

# Parent-Professional Relationships

The following statement was written by and for parents. It was developed at the inaugural Plumtree Now And Next Alumni Conference April 2017.



## The best partnerships

- have the best interests of our children at their heart;
- are firmly child- and family-centred, reflecting the strengths and needs of our children and our families;
- respect the unique expertise that we, as parents, have as our children's frontline educators;
- equally respect the knowledge and guidance that professionals offer to us and to our children;
- are based on open, honest, and respectful communication between parents, professionals, and children, so that relationships are safe, collaborative and supportive for all parties, and recognise the expectations required of parents, professionals, and children, to achieve the most positive outcomes for our children.

## The best relationships develop when

- parents and professionals together agree upon the most meaningful goals for our children;
- goals are measurable, achievable, and relevant to us as unique individuals;
- we plan together the strategies and processes we will use to implement and achieve our child and family goals;
- we agree on how we will together evaluate our progress;
- professionals support the capacity of our families to implement strategies in the natural settings of our homes and communities, and
- the whole family is empowered to support the achievement of our children's and families' goals.

## Our children need professionals who

- see our children as children, and not as their disability or diagnosis;
- are empathetic, understanding and passionate;
- are flexible, supportive and child-centred in their interactions;
- develop a personal relationship with our children directly;
- develop sessions that are as enjoyable, fun, engaging, relevant and meaningful to our children as individuals as is possible, and
- relate to our children within the frame of their individual interests and strengths.

## We have a responsibility to

- be the most powerful agents for change for our children;
- believe in our own agency as the experts in our children, and embrace our experiences and wisdom as valued and valuable;
- share our expertise with our professional partners to achieve the best outcomes for our children;
- be confident leaders in professional partnerships because of the unique insight that we offer;
- engage in self-education and self-knowledge so that we can continue to be active and informed leaders in our partnerships, and
- share our knowledge and experiences with other parents, so that we can build a strong network of educated and empowered parent leaders who have confidence in their own self-worth and competency.

Compiled by Dr Melanie Heyworth, parent.

Read the full statement at: <https://plumtree.org.au/the-parent-professional-relationship-statement>