CASE STUDY

Communication with families

Feedback: mechanisms, review and embedding into practice

SERVICE	Turtle Cove Wandina Early Learning Centre
SERVICE TYPE	Long day care
MEAL PROVISION MODEL	All meals provided on-site
BUSINESS MODEL	Private, for-profit
AGE RANGE	3 months to 4 years
NUMBER OF APPROVED PLACES	59
NUMBER OF STAFF	30
REMOTENESS AREA CLASSIFICATION	Outer regional

LOCATION

Wandina, WA



Background

Turtle Cove Wandina prioritises open communications with families at their service. There are formal moments for communication embedded in their processes, as well as opportunities for those informal, ad hoc conversations that happen throughout the day.

How do you approach feedback to families in your service?

- Feedback is central to our service approach of holistic care.
- Our goal is not only to care for the child, but to care for families as partners in their child's learning and wellbeing journey.
- In line with this, we have embedded practices for seeking feedback about our service so that families feel included, supported, and genuinely valued within our community.

How do you identify areas of feedback?

- We use monthly group observations and identified trends within the learning environment to develop service-wide feedback initiatives.
- When families or educators identify a common area of development, interest, or need across a group of children, we provide:
  - Targeted feedback and information to families
  - This promotes consistency between home and the service

An example

If educators are supporting children to develop independence skills such as using utensils at mealtimes, we may share the following with all families within that age group, based on group observations and reflective practice:

- Observations
- Strategies
- Practical suggestions
- Information relating to:
  - Language development
  - Social skills
  - Sleep routines
  - Self-help skills
  - Wellbeing initiatives

These initiatives strengthen partnerships with families by sharing common goals, promoting consistent approaches, and supporting children's development across both the home and early learning environments.

What mechanisms and approaches do you use (both formal and informal)?

We encourage families to share their perspectives, ideas, concerns, and aspirations for their children, recognising that they are their child's first and most important teachers.

We actively seek family feedback through:

- Formal surveys
- Informal conversations
- Our enrolment and orientation discussions
- Family meetings
- Suggestion opportunities
- Daily communication with educators

We also seek feedback on the following to ensure our practices remain responsive to the needs of our community:

- Specific initiatives
- Events
- Environments
- Service changes

How often do you provide feedback?

- We seek feedback from families through both formal and informal processes that are embedded into our everyday practice.
- By embedding ongoing feedback opportunities, we ensure family perspectives continuously inform decision-making, service improvement, and children's learning experiences.

Informal feedback

- Encouraged daily through conversations at drop-off and pick-up
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Digital communication platform (app)

Formal feedback

- Opportunities provided at least annually through family surveys
- At enrolment
- At orientation
- During transition periods
- At family meetings
- Additional feedback sought following:
  - Significant events
  - Service changes
  - Policy reviews
  - Environment updates
  - New initiatives

How do you review feedback?

Feedback received is reviewed by the leadership team and educators:

- Actions are communicated back to families where appropriate
- This allows family voices to be heard and to influence:
  - Decision-making
  - Service improvements
  - Program development
  - Policy review

How often do you provide feedback beyond orientation?

Feedback is provided to families on an ongoing basis throughout their child's enrolment, rather than only at orientation.

Educators share information daily through:

- Daily conversations
- Learning updates through announcements
- Daily group journal
- Child comments
- Observations and photographs on a mobile communications app.

In addition to daily communication, more focused feedback is provided at key points throughout the year, including:

- When creating and completing observations and developmental assessments.
- During transitions between rooms.
- When educators identify emerging interests, strengths, or areas requiring additional support.
- Following significant milestones or achievements.
- During family meetings, when developing support plans and goal-setting discussions.
- When implementing group initiatives or focus areas across a room.
- Following incidents, injuries, illnesses, or wellbeing concerns.
- During policy reviews, service changes, or quality improvement initiatives where family input is sought.

What are some of the points that are raised during discussions with your team about how often you should provide feedback to families?

Some of the key points raised during these conversations include:

- Ensuring every family receives regular and equitable feedback about their child's learning, development, and wellbeing.
- Finding the balance between the quantity and quality of feedback
  - Ensuring updates are meaningful rather than simply frequent.
- Identifying families who may benefit from more personalised communication or additional support.
- Discussing the most effective methods of communication for different families, including:
  - Face-to-face conversations
  - Digital platforms
  - Phone calls
  - Meetings.
- Reflecting on whether feedback is linked to children's learning outcomes, developmental progress, and individual goals.
- Considering how children's voices and perspectives are represented within feedback shared with families.
- Reviewing family engagement with feedback and exploring strategies to encourage two-way communication.
- Ensuring feedback celebrates children's strengths and achievements while also addressing areas where support may be beneficial.
- Discussing feedback opportunities during key transition periods, significant milestones, or changes in a child's circumstances.
- Reflecting on family feedback and whether current communication practices are meeting the needs and expectations of our community.

