



Hazeldene Family Centre

Parental Engagement and Involvement Policy

Rationale

Parental and family engagement is a key factor in helping all children achieve the highest standards whilst reducing inequity and closing the attainment gap.

Family learning encourages family members to learn together, fostering positive attitudes to lifelong learning.

National Improvement Framework: Drivers of Improvement, Scottish Government 2017

In Hazeldene Family Centre, we believe that when parents are involved in the life and work of the family centre, they help to:

- Create a safe, healthy, caring and achieving environment.
- Develop close relationships so that together we can enjoy learning experiences in an atmosphere in which we feel valued, supported, confident and secure
- Nurture a sense of belonging within our community
- Educate the whole child by sharing knowledge and understanding of all aspects of their development
- Maintain an environment which promotes equality and celebrates diversity
- Develop within each child positive attitudes of respect for themselves, others and the environment.

We encourage and welcome all forms of parental engagement and involvement in the work and life of Hazeldene Family Centre. We recognise the added value and benefits that participation can bring to the centre and to parents and children. The following policy outlines our commitment to parental participation and outlines how this will be fostered effectively.

Throughout this policy the term '*parents*' is used to include all main caregivers.

1. Inclusion

We adhere to a policy of equal opportunities and will not discriminate against parental participation and volunteer activity on the basis of age, gender, disability, ethnicity or home language. We will endeavour to remove all barriers to participation by supporting parents and volunteers appropriately for example by using translators

when necessary at meetings with parents, ensuring disabled access and use of appropriate approaches to seek children's views.

Consideration will be given to meeting and appointment times for parents in order to accommodate work patterns and home circumstances. Information regarding participation opportunities, meeting times, parents' groups, parental updates etc. will be distributed in a variety of ways (including newsletter; text messages with translation where appropriate; poster, word of mouth and Twitter) to ensure all parents have the same opportunities. Staff will be welcoming, encouraging and respectful towards parents at all times in order to maximise parental involvement.

2. Forms of Participation

The term parental involvement relates to the involvement of parents and carers in the life and work of the family centre. The term parental engagement most commonly refers to parental and family engagement in their child's learning. This can be in the family centre, at home or in the wider community.

2.1 Parental engagement in their child's learning and development

We acknowledge the parent's role as their child's prime educator and will encourage them to work closely with the family centre to promote their child's learning and development. Parents will be consulted formally on a regular basis about their child's progress through telephone calls; parent meetings and opportunities to share information through their child's learning journal. There will also be daily opportunities for brief informal exchanges of information.

Parents are encouraged to Stay and Play, spending time in the playroom or garden with their child (where national guidelines and work or home circumstances permit). Parents will be kept fully informed regarding planning for their child's learning and development and will be invited to contribute. This may include sharing information about their child's interests at home, completing Learning Steps in their child's journals to celebrate their successes and helping to plan their next steps in learning. Parents receive a copy of each backdrop (seasonal) plan for learning together with ideas for supporting their child's learning at home and in the local community.

A wide range of home learning ideas is shared on our website, with links to other online learning. Ideas for learning at home and in the community are also shared via Twitter.

We have a wide range of home learning resources which can be borrowed (subject to national guidance during the COVID pandemic). Parents may help their child to choose a book as often as they wish from our home reading library; borrow nursery rhyme packs or home learning bags with a variety of games to support literacy and numeracy.

Parental permission will be sought as appropriate for any involvement with other agencies (e.g. speech therapy or a blended place with a funded provider). Parents will be invited and encouraged to attend any consultation/planning and review meetings for their child and will receive a copy of the minutes.

2.2 Using personal and professional skills

We actively encourage parental involvement in the life and work of the family centre and welcome the contributions parents can bring through their personal or professional skills, knowledge and interests. When a child enrolls, parents are invited to complete a form indicating areas they would like to be involved in, any skills they can contribute and when they are available. This can include volunteering opportunities such as talking with children about their job; leading a music or art activity; sharing information about cultural celebrations; helping to develop skills such as sewing; reading a story in another language or accompanying children on outings.

Contributions of practical skills that enhance the family centre environment and promote a sense of community are also encouraged and welcomed (e.g. helping to assemble new equipment; helping children to maintain bikes; gardening or accompanying the children on local litter walks).

2.3 Influencing the work and life of the setting

Parental involvement may include activities such as representation in the development or review of policies, improvement plans and key decisions. When their child enrolls in the family centre, parents are invited to join the Parent Fundraising Group which organises several events throughout the year.

