



**Parent Advisory Group
Handbook**

For unincorporated Parent Advisory Groups

October 2020

Disclaimer

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Introduction

Valuing parents, families and Parent Advisory Groups

Shine Bright values the contributions parents, families and Parent Advisory Groups make to their local communities. Parent Advisory Groups, known as PAGs, they complement the work of Shine Bright, as an early years management organisation. PAGs plan activities to help welcome families to the kindergarten and to assist them to feel a part of it. PAGs also provide ideas and feedback to help services improve.

PAGs also may be involved in fundraising to help buy equipment, pay for special events or contribute to building upgrades. Fundraising is a valued activity which can contribute to shaping the way the service operates and provides benefits to children, their families and the teachers and educators of the service.

Shine Bright values the contributions parents, families and PAGs make to their local communities. We welcome your feedback about how this resource can be improved to meet your needs.

Who is this for?

This handbook is for members of unincorporated Parent Advisory Groups, known as PAGs, to help guide them in their role. It contains the draft terms of reference for PAG as well as other tools including:

- What to discuss at a PAG meeting
- Planning a successful parent information session.
- the role of a PAG and officer bearers

What is an early years manager?

As an early years management organisation Shine Bright takes on the responsibilities for managing the day-to-day operations of the service, including employing and supporting staff, meeting legal and other responsibilities, improving the quality of the service under the National Quality Framework, and looking after the financial sustainability of the service. Early years management organisations relieve parent committees of this responsibility so they can concentrate on the needs of their children and the local community.

The role has evolved over time and was previously called kindergarten cluster management. Now more than half of all kindergartens are managed by an early years management organisations such as Shine Bright.

Parent Advisory Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The role of the Parent Advisory Group (PAG) is to create opportunities for families to build meaningful connections and to contribute to the unique early childhood education and care service community.

Responsibilities

The PAG tasks may include:

- Coordinating a calendar or activities including fundraising, social and other events
- Finding ways to create a sense of belonging to the service for all families
- Representing ideas, issues and opinions of local families to Shine Bright.
- Developing partnerships and participating in the wider local community.



Membership

Membership and Roles

The PAG is mostly made up of families whose children are enrolled at or participating in the early childhood education and care service. Membership is open and any member can voluntarily join or leave the group at any time. PAGs can have up to 20 members at any one time. Shine Bright encourages all parents to join and be involved. There is also the opportunity for community representation outside the participants of the (Early Education & Care) ECEC service.

A PAG Convener will be appointed by the members of the PAG at the first meeting of the year and will have the responsibility to:

- call meetings (with the support of the service)
- Informing parents about the PAG meetings
- run the meetings (with an agenda if required)
- ensure minutes/notes of the meeting which record decisions are kept
- sharing information with PAG members and other families
- liaising with Shine Bright.

If there is not a parent member available to act as the PAG Convener, a Shine Bright staff member will assume this role temporarily while attempts are made to recruit a convener.

The Shine Bright Nominated Supervisor is automatically a member of the PAG.

Length of time on PAG

Members of the PAG are encouraged, where possible to commit for 1-2 years membership but may serve a longer period to ensure continuity of knowledge and community connection.

Expected Number of Meetings

A meeting schedule will be developed by the Convener in consultation with all PAG members and include a minimum of four meetings a year. Meeting minutes/notes will be kept and made available to families and staff after each meeting.

Resources

The Shine Bright Early Years Advisor for the service is available to assist with specific or general requests.

Planning a Successful Parent Information Session

Background Information

Many PAGs choose to run a Parent Information Session in Term 4 to introduce new families to the kindergarten before they start the following year.

A parent information session is a valuable opportunity for new families to:

- meet other families and educators
- learn about the kindergartens features, programs and what to expect when their child starts
- learn about joining the kindergarten Parent Advisory Group
- find out about the role of Shine Bright
- ask questions
- receive their Information Pack.



Planning a Successful Parent Information Session

The below table is designed to assist you to track required tasks and who is responsible for managing these in the planning stages.