These discussions form part of our ongoing reflective practice and commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring our communication with families remains purposeful, collaborative, and centred on positive outcomes for children.

How do you provide specialised feedback, for example if it relates to a support plan?

Specialised feedback is:

- Tailored to the individual child and family
- Provided in a way that respects confidentiality, collaboration, and family preferences.

While the approach may vary depending on each family's needs and circumstances, specialised feedback is routinely shared through scheduled meetings with members of our leadership and educational teams. These meetings provide an opportunity to:

- Discuss progress against goals
- Review strategies outlined within support plans
- Share observations and documentation
- Celebrate achievements
- Collaboratively identify next steps

Families are encouraged to contribute their insights, ask questions, and participate in decision-making to ensure a consistent and holistic approach across home and the service.

Where appropriate, specialised feedback may also be supported through the following methods, ensuring all interest holders are informed and working towards shared outcomes for the child:

- Written summaries
- Communication books
- Emails
- Phone calls
- Collaboration with external professionals

Example of feedback in practice

During reflective discussions, educators identified that many children across the Clownfish Room (3–5 years) were showing an interest in food preparation and developing independence at mealtimes.

Through conversations, observations, and children's choices during play, educators noted that children were frequently pretending to cook, discussing foods they ate at home, and expressing preferences about meals.

Group feedback Initiative

The team decided to implement a mealtime focus centred on:

- Using utensils independently
- Serving themselves appropriate portions
- Participating in cooking experiences
- Developing positive mealtime conversations

The initiative was guided by children's voices. Educators asked children:

- "What foods do you like helping to make?"
- "What would you like to cook?"
- "What foods do you eat with your family?"
- "How do you know when your tummy has 'had enough'?"

Children's responses informed:

- Cooking experiences
- Menu discussions
- Mealtime practices
  - For example, children requested smoothies, vegetable muffins, and homemade pizzas, which were incorporated into the menu.

A group communication was shared with families that included:

- An explanation of the focus, highlighting children's interests and ideas
- Practical suggestions they could try at home, such as:
  - Involving children in meal preparation
  - Offering child-sized utensils
  - Encouraging opportunities for children self-serving their food

Ongoing feedback to families

Throughout the term, educators provided regular feedback through:

- Daily conversations at pick-up
- Learning stories documenting cooking experiences
- Photographs of children preparing fruit platters and baking muffins
- Weekly updates highlighting children's progress and engagement

Examples of feedback included:

- "Today Ava independently used tongs to serve herself fruit at afternoon tea. She proudly told educators she helps make fruit salad with her grandmother at home and wanted to show her friends how she does it."

Team discussions about feedback

During team meetings, educators reflected on:

- Whether all families were receiving meaningful mealtime feedback
- How often updates should be shared
- Which children may benefit from more targeted feedback
- How children's perspectives and ideas were being captured and communicated to families
- Strategies for ensuring children's voices informed future food and cooking experiences

The team agreed that feedback should not only focus on what children were eating but also on:

- Ideas, choices, preferences, and decision-making children demonstrated during mealtimes
- Increased verbal feedback around mealtimes due to strong family interest in children's eating habits.

Seeking family feedback

Midway through the initiative, families were invited to share feedback through a short survey and informal conversations. Questions included:

- Have you noticed any changes in your child's independence at mealtimes?
- Has your child shown increased interest in helping prepare food at home?
- Are there any mealtime goals you would like us to support?

Several families reported that their children had begun helping to set the table and requesting opportunities to prepare food at home.

Specialised feedback example (support plan)

One child had a support plan goal related to expanding their range of accepted foods and reducing anxiety around trying new foods.

- A meeting was held with the family, Room Leader and Nominated Supervisor.
- During the meeting, educators shared:
  - Observations of the child's participation in cooking experiences
  - Foods the child was beginning to explore through sensory play
  - Successful strategies used during mealtimes
  - Progress towards agreed goals
- Together, the support plan was reviewed and consistent approaches between home and the service were agreed on, including:
  - Involving the child in food preparation
  - Offering familiar and unfamiliar foods together
  - Celebrating small successes without pressure
- A written summary was provided following the meeting, and progress continued to be discussed during regular check-ins with the family.

As a result of the initiative, the child demonstrated increased independence, confidence, and enjoyment during mealtimes. The family reported seeing similar behaviours at home, and the service used family feedback and educator reflections to inform future cooking experiences and mealtime practices.