



Communication with Families

Aim

To build genuine partnerships with families where Educators and Parents value each other's roles and communicate freely and respectfully to enhance the child's experience at The Rumpus Room.

Explanation

At The Rumpus Room, we believe that it is important to have great communication with families to ensure that we are providing the best care possible for each child. We believe this is essential in supporting each child's growth and development.

We want to treat each family with love and respect and show grace especially in difficult situations. This means taking time for families to feel heard and connected.

We understand the value of following up conversations with brief email messages to confirm that a parent's communication has been "heard" and to provide a paper trail of messages.

We understand that some words may "trigger" responses for families that were not intended so care will be taken to use non emotive words.

We also understand that documents which are not signed by both parties (educators and families) will not hold up in a court situation.

We understand English may not be the first language for all of our families and that written communication may not be most suitable for all families so we will endeavour to provide alternatives such as translated text or visual or auditory versions as required, with a clear trail of communication recorded appropriately.

Implementation

- Centre policies are available to families on our website at www.therumpusroom.com.au/policies.
- Ideally we will know the preferred method of communication for each of our families and consider using that form whenever possible.
- We understand written communications do not replace face to face conversations with families.
- Make time for families to feel heard and connected.
- Verbal conversations will be followed up with a brief email confirming the conversation to ensure families have felt heard and so that the details of the



communication can be recorded. Eg It was lovely speaking with you this morningthen write the points that were shared and asking the parent to agree.

- In cases such as behavior, delays or diagnosis you must make an appointment with the family giving them a reason for the meeting.
- Make sure the actual message is communicated. Email following discussions / meetings to clarify understanding of what was discussed. Ask for feedback to check message received.
- All conversations / meetings are to be documented and signed and agreed by both parties that the information is accurate and understood.
- There are 2 forms to be used to record and communicate about children's behaviours

1) Behavior Incident Record from within the "Interactions with Children including Behaviour Management" policy.

2) Unsafe Behaviour Incident form from "Temporary Separation of a child from the Early Learning Service" Policy.

- In many instances Individual Learning and or Guidance plans should be written for children or a group. These may take the forms of an
 - Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P developed with parents and therapists and signed by all),
 - Room based Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP developed with Inclusion Support Program (ISP),
 - Individual Behaviour Management Plan (developed with the family and signed by all - See Interactions with Children including Behaviour Management" policy.)

These plans should be part of regular ongoing communication or updates with families.

Plans should be followed even at times of great pressure

- *Storypark and emails don't replace face to face conversations.

We have developed the following ways of communicating with families:

- **Verbal communication:** Educators and families discuss the child, the child's day and any other important information.



- **Kiosk Sign in Record:** Records child attendance at the Centre. Also used to communicate messages to families, e.g. please see Educators or collect clothes from bucket in bathroom.
- **Incident, injury, illness and medication forms:** Developed to assist families and educators when communicating the urgent needs of every child or an incident that may have occurred (refer to: medication, incident/injury and Illness policies for further information).
- **Daily Meal Records:** are used to record each child's (Under 3 years) consumption at morning or afternoon tea. In 0-3 areas sleep/rest times, bottle consumption/times, and any other messages are also recorded.
- **Nappy change and toileting records:** Are made, in 0-3 years areas, to record when every child has had their nappy changed or has used the toileting facilities. It is used to communicate wet nappies, bowel movements, & toileting use throughout the day.
- **Reflections:** Staff evaluate the day, planned experiences the children have appeared to enjoy and any spontaneous experiences that have been implemented. Photos are added to assist in giving parents and guardians an insight as to what their child has learned and participated through their day. Photos may also scroll on the screens in each room.
- **Programs:** The weekly/monthly program is displayed in each room and for the outdoor area in a physical form or on Storypark. This is to ensure that parents and guardians can see what is happening in the room and any experiences that may be relevant to their child's development. The daily publishing of *Storypark, Instagram and Facebook gives families immediate feedback about the activities and learning their child has been engaged in or provided with, during the day. Parents are encouraged to write their comments on the weekly program. Educators are encouraged to pose questions about the program sections to aid understanding of the process for families.
- **Developmental portfolios** The tool *Storypark allows 2-way communication between educators and family about the child's development and the milestones that have been accomplished. Families can access their child's online portfolio at any time. It is still available after leaving the Service.



