


Working in Partnership



Presenters:
 Karen James, Manager Early Childhood Strategy, DECD
 Heather Ward, Manager Children's Centres Project, DECD



Workshop Outline


- What are children's centres
- Working in partnership
- Importance of integrated governance
- Parafield Gardens Children's Centre
- What does partnership mean to you?
- Partnership challenges?
- Benefits of working together
- Questions/comments

Opportunities

- Focus on early childhood
- Ecological model: child/family/community
- Addressing drivers of disadvantage
- Doing *with* rather than *to*
- Valuing agency partnership and integrated approaches
- Building on good practice and
- Doing things differently

Two Guiding Principles

- Children and young people are at the centre of everything we do.
- We are there for every child, all of the time, without exception.



Children's Centre Vision

Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting support children and families to achieve the best possible learning, health and wellbeing outcomes in a universal setting with targeted responses for families who may require additional support.





Quality Learning

Through partnerships, Children's Centres strive to achieve four population outcomes:

- Children have optimal health, development and learning
- Parents provide strong foundations for their children's healthy development and wellbeing
- Communities are child and family friendly
- Aboriginal children are safe, healthy, culturally strong and confident.



Children's Centres
for Early Childhood
Development and Parenting

Quality Learning and Care

Overview

- 34 Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting are currently being developed or are operational on school sites across metropolitan and regional South Australia.
- 4 Aboriginal Children and Family Centres are also being established through a partnership with the Australian Government and the SA Health as part of the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership.



Children's Centres
for Early Childhood
Development and Parenting

Quality Learning and Care

Children's Centre Model

Care and education from birth through to the early years of school which may include:

- Playgroup or crèche
- Child care - either long day care or occasional care
- Preschool
- Community development, parenting programs
- Family support and service coordination
- Learning Together (where possible)
- Child Health and Allied Health



Children's Centres
for Early Childhood
Development and Parenting

Quality Learning and Care

Service Delivery

Director Leadership of education, care programs and staff for B-5 year old children

Community Development Coordinator

Coordinates the delivery of services, programs & projects

Family Services Coordinator (if applicable)

Builds local networks and connect families with services

Allied Health and health services

Early intervention, assessment, support and referral

Learning Together (if applicable)

Program focussing on early literacy – B-3 in particular

Partner Agencies & NGOs

Children's Centres
for Early Childhood
Development and Parenting

Quality Learning and Care

Successful Partnerships

In Children's Centres we support & promote:

- Shared vision, common aims and objectives
- Shared outcomes
- Clear governance structures
- Willingness/ commitment to being involved
- Understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Integrated leadership



Children's Centres
for Early Childhood
Development and Parenting

Quality Learning and Care

Working in Partnership

The following qualities are essential:

- Knowing, respecting and caring for children, parents, staff and the community
- Effective communication, positive relationships & flexibility
- Individual passion
- Constructive relationships & supportive leaders
- Understanding and respecting others' roles, experience and expertise



Children's Centres
for Early Childhood
Development and Parenting

Quality Learning and Care

Discussion

What does working in partnership mean for you:

- Agency/organisation
- Community
- Team



Local Governance Structures

- Children's Centres governance structures allow for a broad range of people within the community to be actively involved in decisions and their implementation.
- Partners include parents, families and representatives from a range of agencies and organisations delivering programs and services within the community.
- The governance groups particular to Children's Centres are the Partnership Group, Leadership Team and Parent Engagement Group.

Why Governance Works

Governance arrangements work when:

- Everyone works in partnership for children & families
- Partners have a shared vision and clearly defined outcomes
- There is individual and shared leadership, management & accountability
- Accountabilities and commitments are openly shared



Parafield Gardens Children's Centre

Demographic Information:

- Located north of the city
- Most families have at least one member employed however average household income below the SA and Australian average.
- Many families meet the definition of the 'working poor'
- Significant numbers of families with multiple socio-economic intergenerational challenges
- Community is culturally and linguistically diverse including Vietnamese, Cambodian and Filipino, a large growth in Indian & Afghani.

Working together

- Preschool staff, CDC and FSC started meeting together once per term for planning and professional development.
- Governing Council continued to be the key –parent voice representative.
- Managers of key partnerships were included in leaders days and professional development.
- Conversations with parents and community ongoing.
- Parent representation on working groups to establish new initiatives and feed into governance.
- Partnerships and opportunities result in service development.

Participation & Decision Making Processes

- Partnership group membership now jointly parent, governing council and service leaders.
- Working groups/steering with new initiatives or to explore identified gaps
- Family Voice – process of becoming an informed voice and is now a much stronger voice.
- Built strong collaborative foundations on which to further the integration process.
- Common understanding and commitment to ensuring optimal outcomes of education, health and wellbeing for children.
- Already witnessing improved outcomes within the Centre and local community



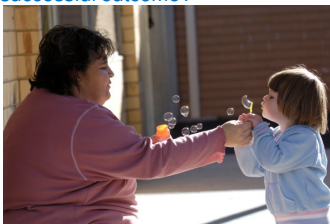
Partnership Challenges

- Co-location rather than integration of services
- Willingness and ability to work in an integrated approach
- Leadership of a multi/inter disciplinary team
- Truly acknowledging and respecting parent/family voice



Group Discussion

- What are some of the obstacles and challenges you have encountered?
- How did you address them?
- Was it a successful outcome?



If Partners Work Together

We can foster

- Integrated Leadership
- Child centred approaches
- Partnerships with parents and caregivers
- Common language and understandings
- Capacity Building
- Quality Outcomes



Final Thoughts

Collaborative partnerships with families and communities...will ultimately impact on the wellbeing of children and families as a whole...

Educators Belonging, Being and Becoming (Educators' Guide to the EYLF for Australia)

By recognising the expertise, cultural understandings and social capital of communities, early childhood services can significantly contribute to social cohesion and equity through their relationships, concern, trust and support.

*Respect, Reflect Relate –
Assessing for learning and development
in the early years using observational scales*