Example Questions/Content	Person Responsible	By When
<p>Make decisions regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the session be combined with a social event? • If having a social event, consider catering, space, attendees, etc. • How will we invite families and ensure strong attendance? • Do we want to have a guest speaker discussing a topic of interest to parents? • How will information be shared with families? Do we want to set up stations/tables? • Will we be giving out information packs? How? • Will we recruit for new PAG members? 		
<p>Invite families to your event. This can be done via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A notice at the kindergarten • Personal/email invitations • In a newsletter • Verbal invites to parents • Text messages to mobile phones 		

Assist Kindergarten staff to prepare parent information packs. These can include:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A welcome letter, information about parent interviews and sessions times for the new year. • Child group allocation information • How to order uniforms if applicable • The Join our Parent Advisory Group Flyer and “Just One Thing” Form 		
Develop the agenda for the event.		
Plan and prepare the venue. If you are using the kindergarten, ensure that you have adult chairs if it will be a sit down event.		
Organise guest speaker, if desired.		
Organise catering, technology, printing, displays etc.		
Send a reminder to parents		
Organise name tags and an attendance list		
Prepare a list of event day lists and who will be responsible for these.		

Example running order for Parent Information Session

Item	Tasks	Who
1.	Prepare the venue including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning the room • Rearrange furniture and set up chairs and display stations • Make sure any required technology is set up and working • Set up a catering area if required 	
2.	Display/distribute required documents, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name tags • Agenda • “Just one Thing forms • Information packs 	
3.	Welcome arriving families and provide them with the relevant information	
4.	Event is run (include Acknowledgement to country by the PAG Convener or the kindergarten Nominated Supervisor) Ensure outgoing PAG members are acknowledged	
5.	Clean the room and pack up after the meeting. If using the kindergarten room ensure it is ready for children on the following day.	

If you would like any further advise or support in planning your Parent Information Session contact your kindergarten Nominated Supervisor or your Early Years Advisor at Shine Bright Central Office.

What to discuss at a PAG meeting.

Sample Agenda

Please feel free to use or adapt this sample agenda for your first meeting. After the first meeting, you can shape meeting agendas in the direction the PAG wants to go.

At the first meeting, if you don't already have a PAG Convener, your representative educator will usually chair the meeting. Don't worry if you can't cover all of this in the first meeting, you can pick it up in the next one!

Agenda Item	Example Questions/Content
Introductions	Give everyone the opportunity to introduce themselves and share information about their family as they feel comfortable with and why they have joined the PAG
Terms of Reference	Review the sample Terms of Reference Raise any questions Share aspirations for the group and the service
Reflections and Learning	Any previous PAG members can share information about past experiences and achievements. Nominated Supervisors/Teachers to discuss their hopes for the PAG and share examples of types of activities done in past years.
PAG Goals and Roles	Decide who will be the convener. Are there any other roles that would be useful? E.g. note taker, community liaison, etc. Brainstorm ideas for what you would like to achieve together Begin thinking about how you might find out more about the families who are accessing the service and how you can include them. What activities can you set up to create a sense of belonging for everyone? What strengths, interests, capabilities are held in the group?
Working Together	Discuss how you would like to work together: how often to meet, how to communicate etc. What values and behaviours do you want to demonstrate?
Future Meeting Dates	Set a date for the next meeting (minimum once per term) Plan an agenda for the next meeting (e.g. at your next meeting you might plan an annual calendar of events/activities)

Fundraising

Please note that the information below does not reflect the current arrangements in place for many of our unincorporated PAGs. Shine Bright's Finance Manager will work with each PAG throughout 2019 to implement the processes outlined in this section.

Fundraising Bank Account

As unincorporated groups cannot technically hold a bank account in the name of the unincorporated group, Shine Bright will establish a bank account for each PAG. The Shine Bright CEO and Shine Bright Finance Manager will be the signatories to the bank account, with a member/s of the PAG (eg Treasurer, President) being provided with view only access. The PAG will still retain full control over the use of the bank account and no funds will be used to purchase items without PAG approval (see below). The PAG Treasurer will be responsible for providing a report to the PAG on the finances of the PAG.

Using fund raising money

Each Kindergarten will have a document referred to as their Strategic Plan, this is a Shine Bright document led by the Nominated Supervisor in consultation with Shine Bright Central Office, the kindergarten staff team and the kindergarten PAG. This plan is a list of improvements and upgrades that have been identified as being required by the kindergarten at some point in time in the future. Each specific project on the strategic plan should be listed in order of priority so that they can be planned for as funds become available.

