

Parent Perspectives on the Implementation of a Digital Documentation Portal in an Early Learning Centre

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What is a Digital Documentation Portal?



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Value proposition for today



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Digital Technologies...who are they for?

An increasingly digital world offers new models of technology that are revolutionising the way information is gathered and communicated (Cheung, Yip, Townsend, & Scotch, 2008).



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What we know about Digital Documentation and Digital Technologies

- Enablers
- Challenges



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Research context

- Dual focus
- Mixed method design
- Survey and focus group



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Research questions

1. What processes were involved in the implementation of the digital portal?
2. What are the experiences of parents using the digital documentation portal?



Flexibility, accessibility and communication

The content can be consumed in your own time at any time which is a fantastic convenience (16).

I really appreciated having that feedback and connection with my child even though I wasn't there, I travel interstate sometimes, it's wonderful because I do have that insight into what my kids are doing. . .(34)



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Security

Only concern is over the portal software's overall security. There is an implicit and required level of trust (16)

Originally at the beginning I was quite against the concept. I feel quite hesitant to see pictures of my children anywhere that I don't have control of (165).



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Engagement, connections and collaboration

I find it a very useful resource to keep up with what my children are learning and reinforce that learning at home. It is also nice to see pictures of them engaged in the activities. It makes me feel that I have left my child in a good environment, that they are been taken care of and that they are happy (33)



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Engagement

It's hard being away from your kids if you choose to work so this makes it feel like we have been part of their day (10).

We want to know what our kids did, we want to know what the kid next door did . . . it deflates me when I have to read through all this red tape...I find it very tedious to have to read through how we met requirement number one out of our quality framework . . . I think that's not my problem, that's your problem (81)



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Connections

We look at pictures together and talk about what he has done in the day. Talk about friends in class, to find out relationships he has made with other children (14)

It'd be really good to be able to sort of connect with other children's parents in your room or be able to see a list and go . . . these are all the parents (328)



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Professional dialogue

How have the perspectives of these parents resonated with or challenged your experience of using digital portals or technologies?



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Implications for practice

- Design and implementation as a collaborative practice
- Phasing in of the portal was effective
- Addressing security concerns
- Understanding parents' needs for the portal is key to getting 'best fit'



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Value add

Digital portals should be seen as a catalyst to building respectful and responsive relationships with parents, not in any form a replacement for rich information sharing through conversation, checking in with parents on a regular basis and engagement on site at the centre.



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Provocation

What does the increasingly digitised presence in early childhood mean for children and families?



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Thank you

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