Through participation in the Parents' Group, Tea and Talk sessions and consultations via questionnaires we invite parents to express their views and influence policies and events within the family centre. Parents' views are sought on the quality of the education and care their child receives and the way the family centre is run. Careful consideration of parental questionnaires enables us to plan next steps for improvement and make judgements about the quality of the service we are providing. We also take account of views expressed to staff by parents on a more informal basis. This helps us to improve our service and share successes as a staff team.

2.4 Developing personal skills

Staff within our setting will seek to share their expertise in childcare with parents who wish to increase their own knowledge and skills. Our Depute Head of Centre is a PoPP Expert (Psychology of Parenting Project) and regularly delivers workshops or individual support for families. We respond to parents' interests where possible by providing workshops on a variety of topics (e.g. Curriculum Open Nights; supporting your child's Numeracy development; Digital Learning; Science workshops to share ideas for family learning). Where staffing ratios allow, we encourage staff and parents to participate in learning activities together, sharing the learning.

2.5 Regular Volunteers

On occasion parents or other members of the community may wish to take up a more regular or formal role within the family centre (e.g. a parent may come into the setting on a weekly basis to help in the creative area or read stories to the children).

These roles will be clearly defined for the volunteers, with expectations set out at the onset and appropriate support and guidance provided. In the case of regular volunteering, the volunteer will require to be registered with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme and will be expected to meet the cost of this.

Volunteers will be carefully screened and vetted and will *never* be left on their own with children. All volunteers will be made aware of key policies within the setting especially Health and Safety, Child Protection, Confidentiality and Infection Control, and will be required to adhere to them. (See Volunteer Policy).

3. Confidentiality

Parents and other volunteers participating in work or activities within the setting will be made aware of the importance of confidentiality and the requirement not to discuss or comment on children other than their own. Staff must be mindful of the need to maintain confidentiality and not discuss children while working with parents/volunteers.

4. Open door policy

Our welcoming and open atmosphere ensures that parents feel a part of the family centre and are able to consult with staff on an informal basis as necessary. Parents will be informed at enrolment that if they have anything they wish to discuss in relation to their child, they can speak to their child's key worker or other playroom staff working directly with their child. Should they wish to speak to the nursery teacher, head teacher or another of the Senior Leadership Team, every effort will be made to accommodate this request immediately or as soon as possible. We welcome suggestions from parents, treat their concerns seriously and are willing to advise them where we can or signpost to other services.

Should a parent wish to express a concern or make a complaint, we ask that they speak in the first instance to the head teacher or Depute Head of Centre so that the issue can be resolved as soon as possible. Parents may also contact East Renfrewshire Council Customer Services and may contact the Care Inspectorate if they are unhappy with the outcome. Parents are entitled to take complaints directly to the Care Inspectorate in the first instance (see Complaints Policy). Staff should be alert to any signs of dissatisfaction with the service that parents may express to them informally and feed this back to the head teacher or Depute Head of Centre so that the issue can be addressed as soon as possible.

Our suggestions and complaints procedure is described in the handbook and on our website. A Suggestions Box is available in the foyer. During the pandemic parents may pass on any suggestions or concerns via the family centre email. Any complaints would be logged and we would work together with parents to reach a solution they are happy with.

Links to local and national policy

East Renfrewshire Council Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy (2018-21)

[https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/187/Parental-engagement-and-involvement-strategy-2018-to-2021/pdf/parental-engagement-and-involvement-strategy.pdf?m=637576319319900000#:~:text=The%20East%20Renfrewshire%20Council%20\(ERC,involvement%20and%20engaged%20in%20their](https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/187/Parental-engagement-and-involvement-strategy-2018-to-2021/pdf/parental-engagement-and-involvement-strategy.pdf?m=637576319319900000#:~:text=The%20East%20Renfrewshire%20Council%20(ERC,involvement%20and%20engaged%20in%20their)

“Learning together” Scotland’s national action plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018 - 2021

<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/783656/action-plan-on-parental-involvement-and-family-learning.pdf>

Engaging parents and families: A toolkit for practitioners

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/engaging-parents-and-families-a-toolkit-for-practitioners>

Health & Social Care Standards My support, My life

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-standards-support-life/>

Volunteer Scotland

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/>

Quality Assurance

The Parental Engagement and Involvement Policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly within the Family Centre’s audit and review process.

First Draft	Date: November 2020
Consultation with Early Years Community	Date: January 2021
Second Draft	Date: September 2021
The policy was reviewed on:	Date:
Due for review on (not more than 3 years):	Date: September 2023

Reviewed
Next Review due