

4.11 Complaints Handling

Policy:

If any aspects of our service make you unhappy you have the right to bring it to our attention. The Authorised Supervisor and educator welcome any suggestions as this feedback assists us in maintaining a quality child care service.

Relevant legislation: National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management - Standard 7.3

Key Resources: ACECQA www.acecqa.gov.au, NSW Ombudsman (2004) 'Effective Complaint Handling'. NSW Ombudsman 2nd Edition 2010, NSW Ombudsman (2009) "Complaint Handling Kit", Community Childcare Co-operative.

Practices:

Parents, children and community members are welcome to:

- Raise any concerns they may have with the preschool.
- Make suggestions.
- Appeal an action or decision made by the preschool.

Responsiveness

All complaints will be acknowledged and responded to as soon as practicable. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and complainants will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint and anticipated timeframes. Allegations of suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or possible victims of crime, will be actioned immediately by urgent referral or reporting to the relevant agency.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Informal complaints or suggestions are made verbally and relate to simple and straight forward complaints.

- Have a chat with the educators member concerned.
- Usually such complaints can be resolved on the spot or during the day.
- If the educators member does not have the knowledge or authority to deal with your complaint, the educator will pass on the complaint to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved provider.
- You will be kept informed of the progress of your complaint.

Where an educator believes they will have to share a confidence with another person in order to resolve and issue, or of the nature of a complaint requires that a third party has to be informed in order to meet legislative requirements, they will inform the family of the need prior to any further discussions on the matter.

- The complaint will be documented and any legal requirements in relation to the complaint considered, such as the need to notify regulatory authorities
- The complainant will be asked to provide information regarding how the situation could be rectified to their satisfaction.
- If possible, the problem will be resolved immediately. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised that the issue will be given high priority and dealt with as soon as possible.
- If the issues are complex the complainant will be asked to put their concerns in writing.
- Where mediation is required all parties will have the right to agree to the appointment of the mediator.

Notifiable Complaint

Complaints alleging that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised, or that the law has been breached must be reported by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2) (b)). Written reports must include:

- details of the event or incident
- the name of the person who initially made the complaint
- if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including a medical or incident report (where relevant)
- any other relevant information.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted using the appropriate forms, which can be found on the ACECQA website: www.acecqa.gov.au

Direct Complaints

Families can make a complaint directly to the Regulator Authority where the complaint alleges that:

- The safety, health or wellbeing of a child or children was or is being compromised while that child or children is or are being educated and cared for by the approved education and care service.
- The relevant legislation has been contravened.
- Contact details are available in the family hand book and displayed in the foyer of the service.

Follow-up and Review

Each complaint will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement. After the complaint or grievance has been dealt with, we will:

- Analyse the complaint to determine if any policy or procedural changes need to be implemented.
- The Approved Provider will follow through to determine that complaints and grievances have been successfully resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Families will be contacted to determine if they were satisfied with the way the issue was resolved, and educators' will be consulted about the outcome from an operational viewpoint.

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