- **Two summative assessments (with a feedback form) are provided to families annually at Darling street. At Chatham street, it is quarterly.** These are published on *Storypark and/or a paper copy is handed to families. Families are asked to complete a feedback form after reading the document.
A NSW **Transition to School Statement** may be provided instead of Summative Assessment for children who will soon attend school.
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/working-in-early-childhood-education/transition-to-school/T2S-Statement-interactive-form-2018.pdf>
- **Identifying children's goals.** Families are asked in many ways to inform the Services of the goals they have for their children's learning including:
Surveys, informal conversations, meetings, Enrolment Form, annual update forms. Older children can nominate their own goals eg selecting a picture from 6 or 8 provided pictures identifying what they'd like to learn this year.
The service may have a set of Room Goals which are published on *Storypark.
The Early Years Learning Framework provides 5 Outcomes with sub statements which form the curriculum for any early childhood learning centre.
Children and parents are encouraged to know what their child's goals are and to be able to talk about the learning that has occurred.
- **Parent and educator interviews:** Parent and guardians are welcome to speak with staff at most times. If dedicated time is required, Parents are asked to book an appointment to meet with educators when they are not required to be on duty. This might be to discuss developmental goals or discuss their child's developmental progress in detail.
- **Notices:** Are displayed throughout the Centre or sent via email to inform parents and guardians of any upcoming events, or any other information that is required.
- **Email:** Storypark, Owna and an email register are used to inform families of upcoming events, account statements, reported cases of illnesses, and any other required information.
- **Telephone system:** The Centre has a telephone system to allow parents and carers to call each other throughout the day. Parents and guardians are encouraged to call throughout the day to see how their child is. Calls will be received in Reception and



only transferred to the Educators in the child's room in exceptional circumstances as staff are attending to the needs of the children

- **Parent Resources:** General information and publications of interest to parents will be located in the entry foyer and/or on our website
- **Communicating with families with culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds:** The Rumpus Room is blessed to have some staff who speak multiple languages amongst its team of staff who may be able to help. Where needed, The Rumpus Room will make all efforts to obtain information required by the family to be translated through an interpreter or into written form of the required language (Interpreting Services (TIS National) Ph:131 450).
- **Communicating with families where written communication is not appropriate.** The centre will endeavour to be inclusive of all needs, so will consider auditory or visual (eg photos) communication trails as required and will seek specialist advice when needed to achieve this.
- **Social Media such as Facebook or Instagram**

Parents are invited to LIKE the Facebook or Instagram pages and the relevant staff who oversee, will add updates regularly. Permission for children should be checked to ensure the family has allowed pictures for marketing purposes, a list of those who do not give this permission, should be updated regularly and be kept by the staff who upload. The Photos should show children engaging in learning or socialisation moments and not be staged photographs unless it is to publicise an upcoming event or learning area. Relevant information should be attached. **Never mention the children by name.** Other visitors or professionals or adults in photos should be asked for permission to share their image. Short film clips are to be clear and not overly noisy as it is hard to watch.

At no time should these images bring about any type of disrespect or disrepute on the company.
- **Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise** to enhance the Centre's program. This may be through contributing ideas for the daily program, sharing a particular skill or interest with staff and / or children, reviewing and commenting on Policies, assisting with gardens and natural environments, collecting resources etc.



Storypark. Is an online communication tool which facilitates easy and immediate communication between the centre's management, and families. Upon enrolment, families are invited to join *Storypark via an email request. When accepted the child's file is activated to receive daily reports as well as detailed learning observations. While the daily reports go to all families and are therefore of a general nature, the detailed individual learning reports just go to the child's direct contacts. The family nominates who is able access their child's file by inviting them from their home page. These contacts can also participate in the communication flow and may upload photos and comments and be part of the learning community.

The child's goals, from the family, from the child, from the educator, are added to their page. Observations link to the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework as well as to the centre's Philosophy and the Room Goals.

*Storypark is charged per current user. When a family leave the centre the centre will "export the child's file and save it to a Centre based storage device" and reallocate that space to another enrolment and it is recommended that the child's file is downloaded and saved to (external hard drive or google) as a record to meet Regulatory requirements so that it be available for 3 years.

Once removed the child's profile will sit under your Removed children's tab. **They will remain there indefinitely or until the parent decides to delete their profile (in which case you would receive an email).**

So long as the parent has accepted the invitation to their child's profile, they have free access to that for as long as they want. That means that they can continue to access and add content, even after their child has left your service and been removed from your Children's page. If a child attends another Service it is possible to invite the other service to *Storypark so that each Centre can see the child's progress. Likewise therapists can be invited by the family to be able to access the child's file.

Related Policies

Interactions with Children and Behaviour Management

Inclusion and Cultural Diversity

The Program



Enrolment

Temporary Separation of a Child from the Early Childhood Service

Complaints Policy for Parents

This policy links to the following NQS:

National Quality Standards: 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.1, 6.2.2,

See Appendix 1 – National Law (section) and National Regulations (regulation)

