Families as First Teachers attendance recording – procedures

Teaching and Learning Services

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Contents

These procedures are part of the Families as First Teachers (FaFT) information available on the Department of Education (the department) School policies webpage.[1] Read this document with the FaFT policy, the FaFT guidelines and the FaFT Book. The FaFT Book is a resource that provides information about FaFT and the theory that underpins the program.

1. Introduction

Timely and accurate attendance and participation recording is critical to the FaFT reporting process and the success of the program. The FaFT program is jointly funded by the Australian and NT governments and requires a high level of accountability, data integrity and visibility of qualitative information in real-time. Early Childhood Programs Attendance System (ECPAS) recording at the site level is captured by the Business Intelligence System and eDash to enable FaFT schools to identify trends, risks and areas of growth and improvement.

FaFT attendance and participation data is important for the developmental and care needs of children by helping FaFT educators and other FaFT staff to:

- track the growth and needs of each child and parent
- maintain accountability for the safety and wellbeing of each child and parent while attending
- identify children and families in need of re-engagement and establishing early intervention strategies.

While participation in a FaFT program is not compulsory, accurate and timely attendance recording and reporting is important for program integrity and performance reasons including:

- assessing overall participation in the program and understanding trends in attendance and engagement
- maintaining accountability of the program against the department's aims and objectives
- informing budget planning and allocation
- supporting duty of care obligations of the school principal as manager of the program.

2. Procedures

2.1. Enrolment

Before children and families can participate in a FaFT program and for attendance and participation recording to begin, children should be enrolled in line with the Enrolment policy and guidelines. Parents must submit a Student enrolment form and a Supplementary preschool enrolment form.

Find more information about Enrolment policy on the department's School policies webpage in the Enrolment section[2] and in the Enrol your child at school section.

There may be occasions when a parent commences an unenrolled child in the program. Those children should be enrolled immediately.

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[1] https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care
[2] https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment

Once enrolled, a child's information will be recorded in SAMS by the school's SAMS operator, and this information will then upload into ECPAS automatically in the next scheduled data transfer. Information about recording a child's enrolment in SAMS is available to internal department staff on the department's intranet.

2.2. Recording attendance and participation

2.2.1. Early Childhood Programs Attendance System

When a child is successfully enrolled in SAMS with a FaFT enrolment status, their details are uploaded into ECPAS. A FaFT enrolment status is created in SAMS as per the SAMS G2 fact sheet, which is available to staff on the department's intranet. FaFT educators can check the Student Master Index to confirm if a child is enrolled in SAMS.

ECPAS is a web-based application used in all NT Government schools to record attendance and participation information for children enrolled in FaFT and SPL programs. FaFT educators record attendance and participation information in ECPAS each day. Access to ECPAS is authorised by the Director FaFT following access requests submitted by the school principal or FaFT Program Leader.

New FaFT educators will receive ECPAS training during their induction and refresher training is available when required for staff who have been off-site.

Unlike a school roll, ECPAS links attendance with the type of participation involved and whether the focus of the activity is the child, parent or both. ECPAS records mode of delivery, activity type, approach used, services engaged and external partnerships, where appropriate. ECPAS recording allows for differentiation of data to better inform the reporting process.

The following sections describe the different record types.

2.2.1.1. Modes

Modes are how an educator delivers their FaFT program and includes on-site and off-site delivery. There are six modes of FaFT program delivery that can be entered into ECPAS:

1. FaFT Primary Site – when delivered at the main FaFT location
2. Home Visit – intentional home visit to implement 3*a* strategies and family engagement
3. Outreach Playgroup – when delivered in the community, away from the main FaFT site
4. Supported Playgroup – when supported by another early childhood program
5. Mobile Playgroup – when delivered at another service location
6. Excursion – FaFT playgroup goes off-site to visit a place or participate in an activity.

