



ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

The parent voice on public education

Minutes

Early Learning Committee Meeting

July 29, 2021, 7.30 pm, online via zoom

Announcements

Registration link for Council's live [online training](#) for P&C's
Financial Review Training for P&Cs 7-9pm, Thursday 21 October

Events

Events provide an opportunity to connect with school communities around a theme and to leverage the exposure and interest.

September 16 [Transition to School Parent Forum](#)

October 5 World Teachers Day, 23-31 [ACT children's week](#)

<p>Council's Early Learning Committee (ELC) was established in 2018 when the <i>Canberra Preschool Society</i> (1943-2018) wound up after extended consultations with the preschool and parent community.</p> <p>ACT Council of Parents and Citizens website EL Early Learning Officer email</p>	Introduction
<p>1. Meeting open Acknowledgement of Country</p>	7.33pm
<p>2. Parent Engagement in early school years Responding to <i>Early Learning Matters Week</i> and the Education Directorate's P&C grant funding for '<i>supporting parent and family engagement</i>'.</p> <p>Discussion about parent association activities for engaging with EL parents and carers.</p>	EL parent reps Resources
<p>Early Learning Parent Representatives Council supports primary school P&Cs to engage a volunteer parent representative (P-2) on their committees. We're creating a range of resources including a customisable Role description template, and social media tile ("Are you our new early learning parent rep?") to download via Canva - a great tool with free options – contact the ELO for assistance.</p> <p>Parent engagement and EL parents Good engagement and school-family partnerships impact children's learning and long-term outcomes. All levels of government are responding to the evidence supporting parent and family engagement in education.</p> <p>At the start of the school education journey, new families interact with the school community from a range of contexts - across the community. These Parents often say they have more time in the early years and are more involved with schooling. Taking time to ensure their children are secure, confident and happy at school.</p>	

This is an opportunity for P&Cs to strengthen and build community. New parents often ask about networking with others and playdate opportunities for children. Connections made in the early years are mutually supportive, affirming and help to process school information, '*those early years are really important for building connections and networks.*'

Barriers to engagement and family networking

Parent associations exploring barriers have cited concerns that volunteers won't have enough time, don't want to overcommit, have work obligations, don't know the other parents, may not understand the value of their contribution or what it might look like.

Sharing networking examples

One P&C organised monthly morning teas in the school library for new parents to meet each other and chat. While Covid has stopped these events, the school also has information sessions at the beginning of each year, providing an opportunity for parents to stay behind after presentations to meet and mingle.

Another P&C partners with the school to hold afterschool playdates. One of the facilitators commented that she felt there was more she could do such as wearing something to identify her as an organiser, providing name tags, and setting up an information table where parents could pick up information, ask questions and share feedback or opt in to class group parent communications.

One school did a tree planting for World Tree Day, planting native plants around the school to enhance the grounds and engage parents (with children), that might never go to a P&C meeting. The P&C raised the money to purchase trees and the children had their own plant to look after.

Another proposal was requesting new parent's feedback on a single communication item such as a page from the preschool handbook or kindergarten info pack (brief request letter and a gift teabag and biscuit).

Covid impact and virtual community

Online options suggested for creating opt in closed communities for parents and carers. For year group or class group parent meetings when required, ie closed Facebook groups. While P&Cs can't own or maintain these networks, they may support or initiate them through providing practice guidelines.

Virtual Challenges

Online activities provide extra challenges including: Getting an account and learning the platform, encouraging people to participate, 2-way communication, encouraging questions, Privacy and legal concerns, and commitment. Look out for our term four workshop on administering closed chat groups.

The Early Learning Committee will continue to explore processes for engaging with parents and encouraging feedback. Council invites you to share details about facilitating parent networks. To discuss your experiences contact Marina, Council's Early Learning Officer, phone m 0401 838 872, email earlylearning@actparents.org.au See Council's [sharing P&C expertise](#)

3. Trial of Preschool OSH (out of school hours care) report summary	Report link																														
<p>The trial was established to address the impact on parents who currently must manage cost and transitions between government preschools and centre-based services. Where families access the free 15 hours per week of preschool but require further hours to meet their working arrangements. This often results in a substantial time and cost burden to families.</p> <p>When schools collaborate with non-government services in an effective model of delivery, children and families experience one continuous service.</p> <p>The OSH trial was held at four ACT preschool sites and involved the OSH service provider working closely with the preschool.</p>																															
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Preschools</th><th>Preschool children enrolled – before school care</th><th>Kindergarten children enrolled – before school care</th><th>Preschool children enrolled – after school care</th><th>Kindergarten children enrolled – after school care</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Palmerston</td><td>14</td><td>0</td><td>30</td><td>35</td></tr> <tr> <td>Duffy</td><td>10</td><td>0</td><td>39</td><td>35</td></tr> <tr> <td>Giralang</td><td>10</td><td>0</td><td>39</td><td>35</td></tr> <tr> <td>Monash</td><td>4</td><td>0</td><td>29</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>38</td><td>0</td><td>137</td><td>105</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Preschools	Preschool children enrolled – before school care	Kindergarten children enrolled – before school care	Preschool children enrolled – after school care	Kindergarten children enrolled – after school care	Palmerston	14	0	30	35	Duffy	10	0	39	35	Giralang	10	0	39	35	Monash	4	0	29	0	Total	38	0	137	105	
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<p>OSH learning framework: Our Time, Our Place Preschool learning framework: Belonging, Being, and Becoming Service providers regulated through ACECQA's National Quality Framework.</p>																															
<p>Participants reported that they felt the trial had a positive impact on their school community and on their relationships between each other. Trial sites developed measures to include children and families in the design and implementation.</p> <p>The trial facilitated improved transitions between the OSHC service and school.</p> <p>COVID-19: OSHC services advised that schools moving to online learning negated the need for OSHC for preschool children, and enrolments ceased for a period in most instances. Services also faced staffing challenges as many of their staff are university students.</p> <p>The trial will be expanded to include Red Hill Primary and Charles Western School. The ELC will continue to monitor the expansion and seek feedback from parents with children participating in the trial preschool osh services.</p>	contact																														
4. P&C Guide to Parent Surveys and Polls	P&C Survey Guide																														
<p>Polls and surveys can inform engagement and capacity building activities, provide feedback on canteens and uniforms, and indicate planning priorities. Obtaining feedback from the school parent community group can be a regular occurrence with minimal imposition on participants.</p>																															

<p>Council are currently developing a P&C guide to parent polls and surveys outlining why and when to conduct a poll or a survey, types of questions, templates, and information about sharing, collating, and using the results.</p> <p>If you can share details about surveys conducted at your P&C please get in touch!</p>	<p>Draft guide for Oct mtg</p>
<p>Early Learning Committee participation</p> <p>It's acknowledged that parents with young children have multiple demands on their time which impacts committee participation. The ELC continues to seek feedback on ways to strengthen the network, provide resources, and collect the voices of EL parents. Feedback is compiled and used to inform activities.</p> <p>Who can nominate for the Early Learning Committee</p> <p>Parents of 3-7yr old children in public education are invited to nominate to represent parents of early learners at their local ACT school and more broadly via the P&C Council.</p>	

Meeting closed 8.35 pm