

# Managing a Successful Committee

## PRESIDENT/SECRETARY INFORMATION SESSION 2010

just a couple of reminders:

- attendance book – kindly sign
- sessions are combined as i believe president and secretary need to support one another in their roles and work closely together.
- there is nothing onerous about your position
- all committee members have pockets at the preschool where information is placed from time to time – please check your pockets regularly
- have fun and meet new friends

### DUTIES TO FINISH NOW

- List of Office Bearers form
- Group Membership form
- AR form
- Change Signatories form
- CPS Delegate

**List of Office Bearers Form** – please ensure that this is now filled out and faxed or posted to the CPS Office, together with the Group Membership Form

**AR form** – signed by the Auditor and posted to Office of Regulatory Services, with a copy of Audited Financial Statement and cheque for \$32.00

**Change of Signatory form** – please ensure that this has been filled out with the correct signatory holders – often Treasurer/President and Secretary are signatories – no two signatories from same family

**CPS Delegate** - please ensure that they are fully aware of the meeting dates for 2009. If you have not been able to elect a delegate may I suggest that you share the position amongst your committee members. More information about meeting dates and up and coming events can be found at our website:[www.canberrapreschools.org](http://www.canberrapreschools.org)

### The traditional Role of the PPA

- Financial
  - Resource Donation
  - Fundraising
  - Insurance
- CPS Affiliation fees
- Communication with parents
- Executive and General Meetings

- CPS Delegate
- Playgroups/Playschools
- Inventory
- Self Help Projects

**Financial** – PPA’s as independent incorporated entities are entitled to request a voluntary resource donation to support additional resource and equipment purchases, to cover insurance costs associated with ownership of all assets and personal accident and public liability, affiliation fees to the CPS, and petty cash for teacher and purchasing officer. It is not the teachers responsibility to collect any monies – it is the Treasurer or assistant treasurer.

•Voluntary resource donations and voluntary contributions to the school, will be discussed in more detail a little later.

•Fundraising – fundraising committee can come up with ideas for fundraising but should be put to general meeting for approval. Monies raised through fundraising done specifically by the PPA are deposited into the PPA account, if done jointly with P & C, allocation of funds needs to be sorted between the two groups.

•Insurance is organised through the CPS and P.P.A. will be invoiced early June for payment. Affiliation fees to the CPS will be sent to PPA’s end of April.

**Communication** – there are many ways P.A.’s can communicate with parents – meetings, newsletters – the school newsletter should include a segment for preschool news, notice boards, notes in pockets, fundraising events and social events. Your T-I-C should always be provided with a copy of what you intend to communicate to parents before it goes out.

**Meetings** – we will discuss meetings of the P.A. in more detail shortly, however it is important that you have a CPS representative or another committee member attend the CPS general meetings – list of meeting dates is enclosed in your documents.

**Playgroups/Playschools** – approval for use of P.A. equipment by playgroups/playschools or any other body must be given by the P.A. as you are responsible for the replacement and insurance of equipment used. An updated inventory must be kept of all equipment owned by the P.A. – this should be updated every year and full inventory done every 3-4 years.

**Self Help Projects** – from time to time you may wish to undertake projects such as shade cover for play area etc. – this must be done through a self help project through the dept (facilities mgt) and in consultation with your T-I-C and Principal.

### What is the PPA now?

- You are a community organisation
  - Common ground
  - Shared experiences
  - Shared concerns
- What do you do?
  - Social planning
  - Social action

- Social development
- Or a bit of of all three?

### **What is community organisation?**

Community organisation is the process of people coming together to address issues that matter to them. It can be:

- Community members spending time together to develop plans for how the preschool or playschool can be a place where all its children do well.
- Neighbours joining in protests to stop drugs and violence in their community.
- Members of faith communities working together to build affordable housing.

These are all examples of community organisation efforts.

### **What are the types of communities that organise?**

Community organisation can happen in the variety of contexts that define "community."

#### **1. Shared place**

People come together that share a common geographic place such as a neighbourhood, city, or town. For example, local residents might come together to address neighbourhood concerns such as safety, housing, or basic services. Problem solving through community-based organisations (CBOs), neighbourhood associations, and tenants -- organisations are common forms of place-based practice.

