

WCS Children's Services

ADMINISTRATION – Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Purpose

For many children and their families, commencing child care is their first experience of separation. It is an experience that can be daunting and should be managed so that the process is as smooth as possible for all involved, especially the child.

The experiences of families and their children during the enrolment and orientation processes strongly influence the quality of their future relationships with the service.

Policy Statement

This policy outlines the way the service welcomes parents/guardians and their children, informs them about the service's policies and procedures, and gathers the information necessary to ensure the safety, education and care of the children.

Strategies and practices

Pre-enrolment

- The service follows the Australian Government's "Priority of Access Guidelines" for allocating childcare places. Once these guidelines are met, the service prioritises siblings of children who are already attending.
- During the initial contact, parents/guardians are provided with basic information about the service, its programs, routines and fees, and are shown through the service, if required. When families indicate their interest in enrolling their child, they are shown across the service and provided with information about its operation (e.g. opening and closing times, program, meals, policies and procedures, fees, documentation required before commencing at the Service and tailored orientation), if required. Possible start dates are discussed. Parents/guardians are also invited to ask any questions they may have. They are given a copy of the Parent Handbook to keep.
- The Supervisor/educator ascertains if the child has any special education and care requirements (e.g. medical, English as a second language) so that these needs can be met by the service from the child's first day of attendance. Families are asked to complete the Family and Child Information Summary or equivalent.
- Parents/guardians are given a reminder to contact the Family Assistance Office to have their eligibility for child care benefit assessed. This information is required prior to formal enrolment.
- Where appropriate, the Supervisor/educator informs parents that every child and family responds differently to starting childcare, especially if it is the first time that children and families have been separated for any lengthy period. They are also told that if needed, at enrolment time, educators and parents will plan to ensure the child settles in as smoothly and as quickly as possible.

Enrolment

- When a vacancy occurs and if required, the Supervisor arranges for parents/guardians and their child to visit and become familiar with the service before the child commences, as required. During the visit, they are shown through the service and introduced to the educators. At this time, some children like to participate in the activities while others prefer to watch.
- Once parents/guardians decide to enrol their child, they complete an enrolment form prior to their child commencing at the service. The enrolment form contains the following details:
 - Full name, date of birth and address of the child
 - Name, address and contact details of: each known parent/guardian of the child; any person who is to be notified of an emergency involving the child if neither parent/guardian of the child can be immediately contacted; and, any person who is an authorised nominee.
 - The name of any person who is authorised to consent to medical treatment of, or to authorise administration of medication to, the child; and, any person who is authorised to authorise an educator to take the child outside the education and care service premises.
 - Details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans provided to the approved provider relating to powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of any person in relation to the child or access to the child. The service will only prohibit collection of a child if the child is expressly named on the order. Parenting plans are not interpreted by the service.
 - Details of any other court orders provided to the approved provider relating to the child's residence or the child's contact with a parent or other person.
 - Gender of the child.
 - Language used in the child's home.
 - Cultural background of the child and, if applicable, of the child's family.
 - Any special considerations for the child, such as any cultural, religious or dietary requirements or additional needs.
 - Parents/guardians are asked to sign an agreement on the enrolment form authorising the approved provider, Supervisor or an educator to: seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service; arrange transportation of the child by an ambulance service; and, if relevant, take the child on regular outings. Refer to the service's *Excursion Policy*.
- Parents/guardians are to provide the following health information.
 - Name, address and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service and the child's Medicare details.
 - Details of any specific healthcare needs or known medical conditions such as allergies, asthma, diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis.
 - Any medical management plan or risk minimisation plan to be followed with respect to a specific healthcare need or medical condition (e.g. asthma, allergy, anaphylaxis).

- Details of any dietary restrictions for the child.
- Immunisation status of the child. Refer to the service's *Immunisation of Children and Staff Policy*.
- Parents/guardians are asked to include about the family and child:
 - Information about the child's interests, needs, likes and dislikes
 - Cultural background, and any special customs and religious requirements to be respected
 - Goals for the child
 - Food preferences
 - Routines at home
 - Toilet training needs
 - Names of family members and pets.
- Parents/guardians are provided with written information about fee structure, payment regularity and options available (direct debit or other). Parents/guardians nominate their preferred method of payment at this time.
- The service's policies and procedures are discussed, and parents'/guardians' attention drawn to specific policies (e.g. *sun protection, nutrition, hand washing*) and aspects of those policies that require their support and cooperation (e.g. ensuring current contact information, appropriate food and drink items provided from home, providing a hat, labelling of all clothes and other personal items). Parents/guardians are then shown where they can readily access these policies and procedures and other resources. They are also provided with a parent handbook.
- The Supervisor/educator then speaks to the parents/guardians about the various ways the service communicates with them (e.g. face-to-face, notice boards, emails, newsletters, individual child pockets) and ways that parents/guardians can converse with the service (e.g. face-to-face, suggestion box, surveys). The information provided by the service is intended to be easily understood by all parents, including those for whom English is a second language.
- If required, the Supervisor/educator, the educator in the child's room and the parents/guardians devise a flexible orientation plan to help the child settle during the transition from home to the service (particularly during the initial settling in period), and how best to maintain continuity between home and the service. The plan can be altered at any time. It is crucial that the child feels secure, and that positive interactions are established between all parties – child, parents and educators.
- Once the child commences at the service, parents/guardians are contacted if requested or it is necessary at any time the child becomes distressed. Parents/guardians are also informed about their child's day when they collect the child, and are welcome to telephone the service throughout the day for updates.