2.2.1.2. Activities

Activities are the intentional child learning activities FaFT educators do with children during the FaFT program. There are 5 activities that can be entered into ECPAS:

1. 3*a*: Conversational Reading – the number of cycles of four back-and-forth exchanges is recorded from a drop-down list
2. 3*a*: NT LearningGames® – the number of LearningGames® cycles between adult and child is recorded from a drop-down list

3. ASQ-TRAK – A screening tool for monitoring the developmental progress of children

4. Attendance Recorded – Other – this activity is only selected if no 3*a* activities or ASQ-TRAK occurred during the attendance and a child engaged in other activities such as sensory play or play-based activity

5. SPL program – currently this activity applies to selected FaFT sites only.

2.2.1.3. Approaches

Approaches are intentional capacity building activities conducted with parents. There are 5 approaches that can be entered into ECPAS:

1. 3*a* workshop – specific group workshops aimed at developing families' understanding and implementation of 3*a*

2. Parent Coaching – intentionally planned, one-on-one coaching for parents under the direction of the family educator or family liaison officer, which can be done on-site or by home visits

3. Family Support – support provided off-site, for example home visits, learning on country

4. Formal Workshop – a group workshop focused on enhancing understanding of a specific topic

5. Linking family with services – supporting families to access services.

2.2.1.4. Services

Services are various types of services provided for parent capacity building sessions and are recorded in ECPAS from a multi-choice screen.

2.2.1.5. Partnerships

Partnerships relate to parents engaging in sessions or workshops with a third-party provider or organisation, for example, Menzies School of Health Research, or the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities.

2.2.2. ECPAS recording responsibilities and frequency

It is a mandatory requirement of the FaFT program that every attendance at FaFT is recorded in ECPAS in accordance with the ECPAS guide, no matter how brief or infrequent the attendance is. FaFT educators must record attendance daily, although it is recognised that factors beyond the educator's control may prevent this, for example, a late enrolment or internet outage.

2.2.2.1. Late recording due to factors beyond staff control

The ECPAS system allows for late recording of attendance into the system of up to 10 business days. If this timeframe is exceeded, the school principal or FaFT Program Leader must make a formal request to the Director FaFT by email at faft.doe@education.nt.gov.au.

If an attendance recording is older than the current school term, the FaFT Outstanding Attendance Recording form must be completed and the authority of the Director FaFT obtained to enter the recording – the form and request for authorisation are made through the FaFT corporate email address.

2.2.2.2. Attendance at multiple FaFT sites

Families moving or visiting between communities can access another FaFT site as long as parent and child are both active in ECPAS. No profile or system changes are required – FaFT educators can find a child from another site in the child search table by deselecting their FaFT site and searching for the child by name.

2.2.2.3. Separate recording for child and parent and parent-only

In ECPAS, child and parent, and parent-only attendance is recorded differently. It is essential to capture differentiated data for child and parent groups. Child attendance and participation data focuses on mode, activities and impact - this is referred to as dosage. Parent attendance and participation data focuses on mode, approaches, services engaged and partnerships.

When a child attends and participates, that record is carried over to the parent record automatically. However, when a parent attends and participates in, for example, a planned parenting or birth certificate workshop, that attendance is recorded only on the parent record.

2.2.2.4. Recording preschool and FaFT attendance

Enrolment and participation of children in at least 15 hours of preschool per week is the preferred approach, however children enrolled and attending preschool are eligible to participate in FaFT.

A child's year level is input by the SAMS operator to reflect preschool. The family educator advises the preschool teacher or SAMS operator that a child attends FaFT as well, if this has not already been recorded. This ensures a child's User Defined Interface shows a FaFT enrolment.

2.2.2.5. Recording preschool-aged Stay Play Learn children

Preschool-aged children engaged in SPL must be recorded in both SAMS and ECPAS each day. Additionally, individual learning plans are required for children attending SPL.

2.2.3. Getting help with ECPAS and SAMS

A comprehensive guide to using ECPAS, titled - A helping hand in: ECPAS, is available to internal department staff on the department's intranet in the Document Centre. Technical assistance in ECPAS is available through the ECPAS Systems Administration Team by email at faft.doe@education.nt.gov.au.

For SAMS-related help – email the SAMS Team, Department of Corporate and Digital Development at sams.det@education.nt.gov.au or telephone on 1800 446 961.

3. Privacy, record keeping and information sharing

Records held by the department – including FaFT attendance and participation records – must be managed in accordance with the NT public sector organisations records and information management standards.[3]

The department only collects personal and sensitive information necessary for, or related to its activities and functions and only by fair and lawful means. The personal information collected by the department is

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[3] https://dcdd.nt.gov.au/government-records/ntps-organisations-records-information-management-standards

used for direct service provision and such information may also be used for statistical, research, planning and reporting purposes aligned with the functions of the department.