#### **2. Shared work situation or workplace**

Community organising also occurs among people who share a work situation or workplace. For example, union organising among industrial or farm labourers brings together those concerned about working conditions, job security, wages, and benefits.

#### **3. Shared experiences or concerns**

It's a good opportunity for community organisation when people share a common experience or concern. For example, organising might happen among people who are poor about jobs, housing, education, and other contributors to financial security.

Organising frequently occurs among those who have concerns about the same issues such as substance abuse, violence, or child welfare. Those who share a common race or ethnicity may organise around issues, such as discrimination, that are barriers to achieving common goals. Finally, those who have physical disabilities, such as mobility or visual impairments, may come together to create conditions that affect independent living.

### **What are some models of practice in community organisation?**

Should community organisation be about collaboration among people sharing common interests or confrontation with those in power? This is a false dichotomy that ignores the context of the work. Several models of practice emerged in various contexts of community organization work (Rothman, 1995).

## **1. Social planning**

Social planning uses information and analysis to address substantive community issues such as education, child development, or environmental health. For example, planning councils or task forces engage (usually) professionals in setting goals and objectives, coordinating efforts, and reviewing goal attainment.

Social planning might occur in a context of either consensus or conflict about goals and means. For example, information about high rates of adolescent pregnancy, and factors that contribute to it, may help communities focus on the goal of preventing teen pregnancy, and even decisions about using controversial means such as sexuality education and enhanced access to contraceptives. Use of social planning helps build agreement on common results.

## **2. Social action**

Social action involves efforts to increase the power and resources of low-income or relatively powerless or marginalised people. For example, advocacy organisations, such as those for disability rights or tobacco control, often use social action approaches. They might arrange disruptive events -- including lawsuits, sit-ins, or boycotts -- to draw attention and focus to their concerns by those in power.

Organisers create events such as a protest or strike, which those in positions of power (such as employers) can avoid or stop by coming to an agreement. For example, people with disabilities might stop picketing a business when it modifies policies that discriminate against people with disabilities. Or, a tobacco company might avoid a lawsuit by tobacco control advocates by eliminating advertising directed at minors. Social action tactics are used in lots of situations involving conflicting interests and imbalance in power; they usually take place when conventional negotiations aren't working.

## **3. Locality development**

Locality development is another way to get people to work together. It is the process of reaching group consensus about common concerns and collaborating in problem solving. For example, local residents in urban neighbourhoods or rural communities may cooperate in defining local issues, such as access to job opportunities or better education, and in taking action to address the concerns.

## **4. Community partnerships or coalitions**

There are many hybrid models that combine elements of the three approaches. For example, community partnerships or coalitions combine elements of social planning and locality development when people who share common concerns, such as child well-being or substance abuse, come together to address them. The goal of many coalitions is to change community conditions -- specific programs, policies, and practices -- that protect against or reduce risk for these concerns. These models, and their variations, may be implemented at local, state, regional, and even broader levels.

## If I only KNEW that before!

- Take it slow
- Listen
- Stars are further away than they appear
- Share the load
- Look for alternatives
- Find common ground
- Be connected

## Getting Organised

- Constitutions?
- Executive committees?
- Meetings?
- Finances?
- Difficult people?

## Constitutions

- Standard constitution for all P.A.'s to adopt
- What is a Constitution?
- Certificate of Incorporation
- Responsibilities to the Office of Regulatory Services

•**Standard constitution** - The CPS is looking to put together a new "standard constitution" for parent associations to adopt. We hope to simplify the contents and look to reducing quorum for meetings, together with a number of other changes. Once it has been prepared we will provide an electronic copy to all parent associations (and on our website) and will assist P.A.'s in the process of adopting a new constitution

•**What is a constitution?** - It is a requirement as Incorporated Associations - President and secretary should be aware of their constitutions, as they are the rules of your association and should be adhered to. They contain the rules relating to: how many meetings you should hold in a year, number required to attend meetings (quorum), membership – who is eligible to be a member etc. If you require a copy of your constitution, you will need to contact the Registrar-General's office, phone number and website address contained in your useful contacts list. There is a charge involved in providing a copy to you. However, check with me at the office first – I have copies of some in my files.

