



Policy Name:	Providing Client Advocacy and Support Policy	Policy Number:	EL0-045
Date Approved:	21 st February, 2018	Approved By:	Management Committee
Date Issued:	22 nd February, 2018	Review Date:	21 st February, 2021

POLICY STATEMENT

Early Links Inclusion Support Service is committed to the principles of respecting and protecting the legal and human rights of individuals and their right to services.

To this end Early Links supports the right of clients to use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be in relation to assessment, reviews, complaints or any other communication between the client and this organisation. Early Links will work co-operatively with any advocate nominated by a client and treat them with respect.

Early Links is also committed to providing clients with advocacy and support when it is requested.

Supporting advocacy

The Program Manager will be responsible for ensuring:

- all staff receive training in the use of advocates
- the service maintains printed material on relevant advocacy services
- maintain local advocacy resource/contact lists

Providing clients with information

Staff in the role of Key Worker will ensure clients and potential advocates are informed via appropriate formats (including verbally and in writing) about their right to use an advocate and the role of an advocate when the client is:

- Assessed and re-assessed for services
- Oriented to the service or program
- Refused service

Or if:

- They want to make a complaint about the service
- A staff member believes an advocate may be beneficial to the client

The General Manager is required to ensure that clients are aware of their rights to use an advocate in relation to the service, including having their advocate present for all assessments, meetings

and communication between themselves and the organisation.

If the client is unsure whether they may want to nominate a person as an advocate, they are to be provided with information (in an appropriate format) on various specialist advocacy organisations that may be able to assist them. If they would like to contact any of these organisations the General Manager or delegate will be able to assist them to make contact.

It is the responsibility of all staff at the time of first contact with the client to discuss any communication issues or requirements.

If a client has an advocate it is the Program Manager's responsibility to discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used between the service and the client's advocate. The name and contact details of the advocate are to be included in the client's personal record.

Staff will not disclose any information about the client to an advocate when the client is not present, unless the client has provided their permission to do so.

Working with advocates (when a client has nominated an advocate)

Where a client has identified or nominated an advocate the Key Worker must:

- Record the advocate's details in the client's personal record
- Ensure the client is aware of their advocacy rights including the right to have an advocate present for all assessments, meetings and communication between themselves and the organisation
- Ensure the advocate knows they have been nominated as an advocate and agrees to this
- Ensure any identified advocate is present at assessments and meetings
- Communicate and work co-operatively with the advocate
- Communicate comprehensively with a client's advocate and involve them in the care and service planning
- Ensure that the client knows they have the right to change their advocate at any time. Any changes should be documented with written confirmation from the client.

If an authorised representative is acting on behalf of a client, the organisation will require proof of representative authority.

Authorised representatives include:

- Guardians
- Attorneys under enduring powers of attorney
- Agents under the Medical Treatment Act 1988
- Administrators under the Guardianship and Administration Act 1986
- A person otherwise empowered by the consumers to act or make decisions in their best interests.

Proof of representative authority will be sighted and a copy of that document placed in the clients file. Proof of authority includes Guardianship or Administration order or Enduring/ Medical Power of Attorney.

Providing advocacy and support

Where a client does not have an identified or nominated advocate and they request assistance from the organisation the request will be considered by the Program Manager. The type of individual advocacy and support that can be provided will be dependent on the organisation's capability and resources.

3. References

Disability Service Standards

Standard 1 – Rights	
Practice Requirement 1	Each person is aware of their rights and can expect to have them respected
Practice Requirement 2	Service providers are to uphold and promote the legal and human rights of each person
Standard 6 - Service Management	
Practice Requirement 1	Each person receives quality services which are effectively and efficiently governed
Practice Requirement 2	Each person receives quality services that are well managed and delivered by skilled staff with the right values, attitudes, goals and experience

National Regulations

Regs	181	Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider
	181-184	Confidentiality and storage of records

Education and Care Services National Regulation

Privacy Act 1988

Australian Privacy Principles

Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012

United Nations Convention of the Rights of a Child

Freedom of Information Act 1989

Child Protection Act 1998

NSW Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) Act (1998)

Children Legislation Amendment (Wood Inquiry Recommendations) Act (2009)

NSW Disability Service Standard 1

4. Persons Responsible

All employees are responsible for:

- Implementing this policy
- Recording documentation in an accurate and strengths based way
- Maintaining Confidentiality responsibilities as outlined in employment contract
- Ensuring child files are secure to maintain confidentiality (hard copy and soft copy files)

All hard copy documents are uncontrolled.	
---	--

General Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring confidentiality agreements are upheld by all workers
- Organising for Confidentiality Forms to be signed by volunteers/students and Management Committee members

Management Committee is responsible for:

- Approval of this policy.

5. Definitions

Advocate – a person who speaks, acts or writes with minimal conflict of interest on behalf of the interests of a disadvantaged person, in order to promote, protect and defend the welfare of that person

Management Committee– the governing body of Early Links, comprised of elected or appointed members who jointly oversee the activities and legal responsibilities of the organisation

Family – refers to the parents/caregivers of the children that receive support from Early Links

Early Links – all Early Links Incorporated services and programs

Staff – refers to employees and volunteers of the organisation

Manager – person responsible for supervising all staff members

Visitor – any person who is visiting an Early Links service who is not a staff member, client or family

Worker – anyone who is carrying out work, in any capacity, for Early Links. This includes employees, contractors/subcontractors and their employees, labour hire employees engaged to work in the organisation, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, students on work experience and volunteers

This policy must be read in conjunction with the related policies and procedure/s which support this policy.

Privacy Policy	ELO-022
Confidentiality Policy	ELO-044
Child Protection Policy	ELO-002
Feedback & Complaints Policy	ELO-010
Medical Conditions Policy	ELP-008
Social Networking Usage Policy	ELO-016
Staff Handbook	

All hard copy documents are uncontrolled.	
---	--