

Tip sheet from the series

Getting started in early childhood education and care

What to expect

Once you have chosen an early childhood education and care service that suits your family's needs, you need to be aware of your rights and responsibilities as a user of these services in Queensland.

The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care is responsible for the licensing and monitoring of early childhood education and care services in Queensland.

In a licensed service, the licensee of a service has certain responsibilities to children and families which are outlined in the Child Care Act 2002 and the Child Care Regulation 2003. Likewise, families who use an early childhood education and care service have responsibilities to the licensee and educators of the service.

Licensees' responsibility to provide safe and suitable care

The *Child Care Act 2002* requires that the licensee of a licensed service must provide the service in a way that is safe and suitable for the provision of care and education.

Measures that a licensee must take to ensure the service is safe and suitable include:

- engaging a sufficient number of suitably qualified educators
- providing and maintaining adequate facilities to conduct the service
- establishing and maintaining appropriate health and hygiene procedures, practices and facilities

- providing and maintaining developmentally appropriate programs for children
- developing and maintaining appropriate safety strategies and emergency procedures in relation to any place where care and education is provided.

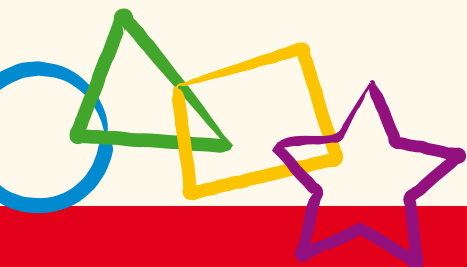
Licensee to provide information to parents

On request, licensees are required to provide parents and carers with written policies which outline the service's practices and procedures. These are usually contained in the parent's handbook.

Appropriate learning opportunities

The licensee must ensure that activities and experiences offered:

- include a balance of indoor and outdoor activities and learning experiences for individual and group activities
- allow for periods when children can rest or sleep as required
- encourage children to make choices
- are flexible and responsive to changes in the children's abilities, interests and skills
- nurture each child's self-esteem, self-reliance and competence





- ensure each child's social, cultural and linguistic background is respected and valued
- reflect an understanding of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and its multicultural heritage.

Parents' and carers' rights and responsibilities in licensed services

Parents and carers have the right to:

- observe activities being provided in the service at all times
- receive information and policies relevant to the service
- receive information about grievance procedures
- have access to records kept on their child
- experience respect for their needs, views and culture
- know about their child's progress

Further information

The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care has developed a series of practical tip sheets for parents, carers and families on topics including: *General parenting, Babies and toddlers, Children 4–12 years and Early childhood education and care services.*

The Office's free, 24-hour Early Childhood Information Service provides families with up-to-date information about local early childhood education and care services, advice on what to look for in a quality service, what to expect as a consumer and how to access support and assistance.

For free tip sheets and information

Freecall 1800 637 711* (24 hrs)

*Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.

Email: ECIS@deta.qld.gov.au

Web: www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood

Early Childhood Education and Care Services Search

Visit the Office's website to locate early childhood education and care services in your area.

- expect that a service will understand their work and other time commitments and find realistic ways to achieve effective communication with them
- be actively involved in decisions that affect their children.

Parents' and carers' responsibilities include:

- paying fees for the provision of care and education
- timely delivery and collection of children
- notification of changes in information recorded about a child
- compliance with relevant health and hygiene policies of the service.

How can I be involved in the service?

Every family has something to offer to enrich the care of all the children in the service. There are many ways parents and carers can participate. Families can be involved in a range of activities at the service, and many services have management or advisory committees, which develop policies and make decisions for the service. Ask the service about how you can be involved.

If you have concerns

Talk to the service and ask for help or advice.

Educators need to know of any concerns you might have about the service so they can address the issue. If you are concerned about the standard of care, and your approaches to educators and licensee are not effective, contact us via our website (www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood) or call the Early Childhood Information Service on 1800 637 711 to speak to an officer who can assist you further.

mychild.gov.au

Helpful information about assistance with fees and other issues is also available at www.mychild.gov.au/.

Disclaimer

The information in this tip sheet is offered as a guide only and should not be treated as an exhaustive statement on the subject.

Other languages

For assistance with other languages call Translating and Interpreting Service National on 131 450 and ask to be connected to 1800 637 711.

National Relay Service

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment you can call through the National Relay Service:

TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1800 637 711

Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1800 637 711.