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Background

Strong partnerships between child-educator and educator-family are more likely to achieve improved outcomes for children in early childhood (DWEER, 2009). Strong educator-educator partnerships may lead to improved outcomes for children but has been subject to less research. The Australian National Quality Standard (NQS), Quality Area 4 recognises the value of educator-educator partnerships by requiring ‘educators, co-ordinators and staff members to work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and to improve practice and relationships’ (ACECQA 2017). Lumsden (2005) and Bruder (2010) showed that there is a relationship between educator partnerships and best practice, thus affecting the quality of the educational program delivered and potential educational outcomes. Woodruff and O’Brien (2005) and Dalll (2008), found that many educators believed educator partnerships were necessary to meet this aim. Further research is needed to test the hypothesis that strong educator-educator partnerships deliver better educational outcomes for children.

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Methodology

Applying an action research method at one metropolitan early learning service in Australia, educators were invited to participate in an online survey and focus group to discover educators perspectives on:

- Staff ratios
- whether there was a positive professional culture and learning community among educators
- the impact of these two factors on the quality of education delivered to children in the service.

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Next Steps

Adopting an “all for one and one for all” approach offers the opportunity to develop a mutually respectful and supportive culture for educators.

Research has shown that such a culture will help to improve best practice for the children being taught (Lumsden, 2005; Bruder, 2010).

Developing a supportive professional culture that celebrates achievement and focuses on supporting better learning outcomes for children can be achieved by:

- Improving staff meetings to create time for team activities with opportunity to boost encouragement
- Professional development days for centre educators
- Develop a set of values with identified “above the line” and “below the line” behaviours
- Develop a one-for-one mentorship program for educators



“I think everyone needs to be respectful of the needs of others and support each other”

References

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Results

Educators agreed that the ‘centre has a good team work environment’ (58%)

and ‘has children as their first priority when it comes to staffing arrangements’ (58%)

Educators agreed (58%) or strongly agreed (8%) that ‘the centre culture is positive and uplifting’



Understanding Context

Educator Relationships



Educators disagreed (42%) or strongly disagreed (8%) that relationships between colleagues at the centre are ‘reciprocal and respectful’



Educators disagreed (75%) that there was ‘very little tension’ between educators at the centre



Educators disagreed (50%) or strongly disagreed (25%) that ‘negative gossip and language towards other educators is uncommon’

Educators agreed (42%) that they felt ‘encouraged’ by their colleagues.

Educators agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (8%) that they felt their ‘work was appreciated’ by their colleagues

Educators agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (8%) that they felt they were ‘supported’ by their colleagues



Learning Communities

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Conclusion

Using “all for one and one for all” approach as the cornerstone through the implementation of currently available human resource tools, a mutually respectful, affirming and supportive culture can be achieved among educators, supporting higher quality learning outcomes for children.