



Enrolment and Orientation Policy (This policy replaces and combines the previous Enrolment policies for Dubbo and District and Buninyong Preschools)

1. Introduction

Dubbo and District Preschools 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 NSW Government Priority of Access Guidelines are adhered to.

1.1 Relevant Legislation & Quality Framework

Early Childhood Education and Care Services National law & Regulations

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Relationships with Children - Standard 4.2

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities - Standard 6.1

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management – Standard 7.3

1.2 Related Documents

Enrolment Procedures

1.3 Links to Other Policies

Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy

Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

Incident, Injury and Trauma Policy

Emergency and Evacuation Policy

Excursions Policy

Governance and Management Policy

Interactions with Children Policy

Complaints Handling Policy

Fees

Safe Transportation of Children Policy

2. Scope

This policy applies to children, families, carers, staff, and management of the Preschool.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline our enrolment processes in keeping with the legislative requirements and in line with Priority of Access Guidelines for NSW State Government funded preschools.



4. Priority of Access and grouping guidelines

For NSW state funded community-based preschools, the *Priority of Access Guidelines* are defined by NSW State Government funding agreements. Preschool providers are also required to adhere to the Early Childhood Education and Care Grants Program Priority of Access Guidelines. These guidelines require services to give priority access to:

- a) Children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not yet in compulsory schooling
- b) Children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July and from a disadvantaged background (i.e., from a family holding a low-income Health Care Card and/or is Aboriginal)
- c) Children with English as a second language (ESL)
- d) Children with disabilities
- e) Children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective).

Buninyong Preschool guidelines:

Priority of access will also be given for those children who live in the Buninyong Public School catchment area.

Dubbo and District Preschool guidelines:

- a) 4–5-year-old classes - children must turn 4 before 31 January in year of enrolment.
- b) 3–4-year-old classes- children must turn 3 before the 31 January in the year of enrolment.

Note: Children must be 3 years of age before starting preschool as per the licensing requirement. This ensures that opportunities to attend are maximized and the preschool maintains full enrolments.

Dubbo and District Preschools recognise that some families of children meeting the priority of access guidelines may not make application for waitlist or enrolment until closer to the date they wish their child to start. To support these children and families:

10 places at Dubbo and District preschool and

4 places at Buninyong Preschool will be reserved for these children and filled as requested, until the first week in December of the year prior to starting. If these places are unfilled at this time, due to no request for enrolment, then the places will be offered to children from our waitlist.

5. Our 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.



6. Our strategies

Pre-Enrolment

Dubbo and District Preschool welcomes visits from prospective families and children. The Nominated Supervisor or delegated authority may provide the visiting family with a tour of the service environment and information that may include:

- a) service philosophy and curriculum.
- b) approaches to documentation, curriculum and planning.
- c) introduction to educators and staff.
- d) the physical environment.
- e) administrative matters, cost, and fee payment methods.
- f) How to provide feedback.

Waitlist

Waitlists remain open all year round. Children's names can be placed on our waitlist at any time through the year. Children must be born and hold a birth certificate to go on our waitlist.

The waitlist only becomes active from the end of term 1 /early term 2 for children on the waitlist who are turning three years old prior to the 31st January the following year.

Any emails sent to those active on our waitlist (turning 3 by 31st January the following year) must provide a response to ensure the waitlist application details are current. Failure to respond will be taken as no longer requiring a position and will result in removal from the waitlist.

Enrolment

Dubbo and District preschool will provide to families upon enrolment:

- a) Enrolment form-that includes authorisations.
- b) Current fee structure and payment details.
- c) Policies including, but not limited to, those required under Regulation 168. These are available on our website.
- d) The Family handbook

Withdrawal of Enrolment

Dubbo and District Preschools reserves the right to withdraw enrolment after a period of non-attendance to ensure our services are utilised and children are provided access. (See procedures)

7. Custody Arrangements



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

- a) 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.
- b) All relevant legal documentation is to be shown to the Director and a copy will be maintained in the child's enrolment record.

8. Orientation

The orientation 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 regarding 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:

- a) Inviting new families to visit the service with their child on our Open Days, at our orientation session or at alternative times that are mutually suitable, to familiarise families with the service prior to the child's attendance.
- b) Providing all new families if requested, with a conducted tour of the premises on 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.
- c) Ensuring each family has an opportunity to have any questions answered.
- d) Supporting family members with the opportunity to stay with their child during the settling in process.
- e) Ensuring all new families are encouraged to share information about their child and any concerns, doubts, or anxieties they may have about enrolling their child at the service.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- a) Ensure the service always operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 about the delivery and collection of children.
- b) 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.
- c) Ensuring that enrolment forms (refer to Definitions) comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162.



- d) 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).
- e) 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).

Nominated Supervisor

- a) Oversight of the enrolment process:
 - The provision of enrolment application forms,
 - Maintaining the waitlist
 - Offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority of access
 - Providing paperwork to families in accordance with this policy
- b) Providing a monthly report to the approved provider regarding the status of enrolments.
- c) Storing completed enrolment application forms confidentially (refer to privacy and confidentiality policy).
- d) Acting in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- e) Responding to enrolment enquiries in a timely manner and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required.
- f) Ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child's commencement at the service.
- g) 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).

Early Childhood Educators

- a) 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.
- b) Providing comfort and reassurance to children who may be anxious or upset when separating from family members.
- a) Sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress regarding settling into the service.

Families

- a) Reading and complying with this policy.



- b) Disclose of all aspects of their child's needs from waitlist application and continuing through enrolment; including diagnosis, medical history, current investigations, and any concerns or questions regarding development, toileting, and behaviour. (This supports the child's needs being met and a supportive placement) Failure to do so may result in the child's needs not being met and impact the care provided to that child and others. For this reason enrolment may be terminated for non disclosure if needs cannot be accommodated.
- c) From enrolment, share information about their child's needs, medical history, illness, or any concerns they may have with educators.
- d) Respond to email requests to verify they still desire a position and wish to remain active on the waitlist.
- e) Communicate with the preschool to advise of their child's absence from preschool and intended duration.

10. 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.

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.

SOURCES

- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF02-Guide-to-ECS-Law-and-Regs-130902.pdf>