•**A certificate of Incorporation** should also be kept on file and a common seal

•**Office of Regulatory Services** - by now your public officer should have submitted an AR form to the Office of Regulatory Services with a cheque for \$32.00 (where your Association's annual income was more than \$5,000) and a copy of your audited financial

statement. – CPS office would also like a copy of your audited statements. Any changes during the year to your committee need to be notified to the Office of Regulatory Services– usually requires submitting an A9 form.

## Executive Committees

- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

### **President:**

- Chairs the meetings
- Plans the Agenda of the meeting with the Secretary and the Teacher - If you follow the Agenda in the order it is written you shouldn't go wrong – this is where the Secretary can come in so handy, refer attachment 1 for Agenda Items and explanation). I will go through the agenda in more detail in our next slide.
- Ensures that sufficient information has been given to the members
- Is the spokesperson or representative of the Association to outside stakeholders (the teacher, the Principal, the School Board, the P&C Association)
- Mediates or otherwise resolves conflict between members, or other stakeholders
- Facilitates discussion** - keep in mind that you will get to know the people who attend the meetings quite well and they will become some of your good friends, so please don't feel intimidated. Meetings should be relaxed and informal and allow for general discussion over a cuppa. The Chair should not take over the meeting but facilitate discussion.
- Keeps time - the length of meetings should not be too long** -A well conducted meeting will help keep those who attend up to date and well informed and encourage attendance and participation. Meetings should not need to go longer than 1 – 1.5 hours. It is useful if you place a closing time at the end of an agenda.

### **Secretary :**

- Make a copy of the minutes (of the previous meeting) available to parents prior to the next meeting, saving time. A copy can be made available on the notice board at the preschool with a note in the newsletter informing parents that they can avail themselves of a copy from the notice board.
- Advertises the meetings
- Books any rooms
- Ensures that all relevant correspondence or documents required for meeting are available for the President
- Prepares agendas for meetings (in consultation with the President)
- Maintains an attendance record (a sheet of paper or a book) of all present and apologies given at the meetings
- Takes the minutes of meetings (although some committees may wish to appoint a minute secretary for this purpose)
- Ensures that back-up information is available at meetings where the topics to be discussed require it – even if this means researching a bit more to make that support effective.

- Takes care of the common seal

### **Treasurer:**

- Nerida calls the Treasurer a superhero - I would have to agree! The committee cannot function without one - they are absolutely essential - so keep them happy!
- The Treasurer is responsible for providing financial transparency and accountability to the board/committee, and ensuring that processes and reporting requirements are met openly and accountably. A Treasurer also provides an assurance of the ongoing financial viability of the organisation to the board/committee.
- The tasks of the Treasurer for committee or board meetings may include:
  - \* Ensuring that the finances of the organisation are managed appropriately
  - \* Making recommendations to the PPA about income and expenditure
  - \* Keeping records of all incoming and outgoing payments
  - \* Reviews the accounts
- \* Ensures that the annual audit process is undertaken in a timely fashion according to legislative requirements
  - \* Provides regular financial statements to the PPA with a capacity to explain any details
  - \* Draws up the annual budget in consultation with the members and the teacher
  - \* Ensures that sufficient funds are available at all times to support the association's liabilities

## Meetings

- Purpose of Meetings
- Quorum
- Guest speakers
- Ample notice of meetings

- purpose of meetings** - meetings are a forum where parent associations make decisions regarding; funds/expenditure, excursions, resources, program, parent association activities and organise parental involvement
- without meetings you cannot authorise expenditure or a fundraising event.
- your T-I-C should be invited to all meetings, the principal of the primary school, the playgroup and/or playschool convenor are also welcome, however they are not members of the Association and have no voting rights.
- the president's job is to chair the meetings, the secretaries is to take the minutes and assist the president to keep on track
- quorum** - i.e. number of people required to attend a meeting is determined by your individual preschool constitutions – i'll talk a little more about that later.
- guest speakers** - it can often be useful to invite a guest speaker along to some of your meetings to encourage attendance e.g, kidsafe, police safety
- notice of meetings** - you need to give ample notice of meetings to ensure a quorum is present and parents are given the opportunity to be aware of any particular issues you may wish to discuss.

