

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

PURPOSE

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at BCYF (Barwon, Child Youth & Family) Education and Care Services
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at BCYF Education and Care Services
- the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into BCYF Education and Care Services
- 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

1. VALUES

BCYF Education and Care Services are 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.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at BCYF Education and Care Services.

3. 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 (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011* (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*. The introduction of legislation, known as 'No Jab, No Play' requires children to be fully vaccinated before they can commence at early childhood education and care services, or be participating in a recognised catch-up schedule.

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)
- *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
 - Standard 6.1: Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained
 - Element 6.1.1: There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
- *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/>

4. 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: documentation as 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 Subsidy payments on behalf of eligible families accessing long day care services. Details are available at:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

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:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

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 child in 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 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.

Kindergarten Placement Offer deposit: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the service. This is deducted from term fees.

Kindergarten Registration fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's kindergarten registration on the wait list excluding families who are verified as qualifying for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS) or Early Start Kindergarten (ESK)

Registration form: A form to apply for a place at the service.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:
www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- Child Care Subsidy(Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L00826>
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:* www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard:* www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training):*
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services 2015:*
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation>
- Victorian Department of Health: 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 is responsible for:

- developing and implementing a registration, offers, enrolment and orientation process and policy
- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at BCYF Education and Care Services based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy
- 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*
- the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy

- 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
- 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 and early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- reviewing enrolment forms to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- reviewing the early years enrolment and consent form for each child and to ensure that all areas have been completed before orientation occurs.
- implementing an orientation program and plan that meets the individual needs of children and families, and complies with DET funding criteria
- meet parent/guardian and discuss health and wellbeing needs of children diagnosed with Anaphylaxis, Asthma, diabetes and or allergy which requires an action plan, and/or a risk minimisation and communication plan

- 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.

When accessing kindergarten parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- reading and complying with the BCYF *Fees policy*
- completing the enrolment and consent 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.

When accessing a long day care service parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Lodging a claim for Child Care Subsidy with Centrelink
- Agreeing to and confirming the compliant written arrangement relating to the care of a child
- confirming the enrolment notice submitted by the provider
 - Once this enrolment process is successfully completed, entitlements can be calculated and payments made.
- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- reading and complying with the BCYF *Fees policy*

- completing the enrolment and consent form prior to the child's commencement at the service and providing approved immunisation documentation of the child's immunisation status
- ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing approved immunisation documentation to the service, where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule
- 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
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Eligibility and priority of access criteria Attachment 2 **2020 Registration and Enrolment Timeframe**

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of BCYF on

REVIEW DATE:

ATTACHMENT 1
Eligibility and Priority of Access Criteria

**City of Greater Geelong, Bethany Kindergarten Services &
 BCYF (Barwon Child, Youth & Family)
 Kindergarten Registration
 Priority of Access Criteria**

All children who turn four before the 30th of April in the year before school are eligible to access a funded kindergarten program. Allocation of places is based on the following Priority of Access Criteria.

Priority Criteria	Determined by:
<p>Priority 1 Criteria:</p> <p>Victorian Kindergarten Guidelines Criteria</p> <p>Children at risk of abuse or neglect and children in Out of Home Care</p> <p>Children exposed to increased vulnerability as evidenced by referral from child protection, early intervention and/or family support agency</p> <p>Children that have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with <i>The Victorian Kindergarten Guide, Part B Guidelines for a second year of kindergarten</i> (page 67)</p> <p>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children. (Family identifies the child as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander).</p> <p>Children with additional needs, as defined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ who require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program ▪ who require a combination of services which are individually planned ▪ who have an identified specific disability or developmental delay <p>Children holding, or has a parent or guardian who holds one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a Commonwealth Health Care Card ▪ a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card 	<p>The child is attending a three year old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning, or referred by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Protection ▪ Child and Family Services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST) ▪ Maternal and Child Health nurse, or ▪ Out-of-Home Care provider <p>The child is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten</p> <p>Family identifies the child as a Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</p> <p>The child is approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the National Disability Insurance Scheme ▪ Early Childhood Intervention Service ▪ Preschool Field Officer, or ▪ Maternal and Child Health nurse <p>The child has Disability Health Care Card Appropriate card with child's name referenced</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card ▪ a Refugee/Special Humanitarian Visa 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212,213, 214, 215, 216, or 217 ▪ Asylum Seeker Bridging Visa A, B, C, D, E or F ▪ The child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child ▪ (triplets or more) 	
<p>Priority 2 Criteria: Children who have prior association with the centre.</p>	Identified by the family.
<p>Priority 3 Criteria: (Colac) Children who live in Colac Otway Shire Children whose families are in the process of moving to Colac Otway Shire Children who are cared for in with the Colac Otway Shire Children whose families work or study in Colac Otway Shire</p> <p>Priority 3 Criteria: (Geelong) Children who live in the City of Greater Geelong. Children whose families are in the process of moving to the City of Greater Geelong. Children who are cared for in with the City of Greater Geelong Children whose families work or study in the City of Greater Geelong</p>	Identified by the family.

In the event that all criteria (above) are equal, positions shall be determined by ballot.

ATTACHMENT 2

2020 Registration and Enrolment Timeframe

Date	Action
Wednesday 30 th January 2019	Registrations process opens
Friday 21 st June 2019	first round registrations close
Monday 15 th July 2019	First round offers are sent to families
Friday 26 th July 2019	First round acceptances due back
Monday 5 th August 2019	Second round offers are sent to families
Friday 16 th August 2019	Second round acceptances due back
Monday 19 th August 2019	Registrations for 2020 ongoing

*BCYF reserves the right to alter this timeline if required