

## WELCOMING FAMILIES INTO YOUR ORGANISATION

Families are an important part of an organisation's community. Providing a welcoming environment will help create positive experiences for families, so they remain active participants of your organisation.

### Why families are important



- Participation at your organisation is generally a joint decision between the parent and child. If the organisation's experience is not positive for both the parent and child, they will be less inclined to remain active participants of your organisation.
- Families are often concerned about committing time and money to an activity. If the organisation is not welcoming, they may find other more enjoyable ways to spend their time and money.
- Families often want to feel a part of something. Providing a welcoming environment will help them connect with others and the organisation.

### How to welcome families and actively involve them

- Welcome new families by showing them around and providing clear information about your organisation. This helps families take the sometimes overwhelming first step to get involved in the organisation.
- Assign someone to greet families on arrival and invite them back. This helps create a friendly organisation environment and ensure families feel valued.
- Treat every person with respect and dignity and establish a positive culture free from discrimination, harassment and abuse in your organisation.
- Provide regular, accurate and up to date communication and respond quickly to queries.
- Offer fun, social activities and functions and use the opportunity to exchange ideas on how to make the organisation better. This keeps communication lines open and helps families feel included.
- Provide clean, comfortable and inviting spaces for families to socialise and relax.
- Offer a 'free trial' at your organisation. This can address concerns some families have about committing time and money to your activity and it will help promote the flexible and family friendly culture of your organisation.
- Offer sessions that fit in with family time and are flexible. This will help families work outdoor recreation into their busy family life.
- Encourage families to get involved during training or competition and help with tasks, such as scoring, being group/team manager, helping to instruct, safety marshal or looking after equipment. This helps families develop a sense of ownership and build relationships with other people in your organisations community.
- Invite families to help, instruct, or coach at your organisation and ensure they are adequately trained and supported.
- Ensure your organisation is inclusive and welcomes everyone in your local community. Work with other local organisations to understand local needs and find ways to welcome new participants.
- Create and promote a safe environment for children at your organisation. This could be a critical factor in attracting and retaining young participants.

