

## 2.24 Children's Participation and Decision-Making Policy

The service has a commitment to ensuring that children can develop a sense of agency through making and influencing decisions that may affect their world. This will be undertaken through children's meetings, surveys, suggestion box, newsletters, noticeboards, or general conversations.

The service respects the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, encouraging children, staff, and families to be collaborators and shared decision makers in the program at our service. We believe that children's views should be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, and that children have the right to freedom of expression through media of their choice.

It is essential that all educators, management, and other stakeholders who make decisions have a clear understanding of the views and wishes of the children to effectively inform the decision-making process.



### Relevant Laws and other Provisions

The laws and other provisions affecting this policy include:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Regulations 2011*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)*
- *UN Convention on the rights of the Child*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice; Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children*
- *Policies: 2.1 – Respect for Children, 2.11 – Including children with Special/Additional Needs, 2.19 – Children's Media Viewing, 2.23 – Interactions with Children, 3.1 – Educational Program Planning, 3.3 – Educators Practice, 3.4 – Homework, 3.5 – Excursions, 3.7 – Physical Activity, 3.9 – Creative and Expressive Arts, 3.13 – Water Activities and Safety, 3.15 – Cooking with Children, 4.7 – Keeping of animals, 5.6 – Menu Development, 8.1 – Role and Expectations of Educators, 8.9 – Employee Code of Conduct, 9.3 – Communication with Families, 10.8 – Information Handling (Privacy and Confidentiality).*



### Procedures

Involving children in the decision-making process of the service contributes to the learning outcomes for children as articulated in the 'My Time, Our Place': Learning Framework for School Age Care in Australia.

#### **The Service will:**

- Ensure children are consulted about the environment and program in which they participate.
- Ensure different communication strategies of children, such as body language, facial expression, the manipulation of objects and/or conversation are used to support child-initiated activities and programs.
- Ensure children participate in decision making processes;

- Facilitate children's meetings, recording and documenting their conversations and ideas in a children's meeting book. Educators or other children shall act as a scribe for what children say, making notes for further follow up; and
- Ensure children's views are actively sought and discussed with their responses and perspectives planned into the program with respect and authenticity.

**Educators will:**

- Ensure child-initiated, shared-decision making happens across all aspects of the service;
- Empower children to access and learn from their own life experiences as well as those of their peers and educators around them;
- Be active listeners, observers, scribes and sounding boards for children;
- Respect the age and stage of development of the children during decision making. Educators may use various levels of participation as appropriate:
  - Child initiated, shared decision making with educators
  - Child initiated and directed – educators provide a supportive role; and
  - Educator initiated, shared decision making with children.
- Consult children about how their input will be used and advised of the outcomes of the decisions made; and
- Ensure children have a voice in their level of participation including:
  - Areas of interest they would like to explore.
  - Where and how they would like to play, with others, or alone.
  - What they would like to use;
  - The educators with whom they feel comfortable and secure.
  - When and what they would like to eat; and
  - How they prefer to sleep or rest.

DATE DEVELOPED	DATE RATIFIED	DATE REVIEWED	DATE RATIFIED
August 2018	August 2018	May 2021	May 2021
		FEB 2022	July 2022