

This newsletter focuses on partnerships between families and educators. You may find the ideas useful for working with your child's doctor, maternal and child health nurse and other professionals.

Children do well – they thrive – when the important adults in their lives work together.

Think of yourself and the educators you deal with as being on the same team – both supporting your child.

What is a partnership?

A partnership is a relationship.

In a partnership, both of you share a focus on your child's learning and development. Educators need to know what you know and care about. You need to know what they know. Together you make the best choices for your child.

Partnerships are more than formal meetings and agreements. Every time you and your child's educator share information, ask questions and listen to each other you are working in partnership.

Partnerships require mutual respect – one party is not more important than the other. If there is blaming, judging or criticising you don't have a partnership.

Parents know their children and educators really appreciate you sharing information about your child and the family with them.

Imagine that your child has just started at an early childhood centre or family day care service and they are upset each time you leave during the first week. With your child's educator you explore ideas about how to make this easier for your child. Together you decide that your child will bring a special toy or photo from home and that you will have another chat in a few days' time to follow up. You have acted as partners – both of you sharing and valuing each other's expert knowledge.

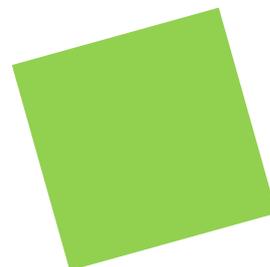
As you can see, a partnership is more complex than being involved on the social committee or helping out on excursions (important as those roles are)

What does this mean for me?

- Free flowing and open communication is critical. Don't wait for a formal meeting to give information or ask questions. Get to know your

child's educator so that you feel comfortable talking with them. This could be as simple as asking 'How is James settling in?' when you collect your child.

- Talk to your child's educator about what's happening in your child's life. Your child might have physical needs (being tired after a restless night), emotional needs (confused by the death of a family pet), social needs (finding it hard to join in with other children) or new achievements (sleeping through the night) or new interests that the educator could focus on.
- You can expect that your child's educator will listen to you and respect what you have to say. They will recognise that you are your child's first and most important teacher. They will also recognise that your child and family are unique and that you have valuable information and perspectives to share.
- In turn, you will recognise that educators have valuable insight



into your child's abilities, interests, likes and dislikes. Listen to their viewpoints, just as they listen to yours.

- Most services will be able to arrange an interpreter if needed.
- Being a parent or carer is rewarding, but can sometimes be hard. If you are facing challenges, ask your child's educator if they can suggest ideas or know of anyone who can help. They can support you with information about other services in the community.

Related links

- [Parenting Research Centre](#) – Australia's only non-profit research and development organisation with an exclusive focus on parenting

You may also like to read

You may also like to read other titles in this series:

- **Courageous conversations:** talking to your child's educator

Other related newsletters can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au