- secretary should ensure that meeting dates are put into the preschool newsletter, on the notice board or on the front gate of the preschool well in advance of meeting date

## Types of Meetings

- Annual General Meetings
- Executive committee meetings
- General Meetings
- Special Resolutions require 21 days notice

- annual general meetings** – obviously you have just had one –parent associations should hold their agm’s in February of each year to allow for a handover from the outgoing committee

- executive meetings** can be held prior to a general mtg if you prefer, saving another night out. Executive involves office bearers e.g. president, vice-president/cps rep, secretary, treasurer (as listed in your constitution)

- some preschools may prefer to meet after session time, but this may not always suit the teacher

- meetings should be held at the preschool premises rather than a private home

- general meetings** - all parents are welcome to general meetings, usually required to hold up to two each term – constitution will stipulate how many meetings are required

- special general meetings** are rare and often require a special resolution to be moved – this involves giving 21 days notice e.g. amendment to your constitution

## The Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of previous meeting
4. Business arising from minutes
5. Correspondence
6. Business arising from correspondence
7. Reports
8. General business
9. Any other business
10. Meeting closure

- Attachment 2 provides a “formal agenda” which you may make available to parents on the night. Attachment 3 provides an example agenda for the President to follow.

- Turn to your example Agenda at Attachment 1 and I will expand on each item.

- Secretaries have an Example of minutes that would result from this meeting at attachment 4.

•It is useful for Secretaries to refer back to the Action List from previous meetings to ensure all business is covered and what else may need to be placed on the agenda.

•**Welcome/Apologies** – circulate an attendance book and note any apologies also in this book, this saves the Secretary having to write out the names within the minutes.

•**Minutes of previous meeting** – two people who were present at that meeting need to verify that the minutes are a true and accurate record. Once verified they can be signed off by the President.

•**Correspondence** – not necessary to read out all correspondence – fundraising material does not need to be listed – the fundraising committee can deal with this independently. However any correspondence in addressed to any executive member or the parent association needs to be addressed and any correspondence sent must also be approved.

•**Reports** – I will deal with this in more detail in the next slide.

•**General Business** – if possible this should be listed on the Agenda so that parents have an idea to see what is going to be discussed at the next meeting.

•**Any other business** – issues which have not already been raised within any reports or have only come to light since the Agenda was prepared.

•**Meeting close** – give a clear indication to the meeting of when the next meeting will be held.

## Reports

- Written and not verbal
- Should be “moved” and “seconded” and agreed upon.
- Types of reports
  - President
  - Treasurer
  - CPS Delegate
  - Fundraising Committee
  - Teacher

•Written reports assist the Secretary as they can be attached to the minutes, rather than them being noted individually

•**The President** - need only provide a short report to the meeting – often it just involves what’s been happening in and around the Preschool over the past month and any fundraising or working bees that may be coming up. It would be useful to check with your Principal also to see if there is anything in particular they may have which they would like you to raise at the meeting.

•**Treasurer’s Report** - It is vitally important that the Treasurer provide a report to each and every meeting, otherwise you are not in a position to decide on purchasing any items of equipment or whatever – you must have a clear idea of what monies you have available and what expenditure is expected to come up during the term e.g. affiliation fees to CPS, *insurance*. If the Treasurer has received an invoice for payment that hasn’t been approved

at a meeting prior to receiving the invoice, then it needs approval at the next meeting. Ongoing expenses such as petty cash do not need approval at each meeting – they should have been authorised at the first general meeting of the year.

•**Fundraising cmt** – if you are fortunate enough to have a fundraising committee then let them run with some ideas on fundraising and bring these ideas to the general meeting for final approval.

•**The CPS rep** is also expected to report to your meetings on what has been happening at the CPS general meetings. An Issues paper is provided to each preschool and to all CPS reps via email after each general meeting to guide them through discussion at their own parent association meetings.

•**Teacher's report** – the teacher may report on the program for the term and what the children have been achieving. It is also usual for the teacher to request any expenditure that she/he may wish. Sometimes teachers may have a “wish list” with approximate prices of items and the meeting may be in a position to approve certain or maybe all of the items listed. approval must be given before invoices can be paid. ongoing expenses such as petty cash and consumables can be reimbursed without approval at each and every meeting as a float amount would have been decided upon at your first general meeting. the teacher or purchasing officer must provide supporting documentation for monies spent before it can be reimbursed – only reimbursed up to the amount spent.