The PAG may identify, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, one of these projects to accelerate, and may raise funds for that purpose or may commit existing funds towards one of these projects. Given the strict regulations around kindergarten play spaces and lease agreements with building owners it is essential that Shine Bright be consulted and involved in any project.

Procedure for spending funds

There are two forms of expenditure for PAGs and they are:

- Fundraising expenses to enable fundraising income e.g. purchase of chocolates etc.
- Equipment purchases/contributions to projects/excursions/social events that the PAG has decided to spend fundraising funds on. This should always be in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor.

In both cases, the PAG will need to develop a plan at the start of the year regarding the fundraising events they wish to arrange and what they wish to spend the funds on. Please note: The plan should be consulted on with all families in the community of the kindergarten to ensure everyone has the opportunity for involvement.

Process for purchasing items

All purchases must be made through the Shine Bright purchase order system. This is to be arranged with the Nominated Supervisor of the kindergarten. The Nominated Supervisor will raise the order request for the purchase and the PAG needs to authorise the purchase at the bottom of the order request, confirming that they have agreed for funds to be taken from the PAG fundraising account. A moved motion authorising the payment of this expense should be clearly documented in the PAG meeting minutes and a signed copy of these minutes must accompany the purchase order. The order will be placed by Shine Bright arranging for the goods/service to be sent to the kindergarten with the invoice to Shine Bright to be paid.

Banking and record keeping

The nature of fundraising means that invariably PAGs will be dealing with cash. Controls around cash are put in place to ensure that people are protected. The following steps must be taken wherever possible:

- Two people should oversee the counting and distribution of cash. Amounts to be banked should be agreed, signed off and bagged.

- It is not the responsibility of any Shine Bright staff to handle PAG funds or to carry out banking duties.
- Signatories for the PAG bank account should be the Shine Bright Finance Manager and PAG members only and not kindergarten staff.
- Anything purchased by the PAG should be agreed by the PAG and minuted through PAG meetings

Maintenance works

Parents carrying out works at the kindergarten

The majority of buildings that Shine Bright operates kindergartens in are owned by councils and the remainder are presently owned by church groups or other community based groups. Any work that is performed on any of the buildings or any significant work on the grounds or equipment needs to be approved by Shine Bright and the property owners. In the case of council owned properties, work is often only permitted by their approved contractors.

Parents' are generally encouraged to take part in working bees and minor maintenance tasks at the kindergarten. There are also many parents who have skills as tradespeople who might be able complete more complex tasks. Unfortunately this is only permitted if strict guidelines are observed.

Work that may be completed by parents without prior approval includes:

- Cleaning (note that cleaning contracts are in place for internal cleaning services)
- Gardening maintenance (any new plantings must be approved by the Nominated Supervisor unless replacement of the same plant)
- Lawn mowing and whipper snipping (appropriate protective gear must be worn including footwear, eye and ear protection)
- Sweeping
- Repairs of toys and equipment. Please note that weight bearing toys ie climbing equipment, bicycles etc must be repaired by approved contractors if structurally damaged.

Use of power tools at the kindergarten

Power cutting tools are not permitted to be used by parents on the kindergarten grounds. This also applies to tradespeople unless specific conditions are met including:

- Any work must have been approved by Shine Bright which may also require approval by the property owner
- Work to be completed must meet with regulations and where permits or compliance are required, ie plumbing or electrical work then tradespeople must be appropriately qualified
- All tradespeople must have, as a minimum public liability insurance, work cover insurance and preferably a red/white card (OH&S).

Communications

This section deals with advertising, social media and communicating with media.

Advertising

Shine Bright must be consulted via the Nominated Supervisor, prior to the PAG advertising any event or any matter relating to the promotion of the kindergarten. Please provide details about what information the PAG would like to include in the advertisement and how and when it will be advertised. Shine Bright will consider how the advertising fits with Shine Bright's communications plans and ensure that any legal obligations and risks have been considered.

Social Media

Shine Bright has a Social Media Policy which is available on the Shine Bright website. These general rules should be followed:

- No other person or organisation should be discussed on social media in a disparaging way.
- Photos taken at the kindergarten, which includes images of people's children cannot be posted or shared on social media without the parents' written permission,.
- Communication with educators via social media is not encouraged. While friendships will develop during the course of the year this type of communication is not encouraged as it can be deemed to be selective with some parents feeling excluded or there being preferential treatment.

