Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

# Purpose

This policy outlines:

* the criteria for enrolment at
* the process to be followed when enrolling a child at
* the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
* procedures for the orientation of new families and children into
* processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

# Policy statement

## Values

 is committed to:

* equal access for all eligible children
* meeting the needs of the local community
* supporting families to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information
* maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
* ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

## Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, Persons in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at .

## Background and legislation

#### Background

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2) (k)).

It is intended that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to one year of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, a priority system for access must be determined by the Approved Provider in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places will vary from service to service, but is generally based on a service’s philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2012*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Criteria for access and inclusion are outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*). Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for families childcare package) Act 2017*(refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government’s *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act* 2010 have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions)*.

#### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

* *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
* [*Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/54d73763ef9dca36ca2571b6002428b0%21OpenDocument)
* *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
* *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
* *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
* *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
* *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 177, 183
* *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
* *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*
* *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
* *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
* *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015* (Vic)
* *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

* Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
* Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

## Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

**Acceptable immunisation documentation:** documentationas defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* as acceptable evidence that a child is fully vaccinated for their age, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind their vaccinations; or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated; or has been assessed as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

**Approved care:** Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers. Details are available at:
[www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/](http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/)

**Authorised nominee:** (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child’s enrolment form.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need to consider a risk assessment on an individual basis to determine if a person under the age of 18 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

**Child Care Subsidy (CCS):** A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Subsidy. Details are available at:
[www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/](http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/)

**Children with additional needs:** Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

**Deferral:** When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place, or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the April data collection. DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DET funding in the following year.

**Eligible child:** A child attending an early childhood education and care service as described in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* or a childin a kindergarten program who meets the requirements of both *The Kindergarten Guide* and the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services.*

**Enrolment application fee:** A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child’s enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

**Enrolment application form:** A form to apply for a place at the service.

**Enrolment form:** A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information on this form is placed on the child’s enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

**Enrolment record:** The collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including the enrolment form; details of any court orders; and immunisation documentation as specified in the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services*. This information is kept confidential by the service.

**Fee:** A charge for a place within a program at the service.

## Sources and related policies

#### Sources

* Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register)
* The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-legislation>
* *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: [www.acecqa.gov.au/](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/)
* *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: [www.acecqa.gov.au/](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/)
* *The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training)*:
[www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)
* Department of Health and Human Services, *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
* Victorian Department of Health: [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation)

#### Service policies

* *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
* *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
* *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
* *Fees Policy*
* *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
* *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

# Procedures

#### The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:

* determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at , based on funding requirements and the service’s philosophy (refer also to Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria)
* considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program
* complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
* appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (refer also to Attachment 2 – General enrolment procedures and Attachment 3 – Sample enrolment application form)
* providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) 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
* providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
* ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the child’s immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable
* assessing the child’s immunisation documentation **prior to enrolment** to determine if the child’s vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16 week grace period
* ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
* advising parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (see Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)
* taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
* ensuring that the enrolment form (refer to *Definitions*) complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
* ensuring that enrolment records (refer to *Definitions)* are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183)
* ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria
* reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
* ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

#### The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge and early childhood teachers are responsible for:

* reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
* responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child’s readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
* discussing the individual child’s needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
* encouraging parents/guardians to:
	+ stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
	+ make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
* assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
* sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child’s progress with regard to settling in to the service
* discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.

#### All educators are responsible for:

* responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
* providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
* developing strategies to assist new families to:
	+ feel welcomed into the service
	+ become familiar with service policies and procedures
	+ share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
	+ share their understanding of their child’s strengths, interests, abilities and needs
	+ discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child’s learning
* providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
* complying with the service’s *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child’s enrolment information.

#### Parents/guardians are responsible for:

* reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
* completing the enrolment application form and the enrolment form prior to their child’s commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child’s immunisation status
* where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child’s immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service
* ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service
* updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

**Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures**

# Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

* regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
* monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
* keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
* revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required
* make policies available at all times so that anyone can make comment on them.

**IN SUMMARY** Eltham South Preschool Policy for

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

1. Applicants for 3 year old kinder must go through Nillumbik Council.
2. Applicants for 4 year old kinder must go through Nillumbik Council.
3. Offers will be made according to enrolment procedures.
4. Children must have had their third birthday before they can attend preschool.

A child who is not 3 by the first day of the school year will only be able to start preschool when he/she has turned 3 by the 30th of April of that year, if a place is available. If a child is not 3 by the first day of the school year, but has been given a place, they will still have to pay full term fees to keep their place.

1. The maximum number of children in the 3 year old group will be 22.
2. All children are expected to be toilet trained prior to commencing 3 year old preschool.