

Creating a shared vision for your early learning service

Transcript

Speakers: Amy Shine and Debbie Yates

Amy Shine

We've done a lot of work with our community, with our parents, our management committee and talking with our children and just reflecting on who we are. So we've come up with quite a simple mission and vision there and that's about everyone is welcome, everyone belongs, is our absolute go to slogan that you can see there in our logo.

We've done a lot of work with branding as well. That's not so much about branding and selling our service because that's not certainly what we're about. It's having that sense of belonging within the community as well. So the children are out at the supermarket and they see someone or a friend with her little shirt on with that logo. They have that sense of: you're my mate; you from that place that I'm from. We're just trying to really build that community feeling up with our preschool. We did employ someone – an external contractor, to come and work with us regarding our mission and vision, because we're educators and we know what we want to do and we know how to, I guess, work with our families and children, but we wanted to develop a really, really professional document with our strategic plan and our mission and values.

It's now actually framed up in our entrance as you walk in because we want to keep that alive and we want people to know who we are and what we stand for. And I think that's really about advocacy and we want our community to understand why early education is so important. We are, actually quite, have a high standing in our community and people are coming to us, including our local council and high school and primary schools asking for our feedback, and they want our input into community decisions. And I think that's because we have really professionalised who we are, while still keeping lots of fun, and we've a pretty relaxed vibe around here. But I do believe there's times we need to professionalise who we are and what we do because what we do is so important in the long-term outcomes for our community.

If we can have a really quality place for early education, we need our community to know that we are the most important people in these lives and we know that the first five lives of a child's life is so crucial. In our high school, so fortunate that our principal is just the biggest advocate for early education and he's like, no, we need to go back to them, go back to them. So you can do it, professionalise yourself and have a really clear vision of who we are and share it with your community.

Debbie Yates

I think that the elements you're talking about there too is that, that the, the process of actually developing your mission and vision happened collectively so it wasn't one person's voice or two or



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three peoples' voices. It was actually a collective process that brought on board, you know, parents and staff and children's voices as well.

Amy Shine

Absolutely and when we have days like that, so we had a, we had actually quite a number of days but the last day when we collated all of our information we held it in a space that was removed from preschool. It was a really respectful space. We supplied morning tea and lunch because we had some external stakeholders come and be part of that process as well. So I think it's not just like, just let's get this document done and let's just throw something together.