## Taking Minutes

- Not verbatim
- Follow Agenda
- Motions to be “moved and “seconded” and agreed to (refer Attachment 5)
- Correspondence
- Finalise minutes ASAP after a meeting
- Distribute
- Action List
- (see example Attachment 4)

•Secretary needs to control the pace of the meeting to ensure that notes are taken accurately – they do not have to be verbatim. If you follow the agenda then it makes life a lot easier for the Secretary.

•**Motions** – the President should not move or second a motion, he or she should have a casting vote, however in some Constitutions the President may be entitled to vote.

•If a motion is not seconded, the motion fails

•Every member of the parent association has one vote

•Secretary should read out the motion that has been moved, so that the meeting can clearly identify what the motion is that is to be carried.

- Correspondence** - It is not necessary to list all the correspondence received. All fundraising correspondence can go straight to the fundraising convenor. Only correspondence requiring attention or actioning needs to be listed.
- Useful to finalise** minutes as soon as possible after a meeting to ensure they are available for people to read in advance of the next meeting. Copies do not have to be distributed to all parents – a copy on the notice board would be fine. Just let parents know via your preschool newsletter that this is how you intend to provide minutes.
- Action list** is very useful as it serves as a reminder to parents to follow through with any tasks they volunteered to do at the meeting – good idea to provide a copy of the action list to those individuals.

## Duties Of Public Officer

- Must be of good character
  - Must reside in the ACT
  - Must be over the age of 18 years
  - Must have no criminal conviction for which a jail term of three months or more has been served
  - The public officer must liaise with the Office of Regulatory Services
- all preschools should now have submitted their AR form (provided in the handover manual online) – this must have a copy of the audited financial statement attached, cheque for \$32.00 and the form must be signed by the auditor. date of auditor’s signature should be two weeks prior to date of AGM (constitutional requirement).
  - if your committee changes throughout the year then an A9 form must be lodged – if public officer changes an A5 form is to be lodged. if lodged within one month of change there is no charge but you will be charged after this time.

## Any Concerns?

- Resource Donations & Voluntary Contributions
- Making good decisions
- Making it Successful Workshop covers ...
  - Collaboration
  - Managing conflict
  - Volunteers

## The Resource Donation

- What do we resource
- Voluntary contributions to the school board?
- Consistency
- Confidentiality
- Funding

• **What do we resource?** – Preschools are all amalgamated with a primary school. As a result of this some costs associated with such things as cleaning and hygiene consumables and some equipment and resources are now the responsibility of the primary school. The P.A. is no longer required to pay for these things.

The PPA continues to support the preschool program with any additional resources and equipment, insurance of all equipment owned by the parent association – the insurance also provides cover such as public liability and personal accident insurance for all the preschool children, siblings and volunteers and CPS affiliation fees. In order to finance this, we request a voluntary resource donation (formerly called voluntary contribution) and some fundraising. These funds are deposited directly into the account of the PPA.

• **Voluntary contributions from the school** – these contributions are set by the school board of the amalgamated primary school and paid directly to the school. These monies will be placed in a ledger set aside for use within the preschool.

• All contributions are voluntary and no child will be excluded from any activity as a result of parents being unable to pay. Parents may choose to contribute in many other ways to their child's preschool experience e.g. roster duty, laundry, supervising on excursions etc.

• **Consistency** - Where there are several preschools linked to the same primary school, we suggest that this donation be the same for each preschool to avoid confusion.

• **Confidentiality** - All donations are kept confidential and no parent or child should be harassed as a result of them choosing not to contribute financially.

• **Funding** – The ACT Government's election promise in 2008 provided for \$1500 to PPA's who remained independent – this money will be funded through the finance section of DET and will hopefully be provided to PPA's towards the end of March.

## Resources to help

- Canberra Preschool Society:
- <http://www.canberrapreschools.org>
- <mailto:canberrapreschools@bigpond.com>
- Preschool Parent Association Guide?
- Preschool Constitution
- Minutes of previous meetings
- Departmental website: [www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au)
- Office of Regulatory Services  
<http://www.ors.act.gov.au/BIL/WebPages/Assocns/assn1.html>