

Childcare

VOL 11 NO 4 DECEMBER 2008

and Children's Health

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS



Partnerships Between Families and Carers

Many carers are recognising the value of working in partnerships with families – and the positive effect this can have on children and families. A partnership involves sharing information and negotiating experiences for children. Partnerships between carers and families require open communication about and for the child. The child's wellbeing and healthy development is the shared goal of the partnership.

Why are partnerships valuable?

Carer-family partnerships benefit children, families and carers.

Children benefit because:

- there can be more continuity and consistency between their home and care environments
- carers know the child better, so planning meets each child's individual needs, strengths and interests
- they gain a sense of satisfaction and security from observing important people in their lives interacting and communicating in positive and friendly ways
- potential or actual problems and concerns can be identified sooner.

Families benefit because:

- they have a voice that is heard and valued
- opportunities are available to discuss their child's progress and to let carers know what is important to them about their child's experience
- family and child strengths are identified and families are respected.

Carers gain a greater understanding of the child in the context of their family, culture and community.

Making Partnerships happen

Partnerships don't just happen: they require on-going work and commitment from both parties, they work best when there is open, respectful communication and clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Carers can help to develop partnerships by providing opportunities for families to share information about their child and information about the service. Families should also be offered opportunities to share their ideas, concerns and goals for their child. In this way, families should be made welcome to contribute their expertise about their child and participate in planning their child's care experiences.

Families can help to develop partnerships with *carers* by:

- sharing information, concerns, ideas and goals for and about their child
- regarding the care of their child as a shared responsibility, with carers and families each contributing their skills, experience and expertise
- accessing information provided by carers
- taking up invitations from carers to be involved – including contributing to decision making, where possible.

Communication involves both talking and listening – for both the carer and the child's family.

AN INITIATIVE OF



The Royal Children's
Hospital Melbourne

SUPPORTED BY AN
EDUCATIONAL GRANT FROM



SUPPORTED BY THE
NATIONAL CHILDCARE
ACCREDITATION COUNCIL



SUPPORTED BY



Australian Government
Department of Families,
Community Services and
Indigenous Affairs