
Dawson Street Childcare Co-Operative Policy Manual

Policy on Parent Participation

1. Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Dawson Street Childcare Co-Operative (DSCCC) Management Committee (MC) meeting on 28 August 2019.

2. Review Date

This policy shall be reviewed in July 2022.

3. Policy Statement

Values

This Centre is committed to:

- Promoting and providing opportunities for parents/guardians to participate in program delivery, maintenance, administration and management of the Centre.
- Recognising parents/guardians are the first and continuing carers and educators of their children.
- Listening to parents'/guardians' knowledge of their child to ensure the program provided is responsive to the individual needs of each child.
- Fostering a spirit of cooperation between the parents/guardians of the children attending the Centre, the staff and the Management Committee (MC).
- Providing information through newsletters, general meetings, emails and discussions with staff.
- Compliance with all funding and legislative requirements.
- Providing an environment that is sensitive to the cultural and social background of families attending the Centre.

While the Centre acknowledges parent/guardian access and involvement is an integral part of the operation of the Centre, the staff and the MC's duty of care to the children is of prime consideration and it will take precedence over parents'/guardians' participation in the program if this is deemed to place children at risk.

Purpose

This policy formalises the importance of an active relationship between parents/guardians and staff at the Centre, with the aim of creating a strong and supportive community. This policy outlines how parents and guardians can be involved in the Centre. DSCCC is a cooperative requiring participation from all members of the community that use it. This policy also explains the role of the parent participation levy.

4. Scope

This policy applies to parents/guardians, the MC, staff and volunteers participating in the Centre.

5. Background and legislation

Centres in receipt of kindergarten funding from the Department of Education and Training are required to:

- create a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment
- support families and children experiencing vulnerability to establish consistent attendance
- improve access for children experiencing vulnerability
- support children with additional needs and encourage their ongoing participation

Dawson Street Childcare Co-Operative Policy Manual

- undertake training and utilise resources for supporting children with additional needs
- support the cultural inclusion and consistent attendance of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families and children
- support the cultural inclusion and consistent attendance of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children experiencing disability can access education on the same basis as children without disabilities.

(DET, *Kindergarten Funding Guide 2016*)

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework advances all children's learning and development from birth to eight years. It does this by supporting all early childhood professionals to work together and with families to achieve positive outcomes for all children.

Legislation

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 96, 99, 102, 160, 161, 168(2)(m), 170*
- *Co-operatives National Law Application Act 2013*
- *Co-operatives National Law (Victoria) Local Regulations 2014*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 amended 2011*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 amended 2012*
- *Family Law Act 1995 amended 2011*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)* □ *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

6. Definitions

DET: Department of Educational and Training.

Participation: Involvement in any aspect of the management and planning of the centre, and the delivery of the program.

Proprietor: This includes the owner of the centre and any person who manages or controls the centre. The term proprietor includes the licensee, the primary nominee and the nominee(s) of a licensed centre.

7. Procedures

Parent Participation

Each family is required to contribute 12 hours of work to the Centre each year. The intention of Parent Participation (PP) is to foster the cooperative nature of the centre and to keep fee costs down, by allowing the Centre to avoid paying service providers to undertake the work completed by parents instead.

Parents can meet their participation hours through a combination of:

- undertaking tasks from the jobs board in the Centre foyer
- attending working bees and other nominated events
- undertaking tasks as assigned by the Director/Management Committee
- membership of the Management Committee
- donations to the Centre.

Dawson Street Childcare Co-Operative Policy Manual

Management of Participation & the Participation Levy

- Family's enrolling a child at the Centre for the first time are required to pay a \$150 participation levy, which is refundable when the child leaves the Centre, provided PP hours have been met.
- This levy will be rolled over in subsequent years of attendance if PP requirements of 12 hours per family are met each year.
- If PP requirements are not met in any year the levy for subsequent year(s) will be \$250.
- The levy (either \$150 or \$250 depending on the most recent amount paid) will be refunded once the family's last child leaves the Centre, providing the minimum requirement for participation is met each year. A calculation of one hour per month may be used to pro-rata the PP levy. (For example if a child leaves the Centre in August, and eight hours of PP have been provided that year, the family will receive a full levy refund.)
- If a child departs the Centre within the first five months of the year and no PP hours have been contributed, half the levy will be refunded if requested by the family.
- If a child departs the Centre after the end of May in any year and no PP hours have been contributed, the full levy will be forfeited.
- Forfeited levy monies shall be used to support activities at the Centre that would ordinarily have been undertaken through parent participation, such as the repair of equipment, books and toys, maintenance, gardening and so on.

Every effort will be made to encourage parent participation and avoid families forfeiting the levy.

To this end the MC parent liaison officer will:

- Monitor the contribution of parents and their hours (with records kept by the office staff).
- Write a letter to all non-participants in the first week of July to remind them of the participation levy forfeiture if they don't make efforts to meet their hours in the second half of the year and to identify opportunities for participation.
- Conduct an annual inventory of parents' specialist skills to ensure any parent who may be able to help the Centre in various tasks throughout the year are given the opportunity to do so

8. Key Responsibilities and Authorities

Specific responsibilities of the MC parent liaison officer

- Invite parents to nominate special skills or preferred activities on the re-enrolment / new family enrolment forms.
- Resolve any issues arising from the application of the PP policy.
- Confirm the list of non-participants forfeiting the levy with the Director at the end of the year.
- Provide feedback to the MC on difficulties arising with participation so that every effort can be made to ascertain the reason for non-participation and offer remedies.

9. Resources and Support

Related Documents

- DET, Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria

10. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes set out under Policy Statement, the MC will:

- Provide an annual summary of parent/guardian participation contributions.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parent/guardian survey.
- Take into account feedback from staff and parents/guardians on the policy.

Dawson Street Childcare Co-Operative Policy Manual

- Monitor complaints in relation to participation conducted at the service.

Date Reviewed	Details of Changes (if any)	Date of Next Review
August 2019	Minor changes only	July 2022
May 2014	Increase of subsequent year levy to \$250; insertion of clause regarding pro-rata refunds if a child leaves the Centre before the end of a year.	May 2018
May 2011	Update references to legislation, regulation and guidelines.	May 2013
May 2009	Removal of sub-committees; insertion of jobs board; insertion of requirement for parents to complete 12 hours a year	May 2011