of priority which must be followed when the demand for access to early childhood services exceeds supply;

1. Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect,
2. A child of a single parent or of parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test,
3. Any other child.

Within these main categories, priority will also be given to children from families;

- With Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background,
- That have a member with a disability,
- With low incomes,
- With a non-English speaking background,
- That are socially isolated.

As Ooranga preschool venues are in small communities, demand rarely exceeds supply of preschool places.

## Family Involvement

All families accessing Ooranga services are required to maintain a current membership. All members are encouraged to take an active role in the operation of the organisation through joining the Management Committee.

Collaborative partnerships with families, are integral to positive outcomes for children. The parenting views and values of each family will be respected and supported with additional information, referrals and support made available for families when necessary.

Families are encouraged to provide feedback to staff regarding the programs and services offered by Ooranga, either through structured parent/educator interviews, informal conversations while at the service or via the formal grievance

procedures.

Educators will seek ongoing parent input that identifies the current interests, strengths, challenges or changes for children. This information will be considered, analysed and will inform future planning.

## Feedback and Complaints

Feedback from families is important to ensure Ooranga remains relevant to our community and continues to provide excellent quality early childhood services. Staff will strive to address any concerns and resolve issues while maintaining good relationships. All Ooranga staff are willing to engage with families and the community, in person or via telephone or email. Ooranga also conduct an annual member survey to provide an opportunity for anonymous feedback. All Ooranga venues can provide a Community Complaints and Feedback form that can be lodged in person, mailed to P.O. Box 699, Gunnedah 2380 or emailed to [admin@ooranga.com.au](mailto:admin@ooranga.com.au). Complaints regarding the Executive Officer should be directed to the President of the Management Committee at the same address, marked CONFIDENTIAL.

## Community Collaboration

Ooranga's educational programming and practice is integrated and interconnected with what is happening in children's home and the wider community. Community services and organisations active in the local area are also incorporated into playgroup and preschool programs to share information and enhance links within the community. Ooranga staff maintain a wide network with relevant community services around the region to enable referrals for families where necessary.

Volunteers and visitors are encouraged to participate in the delivery of Ooranga services through sharing specific expertise or skills with children and educators.

Health professionals often engage with Ooranga playgroup sessions to engage with young families in a local setting. Allied health professionals are welcomed to deliver therapy for individual children at preschool venues. Ooranga staff will work with health professionals and therapists, where possible, to support any developmental priorities for individual children.

Several Ooranga preschool venues have local transport companies that provide complimentary bus travel alongside primary aged children. Parents are encouraged to enquire with their local Preschool educators to determine if this service is available at their venue.

## Related Documents

Other relevant policy documents; Educational Program and Practice, Children's Health and Safety, Staffing Arrangements, Leadership and Service Management.

Relevant forms and procedures; Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations, Enrolment Orientation and Fees, Membership and Preschool Enrolment Forms, Community Complaints and Feedback, Volunteers and Students.

Ooranga Preschool Parent Handbook.

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2016

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.**