Communication with media

All media enquiries must be referred to Shine Bright's CEO and Early Years Advisor. PAGs are not permitted to speak to the media without prior permission from Shine Bright.

Public liability insurance

Generally any parent taking part in activities at the kindergarten or during fund raising activities and excursions will be covered for public liability under Shine Bright's Public Liability Insurance.

Shine Bright Code of Conduct/Code of Ethics

Refer the Shine Bright website for the Code of Conduct policy (Quality Area 4) via the following link: [Click Here](#).

and to the following link for ECA Code of Ethics: [Click Here](#)



Join our Parent Advisory Group

It's a great way to be part of your kindergarten community.

Joining our PAG is a fantastic way for you to meet other families and to contribute to your child's kindergarten experience.



A Parent Advisory Group (PAG) is a great way for parents to be involved in their child's early learning service. PAGs at Shine Bright plan activities to help welcome families to the service and to assist them to feel a part of it. PAGs also provide ideas and feedback to help the service improve.

As an early years management service, Shine Bright is responsible for managing the service leaving parents free of that responsibility. PAGs complement Shine Bright's work by

helping families to get to know each other and contribute to children's experience of kindergarten.

The activities of the PAG vary depending on people's interests and preferences, the needs of the community and people's available time.

How much time is involved?

Most PAGs meet at least once a term. How much you want to be involved is up to you. If you're time limited, please don't let this stop you. We encourage you to attend the first meeting or two to find out more. It's OK if you can't come to every meeting. Any contribution you make is valued.

How is a PAG run?

At the meetings, parents and educator representatives discuss what is happening at the service, share feedback and ideas, and plan upcoming activities and events.

Each PAG has a President or Convener who calls the meetings and organises the group. Other roles depend on the incorporated status of the group. Incorporated groups will have a President, Secretary, Treasurer and General members. Unincorporated Groups can determine their roles based on members interests and strengths. They may all be general members, or the group may decide they need roles such as 'Minute/Note taker', 'Social Coordinator' and 'Fundraising Planner', or 'Community Liaison'.

How can I join?

An Annual General Meeting or information evening about PAGs is held each year. At any other time, please speak to your child's Early Childhood Teacher to find out when the next meeting is taking place and come along to find out more.



'Just One Thing'



As your child's first and most enduring educator, we value your contribution to your child's early learning experience. To reflect this, we are asking each family to pledge 'just one thing' that they can do to contribute to the service this year. All ideas are welcome! Grandparents and extended family members are also welcome to complete 'just one thing' for our service. *Please note, you can select more than one thing if you wish!*

Register your interest	Date:
Parent or carer's name:	
Name of child/ren attending this service and group/room name:	
Phone number during business hours:	
Preferred contact time:	
Preferred email address:	

Please indicate below how you would like to contribute this year. We ask for 'just one thing' but you can select as many as you like:

✓	I Will...	✓	I Will...
<input type="checkbox"/>	join the Parent Advisory Group and attend the meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	organise a new fundraising event or drive
<input type="checkbox"/>	attend/start a playgroup at the service	<input type="checkbox"/>	co-ordinate a social event for parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	come into the service and share my skills/special talent/ culture of with the children and staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	do an 'odd job' i.e. fixing something or helping with gardening or small maintenance jobs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	participate in a working bee to improve the yard.	<input type="checkbox"/>	help with the organisation for the Open Days and/or other promotions for the service
<input type="checkbox"/>	provide advice to educators and/or other parents in my area of expertise or interest.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	donate books, toys, or recyclable materials for use in creative or imaginative play activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	introduce the service to an event or an organisation in the local community	<input type="checkbox"/>	contribute money or time to fundraising activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	go on a roster to 'stay and play' with my child's group occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	help with administrative duties
<input type="checkbox"/>	come to the service and cook with the children, my speciality is	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify

Would you like to add any further comments or suggestions

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SAMPLE ACTION PLAN FOR PAG MEETINGS

Action arising from _____ meeting (type of meeting), held on _____ (date)

Date	Action	Responsible Member	Target Date		Complete	
			Start	End	Yes	No