

Quality Area 6

Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Ooranga’s vision is for young children to flourish in their local communities. We support this vision through the provision of high quality, mobile early childhood 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 in our interactions and ongoing commitment to local communities to realise our vision.

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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 the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2016) by which all staff and volunteers are also required to adopt.

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.

Enrolment, Orientation and Transition

Ooranga staff aim to develop mutually respectful and supportive relationships with families. The preschool enrolment and orientation process promotes positive outcomes for children and meets legislative requirements as an approved provider of early childhood education. Parents and carers must accompany children for the duration of attending playgroup and toy library services.

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

Daily Requirements

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

All supported playgroup sessions are 2 hours in duration and delivered in a range of community settings across northern NSW. Children remain in the care of their parents or carers whilst attending playgroup. Morning or afternoon tea should be provided by parents/carers for their child/ren along with any personal care needs.

Ooranga preschools operate from 9am to 3pm (except Currabubula which is open from 9:30am to 3:30pm). Parents and carers are asked to honor and respect these times to enable educators to prepare activities and complete pack up at the end of each day.

Parents and carers 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 parent/carer unless staff are provided adequate notification of alternative arrangements. Children will only be released into the care of an authorised person, aged over 18 years.

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. First priority is for children at risk of serious abuse or neglect, second is a child of a single parent or of parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test and third priority is any other child. Within these main categories, priority will also be given to children from families;

- With Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.
- With a disability.
- With low incomes.
- With a non-English speaking background.
- That are socially isolated.
- Of single parents.

As Ooranga preschool venues are located 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.

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. Staff welcome parent input that identifies current interests of children and updates of what is happening in their child's world that can be followed up in activities whilst at the service.

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 Grievance Form that can be lodged in person, mailed to P.O. Box 699, Gunnedah 2380 or emailed to ooranga@bigpond.com.

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.

Allied health professionals are welcomed to deliver therapy for individual children at preschool venues. Ooranga staff will work with therapists, where possible, to support any developmental priorities for individual children enrolled.

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; Membership and Preschool Enrolment Forms, Grievance.

Ooranga Preschool Parent Handbook.

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2016

Regulatory References: Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2012; Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment.