

# PLACEMENT / PRIORITY OF ACCESS

## POLICY STATEMENT

Our service offers care to eligible children and their potential enrolment in the preschool program. Guidelines are intended to assist our service with making enrolment decisions, in a way that seeks to allocate places to those in the greatest need, whilst also establishing relevance for our community needs.

Our service is encouraged to maximise the number of children with 600 hour enrolments in accordance with our funding guidelines.

## GOALS

Our service aims to provide preschool children with an accessible, affordable and quality educational care service to support children, their families and our community.

## STRATEGIES

### PRIORITY OF ACCESS

In accordance with NSW Department of Education's 'Start Strong for Community Preschools' program guidelines (Item 4.2), our service is required to give equal priority of access to:

- Children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> July in that preschool year, and not enrolled or registered at a school.
- Children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31<sup>st</sup> July in that preschool year and are:
  - Children from low income families
  - Children with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
  - Children with disability or additional needs
- Children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31<sup>st</sup> July in that preschool year with English language needs
- Children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective).

There is no order of priority assigned to the list of points above. Priority must be given to the groups outlined above before any other groups, including 3-year-olds not eligible for equity loading.

### WAITING LIST PROCESS

Our service requires all children to be registered on the waiting list database before discussions of placement or enrolment can take place.

A non-refundable administration fee is payable upon submission of the waiting list form.

Once added, a child will remain on the list until;

- 1) Enrolment is offered and accepted,
- 2) they year they turn 6 years of age, or
- 3) parent/guardian request to remove their child from the waiting list.
- 4) Several documented attempts to contact applicants have remained unsuccessful.

All criteria must be reviewed to establish priority before placement can be offered to a child intending to commence enrolment.

### OFFERS OF PLACEMENT

Placement offers for the upcoming year of preschool will commence from August the year prior.

Waiting List Sorting:

- 1) Priority of Access
- 2) Returning children from current year
- 3) Age of children: Oldest to youngest
- 4) Date of waiting list application

Contacting Applicants:

- 1) Email and online survey sent out to the first 80 names on list requesting confirmation of placement still required for upcoming year. Survey questions include;
  - a. Child's Name
  - b. Date of Birth (confirming the date of birth provided during application was correct)
  - c. Still interested in preschool placement, or
  - d. Not interested in preschool placement
  - e. Is child currently in care? Where?
  - f. Will child attend care other than preschool in following year?
  - g. Preferred days of preschool (cannot be promised)
  - h. Developmental notes, allergies, concernsA 2-week deadline is set for return of survey.
- 2) Reminder after 1 week for families to complete and submit their surveys to be considered for placement.
- 3) Upon due date of survey, all unresponsive applicants, or those who have nominated to opt out of placement offers will be removed from the waiting list.
- 4) All responding applicants will be invited to attend a meeting with Director and support staff to establish best opportunities for child's enrolment.
- 5) No child will be offered or guaranteed placement prior to meeting.

### CONFIRMATION OF PLACEMENT

Placement will be confirmed by the Preschool Director and support staff, in consultation with the child's parents / guardians, to ensure the most suitable options for education, care and support can be provided for each individual child's needs.

Upon confirmation, an enrolment package will be issued and required for completion in full by a designated due date prior to commencement of attendance.

Confirmation of enrolment will not be finalised until enrolment fee has been paid in full, and all associated paperwork and enrolment information has been received and processed.

### ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

*See Enrolment & Orientation Policy.*

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Approved Provider

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.

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- Providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and staff) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program.
- Ensuring that enrolment forms comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162.
- Ensuring that enrolment records are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for 3 years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183).
- Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where permitting the parent's entry would pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educator under the Law, or if it is believed that permitting the parent's entry would contravene a court order (Regulation 157).

## Nominated Supervisor

- Providing enrolment application forms
- Maintaining a waiting list
- Collecting, receipting and banking enrolment fees
- Offering places in line with this Policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this Policy.
- Storing completed enrolment documentation as per Privacy and Confidentiality Policy as soon as practicable.

## Educators

- Responding to enrolment enquiries and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required.
- Ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service.
- Developing strategies to assist new families to feel welcomed into the service and become familiar with service policies and procedures.

## Families

- Reading and complying with this policy.
- Complying with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations and with all service policies and procedures, while attending the service.
- Following directions of staff at the service, at all times, to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.
- Responding to enrolment enquiries and communications in a timely manner.
- Maintaining confidentiality in regards to enrolment discussions with the service, with consideration to other families also awaiting confirmation of placement opportunities.

## RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS, LEGISLATION

### National Quality Standards

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice  
Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1.3

### Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 166(3)  
Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 149, 168 (2)(i)(ii)

Australian Child Protection Legislation

[www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/Australian-child-protection-legislation](http://www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/Australian-child-protection-legislation)

### Office of the Childrens Guardian: Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in the organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved.

Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported.

Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.

Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.