The department's Privacy statement and the Information Privacy Principles contained in the *Information Act 2002*[4] set out the requirements for all staff using information provided by or about families and children participating in FaFT programs. Read more about the Privacy statement on the department's School policies webpage in the Privacy section.[5] Find out more about the Information Privacy Principles on the Information Commissioner NT's webpage.[6]

Under the *Information Act 2002*, all staff involved in the recording, reporting, use and disclosure of FaFT information are responsible for the appropriate management and security of that information and the protection of the privacy of children and families participating in the FaFT program.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. Teaching and Learning Services

The Early Years and Primary branch is responsible for:

- reviewing the department's policies, procedures and guidelines that relate to the FaFT program to ensure the program is appropriately and consistently implemented
- maintaining financial and administrative accountability of the FaFT program
- providing capacity-building support to all staff involved in the delivery of the FaFT program to ensure the principles, practices and learning outcomes of Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia[7] are implemented effectively
- collecting data and preparing reports and other information about the FaFT program for the Australian Government, NT Minister for Education and the department's Chief Executive and senior leadership team.

4.2. FaFT corporate team

The FaFT corporate team is responsible for ensuring the program meets reporting requirements on activities and deliverables and drives and maintains data integrity for reporting purposes.

4.3. Director FaFT

The Director FaFT is responsible for:

- reviewing and authorising – as appropriate, requests for late recording of attendance and participation data
- authorising school principals' ECPAS access requests for FaFT educators
- authorising the use of FaFT information and data.

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[4] https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/INFORMATION-ACT-2002
[5] https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/conduct
[6] https://infocomm.nt.gov.au/privacy/information-privacy-principles
[7] https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/national-quality-framework/approved-learning-frameworks

4.4. FaFT program leaders

The FaFT program leaders are responsible for:

- ensuring that their FaFT teams are familiar with the responsibilities and requirements of these procedures and the FaFT policy and guidelines
- ensuring FaFT sites are collecting and reporting data accurately and in a timely manner
- providing staircase reports to each FaFT site – these reports contain individual site participation and progress data.

4.5. School principals

The School principals are responsible for:

- providing day-to-day operational management of the FaFT program at their site
- ensuring that children who are participating in the program are properly enrolled in the Student Administration Management System (SAMS), using the supplementary enrolment form or the online enrolment form,[8] and:
  - ensuring that any unenrolled children who have commenced the program are immediately enrolled
  - being mindful that delays in data entry beyond 2 weeks will result in FaFT educators needing to request additional system access or, extra demand being placed on FaFT corporate staff.
- ensuring accurate daily attendance and participation records are maintained in ECPAS for all children enrolled in FaFT
- ensuring all children, including those with special needs, can enrol in line with the Disability Standards for Education 2005.[9]

4.6. Family educators

The Family educators are responsible for:

- maintaining accurate daily attendance, participation and enrolment records in ECPAS and fulfil recording requirements in a timely manner
- being mindful that delays in data entry beyond 2 weeks will result in them needing to request additional system access or extra demand being placed on FaFT corporate staff.

4.7. School SAMS operators

The School SAMS operators are responsible for:

- ensuring that all enrolments submitted via the FaFT program are processed as soon as possible and in the same way as other enrolments submitted to the school

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[8] https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/enrol-your-child-at-school
[9] https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005

- working with FaFT staff to ensure preschool and Stay Play Learn (SPL) children participating in FaFT are correctly coded.

5. Definitions

For an explanation of terms used in these procedures, read the Definitions at section 2 of the FaFT guidelines.

6. Related policy, legislation and documents

6.1. Policy

Enrolment policy and guidelines

Families as First Teachers policy and guidelines

Privacy policy

6.2. Legislation

Education Act 2015[10]

Information Act 2002

6.3. Documents

A helping hand in: ECPAS

FaFT Book

Information Privacy Principals – Office of the Information Commissioner NT[11]

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[10] https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015
[11] https://infocomm.nt.gov.au/privacy/information-privacy-principles

Acronyms	Full form
3*a*	Abecedarian Approach Australia
ASQ-TRAK	Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Talking about Raising Aboriginal Kids
ECPAS	Early Childhood Programs Attendance System
FaFT	Families as First Teachers
NT	Northern Territory
SAMS	Student Administration and Management System
SPL	Stay Play Learn
TRM	Territory Records Manager

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Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1	12 August 2021	Families as First Teachers	New procedure
2	20 July 2023	Quality Standards and Regulation – Operational Policy	Administrative amendments to align roles and responsibilities to the structural alignment in effect from 1 July 2022, including NTG template and minor formatting