



National Quality Framework

E-Tips



Have you ever taken a moment to reflect on who leads the philosophy of your service?

Bronwyn Gibbs, the Director from KU Heathcote Preschool was inspired to consider this when she attended the NQF Preparation Working Group for Preschools & Long Day Care Centres in Gynea. Bronwyn began reflecting on what the centre philosophy said about the beliefs of families, educators, children and the community and if this was a true reflection of their service.

Who leads the Philosophy?

Quality Area 4, Standard 4.3 of the National Quality Standard asks:

- ☐ How do we ensure that different views, beliefs and values are reflected in our statement of philosophy or principles?
- ☐ Is this a true reflection of what happens in daily practice?

Here Bronwyn shares the story of KU Heathcote Preschool's journey so far.

What is our centre famous for?

I put some big sheets of paper on the white board at the front door for families to respond to the question "What is our centre famous for?" Only a few responses were received from families using this approach. Meanwhile, the team was provided with the same question and were already onto their second sheet of paper, feeding off each other's thoughts and ideas.

This question was re-worked to "What was important when you started looking for a service?" and, "Now you've been here for a while what do you think is important?" These questions were asked at the Parent Committee meeting where 10 families were in attendance. There was an amazing response which we recorded on big sheets of paper.

What is important for families?

Some things were surprising, "an organised" centre was very important to families. Also, not so surprising, experienced, interested and engaged staff who didn't change all the time, but no mention of qualifications. Natural play spaces and environmental focus were also important factors for families. The thing that surprised me most was no mention at all about education. When they had finished giving me their thoughts, I asked about this and they all said that the relationship their child has with the staff is more important than the education side of things. Families all felt their children learnt through play and "they don't need to know their ABCs to be ready for school, preschool teaches way more than that."

Another thing families felt strongly about was how the philosophy should be written. They felt we, the educators, use early childhood jargon too much and a philosophy needed to be written in everyday language that anyone could read and relate to.

Where to next?

The philosophy is a work in progress so that it is a document that represents everyone. We have already started the conversations with the children to find out what they think is important. We have been asking questions like "What's special about our preschool?" and, "What makes them feel safe at preschool?" We will also be linking with our local primary school as representatives of our community.

I don't think I would have given the 'development' of a centre philosophy this much thought if it hadn't been for our last NQF Preparation Working Group get together so thanks everyone, you've made me think.

Our thanks to Bronwyn for sharing your philosophy journey.