



QUALITY AREA 6:
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND
COMMUNITIES

Enrolment & Orientation Policy

Policy Review Date: Feb 2019
Next Policy Review Date: Feb 2021

POLICY STATEMENT

Our service will implement a process to ensure enrolment and orientation processes are planned and implemented to meet the needs of the child and family, as well as ensuring all legislative requirements, including the Australian Government Priority of Access Guidelines are adhered to.

We will ensure:

- ▷ Children are provided with support and comfort to settle into the service and establish new friendships and relationships;
- ▷ A thoughtful process is planned in consultation with families, to assist in separating from their child;
- ▷ Educators are provided with a clearly explained enrolment process; time to get to know families before children start; strategies to support families in introducing children to our service, time to develop close professional relationships with families; support from referral agencies; and information about custodial issues;
- ▷ Home language, cultural background and family priorities are considered at all times during the process.

GOALS

Enrolment and orientation procedures form the foundation for strong relationships between families and early education and care settings and promote a quality experience of education and care for children. Good procedures include consistent information around service operation and authorisations, promoting compliance and a safe and secure environment for children and families.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Katoomba Leura Preschool.

STRATEGIES

Enrolment

Enrolments will be accepted according to the Australian Government 'Priority of Access'. Parents/guardians will be advised that families of children enrolled with lower priority of access may be required to alter their days or leave the service in order to provide a place for a higher priority child.

The Priority of Access:

- ☉ Children in their year before school (being at least 4 years old on or before 31st July in the year of preschool enrolment)
- ☉ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children (being at least 3 years old on or before 31st July in the year of preschool enrolment)
- ☉ Children from low income Health Care Card holding families (being at least 3 years old on or before 31st July in the year of preschool enrolment)
- ☉ Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (being at least 3 years old on or before 31st July in the year of preschool enrolment)
- ☉ Children with disabilities
- ☉ Children who are at risk of harm

Katoomba Leura Preschool endeavours to meet the needs of children and families in our community while complying with the above guidelines.

Enrolment Form

The enrolment form must be completed by each enrolling family. Where enrolling families are not fluent in English the enrolment meeting will, wherever possible be conducted in the families primary language. At enrolment, parents are encouraged to provide any further information about their child that will support continuity of care between home and the service.

The enrolment record will include the following information for each child:

- ▷ Full name, date of birth and address of the child.
- ▷ Birth Certificate, Passport or other identification;
- ▷ Name, address and contact details of each parent of the child; any emergency contacts; any person nominated by the parent to collect the child from the service; any person authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication to the child; any person authorised to give approval for an educator to take the child out of the service.
- ▷ Details of court orders, parenting orders or plans.
- ▷ Details of court orders relating to the child's residence or contact with a parent or other person.
- ▷ Gender of the child.
- ▷ Language used in the child's home.
- ▷ Cultural background of the child and child's parents.
- ▷ Any special considerations for the child (e.g. cultural, religious or dietary requirements or additional need).
- ▷ Authorisations for our service to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service, and transportation of the child by an ambulance service.
- ▷ Authorisation for the service to take the child on regular outings.
- ▷ Authorisation for the children to be relocated in the event of an emergency evacuation.

- ▷ Name, address and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service.
- ▷ Child's Medicare number (if available).
- ▷ Details of any specific healthcare needs of the child including any medical condition.
- ▷ Details of any allergies or anaphylaxis diagnosis.
- ▷ Any medical management plan, anaphylaxis/asthma/diabetic management or risk minimisation plan.
- ▷ Details of dietary restrictions for the child.
- ▷ Immunisation status of the child - a vaccination certificate
- ▷ All information will be checked before enrolment is complete including a copy of the Immunisation Certificate, ensuring all enrolled children are fully immunised. Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule will still be able to be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner.

A Privacy Statement attached to the enrolment form which details:

- ▷ the name and contact details of the service;
- ▷ the fact that enrolling parents/guardians are able to gain access to their information;
- ▷ why the information is collected;
- ▷ the organisations to which the information may be disclosed;
- ▷ any law that requires the particular information to be collected;
- ▷ the main consequences for not providing the required information.

Enrolment forms will be updated annually or when a family's circumstances change, to ensure information is current and correct.

Custody Arrangements

The Education and Care Services National Law requires our service to have details of all custodial and access arrangements.

- ▷ Enrolling family members are responsible for informing the Director of custody and access arrangements on enrolment, and must advise the Director immediately of any subsequent alterations to these arrangements.
- ▷ All relevant legal documentation is to be shown to the Director and a copy will be maintained in the child's enrolment record. Orientation The orientation and settling in period will consider and respect the needs of both families and children. Parents/guardians will be encouraged to remain with their child when delivering or collecting them for as long a period as the parent/guardian and/or educators feel may be necessary to ensure the child's wellbeing.

We will always consider the feelings and time constraints that families may have in regard to participating in orientation processes and aim to make the experience a positive and welcoming introduction to the service.

Our service will provide options for orientation to the education and care service for families which includes:

- ▷ Inviting new families to visit the service with their child at times that suit them, to familiarise families with the service prior to the child's attendance.
- ▷ Providing all new families with a conducted tour of the premises which will include introductions to other educators, children and families, and that highlights specific policies and procedures that families need to know about our service.
- ▷ Ensuring each family has a copy of the Family Handbook and an opportunity to have any questions answered.
- ▷ Supporting family members the opportunity to stay with their child during the settling in process.
- ▷ Ensuring all new families are encouraged to share information about their child and any concerns, doubts or anxieties they may have in regard to enrolling their child at the service.

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)).

