



# Enrolment and Orientation Policy

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## Policy Statement

Entrusting their child’s wellbeing, safety and education to Child Australia’s Services is a big step for parents, especially first-time parents or parents from diverse backgrounds or children with different abilities and needs. Child Australia supports equal opportunity principles and considers that it has an obligation to promote equal access to the services it provides within Australian Government guidelines. The enrolment process considers all requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the guidelines contained within the Australian Government Child Care Service Handbook Child Australia’s Services understand the importance of an orientation process that provides clear guidelines to families to help families and children to settle into the service successfully and requires that educators sensitively implement the policy to ensure the wellbeing of the child.

## Rationale

The enrolment process is open and equitable. Enrolments will be subject to Australian Government priority of access guidelines. In the interests of children’s welfare and protection, access to children referred to the service by appropriate agencies will be accommodated wherever possible, whilst still ensuring the safety and care of every child at the service.

Families will be carefully oriented to the service before their children attend. The orientation process is a time for educators to share information with families about how the service operates and how the child is settling within the service. It is also a time for families to share information about the child and their expectations of the service.

The Orientation process ensures that the regulations are adhered to:

**Regulation 160:** Mandates that approved providers maintain an enrolment record for each child, containing specific information.

**Regulation 161:** Requires that enrolment records include authorisations from parents or guardians for medical treatment, regular outings, and transportation.



**Regulation 162:** Specifies that health information, such as medical conditions, allergies, and immunisation status, must be included in the enrolment record.

**Regulation 168:** Obliges services to have policies and procedures concerning enrolment and orientation.

**Regulation 170:** Ensures that the approved provider takes reasonable steps to guarantee that the service's policies and procedures are followed

## Responsibility

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### Approved Provider:

The Approved Provider ensures that relevant policies and procedures are in place.

### Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons:

Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons ensure

- That staff are familiar with and adhere to relevant policies and procedures.
- All records held at the service are maintained in accordance with Records Management and Confidentiality and Privacy Policy.

### Staff:

Staff ensure they are familiar with and adhere to relevant policies and procedures.

### Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians ensure they provide all relevant documents and information.

## Procedures

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### Enrolments

- Enrolments will be accepted according to the Australian Government 'Priority of Access'. Parents/guardians will be advised that families of children enrolled with third priority access may be required to alter their days or leave the service in order to provide a place for a higher priority child.
- An Enrolment Form must be completed by each enrolling family. Where enrolling families are not fluent in English the enrolment interview will wherever possible be conducted in their primary language utilising an interpreter service if required. On enrolment families will be given a Parent Handbook.
- The thorough enrolment form is completed by parents either online or paper based.



- At enrolment parents are encouraged to provide any further information about their child that will support continuity of care between home and the service.
- At enrolment parents will be asked to complete a dietary requirement form should their child require specific food for medical reasons (i.e. allergies, anaphylaxis or intolerances) or due to personal choices or reasons ( i.e. vegan, halal)
- Enrolment Forms will be updated annually or when a family's circumstances change, to ensure information is current and correct. This will be done through re-enrolment forms or a new full enrolment form.
- Enrolment information will be kept in a confidential file as per the Records Management Policy.
- If a place is not immediately available at the service, the family may be put onto a waiting list. At this stage they will be asked to complete a Wait List Form online which details the family's names and addresses, care needs and priority of access eligibility and pay a waitlist fee.
- Once entered onto the waiting list it is necessary for the family to contact the service at the end of each month to confirm their continued wish to remain on the list. When a place becomes available the family will be contacted, and enrolment may proceed.
- Children who are not enrolled must only be present at the service on a temporary basis, and under the direct supervision of their parent/guardian or other responsible adult.

## Referrals

- Referral agency officers will be required to provide verifiable identification before being admitted to the service.
- Acceptance of a referral will be dependent upon:
  - The service having the required resources to appropriately care for the child(ren)
  - Completion of a Confidential Referral to Childcare Service Form by the referring agency
  - A visit from the referring agency (case manager) to:
    - Provide Information about the referral.
    - Clarify any special conditions of enrolment.
    - Provide necessary details about the child(ren)'s care arrangements including foster care details.
    - Determine a suitable orientation process (child to the service / staff to children's needs)



- Subsequent enrolment according to the service's usual enrolment procedure
- Ensure that children are enrolled with the Child Care Management System before care commences.
- Agreement to a debriefing from the case manager at the conclusion of the referral period.
- The referral agency will be invoiced for the scheduled childcare fee.
- The service will always ensure the strictest confidentiality in relation to information about referred children. Access to confidential information will only be given on a need-to-know basis. However, educators involved in the care of referred children will be provided with information that is essential to ensure the safety and protection of both the referred child(ren) and other children in care.

## Orientation

The service will provide an orientation to the service for families which includes:

- Providing all new families with a conducted tour of the premises which will include introductions to other educators/staff, children, and families at the service, and highlight specific policies and procedures that families need to know about the service.
- Ensuring each family has a copy of the Parent Handbook and an opportunity to have any questions answered.
- Recommending at least one orientation (pre-commencement) visit where the parent stays with the child for a period to view and become familiar with the routine of the room, the educators and to provide the child with an opportunity to explore the new environment with the security of parental support. Depending upon the child's needs, more than one orientation visit may be required.
- On these visits, the parent is required to stay in the service and the family is not charged for attendance.
- Ensuring all new families are encouraged to share information about their child and any concerns, doubts, or anxieties they may have regarding enrolling their child at the service.
- When children first attend the service the needs of both families and children will be respected. 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.
- The parent/guardian will be encouraged to telephone the service during the day for reassurance that their child has settled in.



- Families will be assisted to develop a routine for saying goodbye to their child.
- Children who are distressed at separating from their family will be held and comforted by the educator, and closely observed and offered reassurance until they are settled.
- The service will always consider the feelings and time constraints that families may have regarding participating in orientation processes and aim to make the experience a positive and welcoming introduction to the service. However, the needs of the child are paramount and should be considered the priority.

## Related Documents and Forms

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Parent Handbook

Enrolment Form

Referral to Childcare Service Form

Waitlist Form Ongoing Medical

Ongoing Medical Conditions Policy

Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management Policy

Asthma Management Policy

## References

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Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), Child Care Service Handbook. Section 4.9: Information Management, Section 5.5: Key obligations imposed on approved child care services under family assistance law, Section 6.3: Priority of access, Section 6.10: Reporting of vacancy.

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011). *Regulations under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*. Available at: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations> (Accessed: 4 December 2024).