



Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Policy | NQS6



Policy Statement

At Goodstart Early Learning (Goodstart), children are at the heart of everything we do. Families are our primary partners in this mission. We recognise that every child belongs within their family, cultural group, neighbourhood, and wider community. We believe that a child's earliest development and learning occur through their relationships, especially with their family, who are their first and most influential educators. Goodstart is committed to fostering respectful and collaborative relationships with families and communities, working together to create a positive environment for our children - both where they live and where they learn - to actively promote their wellbeing, learning, and development.

We believe that effective collaboration with families and communities enhances the quality of care and education we provide. We are dedicated to creating a welcoming environment where families and communities are encouraged to participate actively in the life of each centre.

This policy outlines our commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships with families and communities to support the holistic development and wellbeing of children in our care. We recognise the vital role that families and communities play in the education and development of children and aim to build strong, respectful, and inclusive relationships.

What does this policy apply to?

- ▶ **Goodstart's vision**
- ▶ **Family rights and responsibilities**
- ▶ **Family involvement**
- ▶ **Information for families**
- ▶ **Connecting with our communities**
- ▶ **Enrolment, orientation and transition**
- ▶ **Children's comfort, safety and wellbeing**
- ▶ **Children's belongings**
- ▶ **Family complaints**
- ▶ **Use of photographic images**

Principles of our collaborative partnership with families and communities

1. Respect and inclusivity:
 - Recognise and respect the diversity of families and communities.
 - Foster an inclusive environment that values the cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds of all families.
2. Communication:
 - Ensure open, honest, and effective communication with families.
 - Provide regular updates on children's progress and centre activities.
 - Use a variety of communication methods to meet the diverse needs of families.
3. Family engagement:
 - Encourage families to participate in centre activities, events, and decision-making processes.
 - Provide opportunities for families to share their skills, knowledge, and cultural heritage with the centre.
 - Respect and support family decisions regarding their children's care and education.

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CONTENT OWNER	Head of Centre Services		DOCUMENT OWNER	Katherine Lucas, National Family Marketing Lead	
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4. Community connections:

- o Build and maintain strong links with local community organizations, services, and resources.
- o - Collaborate with community partners to enhance learning opportunities and support services for children and families.
- o Participate in community events and activities to promote the centre and build community awareness.

5. Shared responsibility:

- o Acknowledge that families are the first and most influential educators of their children.
- o Work in partnership with families to support their children's learning and development.
- o Encourage families to share their expectations and aspirations for their children.

Our vision, purpose, and guiding principles

Children are central to everything we do. We understand the power of early learning – it's why Goodstart makes every moment count for the children attending our centres.

Our Vision is for Australia's children to have the best possible start in life.

Our Purpose is to ensure children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life.

Our Guiding Principles:

- Children are central to everything we do.
- Our People make the difference.
- Families are our primary partner.
- Being a valued member of each unique community.

Rights and responsibilities of families

Goodstart is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for our children, staff, and families at every centre. Our educators are responsible for ensuring that practices within the centre respect the rights and responsibilities of families.

At Goodstart, families are expected to always maintain control of their behaviour and to conduct themselves in a lawful, safe, and responsible manner that respects the rights of others. Families must use appropriate language and speech volume. Unacceptable behaviours towards any person include all forms of bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, actions that put others at risk of harm, or threats of any kind.

Upon enrolment, families agree to the Family Rights and Responsibilities outlined in the Enrolment Form. If families fail to comply with these responsibilities, Goodstart may exclude them from the centre.

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Involvement of families

Goodstart is dedicated to fostering genuine collaborative relationships between families and early childhood professionals. We value each other's knowledge of the children, communicate openly and respectfully, share insights, and engage in shared decision-making. We encourage families to be involved in the centre, provide input into learning programs, spend time with our educators, and contribute their skills and resources to enhance children's wellbeing, learning, and development.

Goodstart commits to hold regular meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and informal conversations with families. We use digital applications (e.g., Storypark), newsletters, emails, SMS, social media, and notice boards to share information.

Goodstart will facilitate translation and interpretation services where necessary.

Information for families

To support collaborative partnerships with families, Goodstart will ensure that current and easily understood information is readily available and effectively communicated about our services. This includes information on policies and procedures, programs and their child's participation, the centre's involvement in the National Quality Framework, and community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

Connecting with community

Goodstart is dedicated to ensuring that children's learning at our centre is integrated and interconnected with their learning at home and in the community. We believe that children's learning and wellbeing are enhanced when the centre, families, community organisations, and individuals develop links, share information, and collaborate. We encourage families to build supportive relationships with one another, and our educators, to understand and provide connections to community services that will support our families.

We host regular family-friendly events and workshops on relevant topics.

Enrolment, orientation and transition

Goodstart actively communicates with families to ensure effective orientation when they first join our centre and when they transition to new learning environments. During enrolment, orientation, and transitions, information about children, their routines, and belongings is exchanged between educators and families to support continuity of learning and care between the child's home, the centre, and other community services, tailored to meet the individual needs of each child and family. We encourage families to spend time at the centre, participate in orientation and information sessions, ask questions, and share as much information with our educators as possible.

Comfort, safety and wellbeing of children

Goodstart prioritises children's comfort, safety, and protection throughout their participation in our program, whether indoors or outdoors, during rest and sleep, when storing and administering medication, and when preparing and storing food. We encourage families to collaborate with us to meet each child's specific dietary, medical, sun protection, and other safety needs.

Belongings of children

Goodstart fosters a strong sense of identity in children by encouraging them to incorporate their family's unique ways of being into our early childhood program. We recognise that children's personal belongings help them feel secure, confident, and connected to familiar people and places. We invite families to bring their children's familiar items to the centre and will collaborate with children and families to care for these belongings.

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Feedback from families

Families are actively encouraged to provide feedback to Goodstart. We will promptly address any concerns to resolve issues and maintain strong relationships. Goodstart offers various avenues for families to provide feedback:

- In person, by speaking directly with the Centre Director
- By phoning the Family Support Team
- Through our regular Family Feedback Survey
- By writing to the Family Support Team at Goodstart Early Learning, PO Box 10120, Adelaide Street, QLD 4000

Feedback and concerns are valuable for enhancing the learning and care we provide to children and families. All Goodstart staff respect the privacy of families when addressing any concerns and commits to providing a comfortable space for families to share their thoughts and concerns.

Goodstart ensures that any necessary notifications about complaints and incidents are made to the relevant regulatory authorities.

Photographic images and video recordings

To protect the privacy of all children, families, and staff at Goodstart, strict measures are in place regarding engagement and taking of photographic images or video recordings facilitated by the organisation. All photographs and video recordings will be undertaken in a manner that is respectful and maintains the integrity of the original image. Goodstart will only use and store photographic images of children according to the permission granted by families in their completed enrolment documentation or permission specifically sought for media and marketing purposes.

Goodstart has implemented stringent measures to protect the privacy of all children, families, and staff concerning the engagement and capturing of photographic images or video recordings. All photographs and video recordings will be conducted with respect and will preserve the integrity of the original image. Goodstart will utilise and retain photographic images of children solely in accordance with permissions granted by families in their completed enrolment documents or specifically sought permissions for media and marketing purposes.

Responsibilities

This procedure is to be implemented by: All Goodstart Staff

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