Katoomba Leura Preschool is a government funded, community based, non-profit Preschool, open to all members of the community aged between 3 and 5 years. However resources and positions for children are finite. The enrolment process must ensure that positions are allocated in an equitable manner. Enrolment and Orientation procedures are an important aspect of building solid foundations for an ongoing relationship with children and their families. It is an important opportunity for sharing of information between the centre, the child and their family. Good procedures include consistent information around service operation and authorizations promoting compliance and a safe and secure environment for children and families.

RELATED LEGISLATION

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- ▷ Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- ▷ Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 168(2) (k), 160, 161, 162, 177, 183
- ▷ Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- ▷ Public Health Act 2010 No 127: Part 5 Division 4, Section 87
- ▷ Health records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)
- ▷ Family Assistance Law www.dss.gov.au

RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS

- ▷ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children - Standard 5.1, 5.2
- ▷ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standard 6.1
- ▷ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1

SOURCES

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – www.deewr.gov.au
- CELA Enrolment and Orientation Sample Policy - <https://www.cela.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Resources/enrolment-and-orientation.pdf>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/
- Guide to the National Quality www.acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/

RELATED SERVICE POLICIES

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Fees Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ▷ Ensuring 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.
- ▷ 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 three 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 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 staff under the Law (Regulation 157).

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ▷ Providing enrolment application forms.
- ▷ Maintaining a waiting list.
- ▷ Maintaining an immunization register.
- ▷ 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.
- ▷ Providing a monthly report to the approved provider regarding the status of enrolments.
- ▷ Storing completed enrolment application forms in a lockable file (refer to privacy and confidentiality policy) as soon as is practicable.

Early Childhood Educators are responsible for:

- ▷ Acting in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- ▷ Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis 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.
- ▷ 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 staff under the Law (Regulation 157).
- ▷ Developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - » feel welcomed into the service;
 - » become familiar with service policies and procedures;
 - » to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child.
- ▷ Providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members.
- ▷ Sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- ▷ complying with this Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- ▷ completing enrolment forms prior to their child's commencement at the service
- ▷ ensuring that all 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.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT 1: Preparing and settling children

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.

Policy Reviewed by: Alison Staniford

Date: 25th February 2019

Approved by: Management Committee

Next Review Date: 25th February 2021

ATTACHMENT 1

Preparing and settling your child

Orientation

Separation from home and saying goodbye to Mum, Dad or Carer can cause real anxiety for some preschoolers. To ensure that your child experiences a happy, relaxed and confident entry into Preschool, we need the cooperation and assistance of parents/carers. Please accept our invitation to visit the Preschool at least once before starting preschool to become orientated and make connections.

Before coming to preschool talk to your child about it to ensure your child knows what to expect (e.g. talk about what will happen during the day). Research shows that the parent's reaction is a key factor in determining how their child copes with separation. If you approach the idea in a positive way, then it is more than likely that Preschool will be a positive experience.

- ☉ It's a good idea to help your child put his/her bag in their locker. Please tell your children that this is the place to put their possessions e.g. shoes, socks, and other clothing. Help them to place their lunch and snack containers in the fridge.
- ☉ Show your child where their hat will be stored in the hat pockets.
- ☉ Ensure your child learns a direct route to the bathroom and tell your child's educator if your child may need assistance with toileting.
- ☉ Learn the teacher's names with your child.
- ☉ Please make time to pass on any useful information about your child's experiences and interests. Share observations and any concerns with your child's educators.

Starting Preschool

For the first few days, you are encouraged to spend time to settle your child into morning activities each morning until he/she builds rapport with at least one educator. When you are ready to leave, please tell an educator and then say goodbye to your child, reassuring them that you will return to collect them. Be positive! Do not allow your own anxieties to be seen by your child, as he/she may mirror your feelings and become distressed unnecessarily.

Please avoid dragging out the goodbye. Long good-byes (lacking adult confidence) heighten the emotional intensity of the experience and will impede the settling process. Have your own goodbye ritual, such as a hug or a kiss or waving goodbye through the window.

Please resist the temptation to sneak out while your child isn't watching to avoid separation tears and tantrums. This can be very distressing for your child. They learn not to trust that you won't disappear at any moment.

If your child is upset, please do not hesitate to seek the assistance of an educator to ease the separation process. Preschool is a new experience and like any other, it takes a while to get used to it. For some children this is a first separation into an unfamiliar environment. Be assured that the educators will be patient and understanding. Each child will respond in his or her own way to this new experience. Below are some typical responses, which may be useful for you to know:

- Some children seem very happy to separate from their parents and are keen to explore a new environment. They hardly notice that their parent leaves and aren't interested in saying goodbye.
- Other children continue to be happy for several weeks and then suddenly seem to dislike being left. At this point separation can be difficult and children may cling or cry.
- Some children cry when their parent leaves for the first few times. Sometimes those tears only last a few minutes and they are consoled by an educator and quickly become interested in an activity.

- At times, children don't cry but prolong the separation by clinging or asking a parent to stay and play for longer periods.
- Some children like to follow or be with an educator or need individual attention for a period of time before settling in.

Be prepared to come back if necessary. If your child continues to cry after 5 minutes, we will call you to decide together what to do next. Be assured that every effort will be made to reassure, comfort and divert your child's attention. We never leave a crying child alone. One of our caring educators will be there.

Please talk to our educators if you are finding separation difficult. We will work together to find the best solution for you and your child.

We welcome your phone calls during the day to talk to the educators about your child's well-being and how they are settling in.

After your child starts preschool:

- 📍 Help them to make connections - find out who they enjoyed playing with and invite them to play out of preschool hours;
- 📍 Stay abreast with the program; and
- 📍 Contribute to the preschool community when you can.