Transitioning to a new room (if applicable)

- Children are transitioned to the next age group when they are developmentally ready to move to the next age group and a vacancy occurs. When educators identify that a child is ready to begin transition, and a vacancy is imminent, they

contact parents/guardians to discuss the desirability of the move and to obtain their input.

- Once all parties have agreed that the move is in the child's best interests, a letter is composed formalising the agreement. It details the day and date of the move, the names of the educators in the new room and any other relevant information. Parents/guardians are also asked to complete the service's "Child's Routine and Update to Routine Form."
- Before children are officially moved to a new room, their current educators talk to them about the impending move and the children then visit the next age group a number of times. The frequency depends on individual children.
- Immediately prior to the child's official move, parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the child's new room and to meet the educators to ensure that they are aware of such matters as room routine, location of lockers, and sign-in and sign-out sheets.

Transition to school

Attending school for the first time is a major change for the child and the family. The service recognises that parents play a vital role in the success of the transition, and supports and works with parents to prepare children for school entry.

- Wherever possible, the service provides families with information about the schools within the local community.
- The service may provide information to parents/guardians about children's readiness for school.
- Educators speak to children about starting school and ensure that the information they provide to children is positive and accurate.
- The service may liaise with the nearest government school and, towards the end of the year, arranges with the school for a number of familiarisation visits for the children who will attend the following year.
- The service coordinates the transition statements to be completed by the educator, parent/guardian and child, and provides these to the school, if requested.

Responsibilities of parents/guardians

- To provide the service with information about their family and their child's needs and interests.
- To provide all of the required documentation, and on-going current information.
- To read and discuss service policies and procedures.
- Should parenting circumstances change, either evidence of legally binding new arrangements or by mutual agreement, new enrolment forms can be completed by both parents. If no agreements are in place, the original enrolment arrangements remain in place.

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Managing Infectious Diseases
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy Relationships with Children Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Sun Protection Policy

Links to Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
	78	Food and beverages
	79	Service providing food and beverages
	80	Weekly menu
	81	Sleep and rest
	85	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
	88	Infectious diseases
	90	Medical conditions policy
	92	Medication record
	93	Administration of medication
	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
	99	Children leaving the education and care services
	100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
	101	Conduct of risk assessment
	102	Authorisation for excursions
	157	Access for parents
	160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider
	161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
	173	Prescribed information to be displayed
	177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider
	181	Confidentiality of records kept by provider
	183	Storage of records and other records
QA	1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.

1.1.3	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
1.2.1	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.3	Each child's agency is promoted enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
1.3.3	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.
2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2.1	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.
6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
6.2.3	The service builds relationships and engages with its community.
7.2.1	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

Sources, further reading and useful websites

Useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2017
- National Quality Standard 2018
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc <http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/> September 2016
- Boyle, L. (2009). *NCAC Factsheet: Settling your child into care* <http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/factsheets/settling.pdf> accessed 5 March 2012
- Dr. B. Abbey and P. Maclean, NQS - the complete system of policies, procedures and forms, <http://www.childcarebydesign.com.au/> September 2016

Further reading

- Information for families using child care - fact sheet kit for 2011-2012 <http://education.gov.au/fact-sheet-kit-families-using-child-care> September 2016

Useful websites

- Department of Education and Training - <http://education.gov.au/> September 2016

Policy review

This policy is a living document and will be monitored and reviewed as issues are identified. Proposed changes will be circulated and discussed by all programs and any external stakeholders for approval.

Person Responsible for Review:

Manager, Children's Services

Implementation Date:	12 th September 2016	Review Date:	September 2018
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Modification History

Date	Sections and/or Paragraphs	Source	Details
12/2016	Whole document		formatting
22/1/2018	Quality Areas	Revised National Quality Standard 2018	

Related Documents

Refer to HR Manual –cross reference to WCS documents such as: WCS Services Guide, WCS Values and Strategic Plan.

Approved by Susan Henderson, Manager, Children's Services.



Date: 16 January 2017