

Enrolment and Orientation

Introduction

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and *Children's Services Regulations 2020* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2)(k) Vic Regs 112).

It is intended that all eligible children will have access to two years of subsidised kindergarten before commencing school provided in multi-age (integrated) programs of five hours duration per session. However, a shortage of places in any Family and Children's Services Program in some locations 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 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 Funding Guide for kindergarten programs. Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved care must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*.

Early childhood education and care services regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation.

Purpose

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for and process to be followed for enrolment in Corangamite Shire Family and Children's Services
- the basis on which places within programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Corangamite Shire Family and Children's Services
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and departmental funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Corangamite Shire Children's Services, including during offsite excursions and activities.

Definitions

Any 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.

References

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

Local Government Act 2020

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

[*Victorian Children's Services Act 1996*](#)

Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020

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/>

Policy Detail

Corangamite Shire Family and Children's Services are committed to:

- equitable access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community where possible
- 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.

Priority of Access

Kindergarten Programs Priority of Access

The Department of Education & Training requires services to operate a Priority of Access. When more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available, priority of access applies. Priority of access is a condition of funding and must operate across all kindergartens. Provisions for priority are:

- vulnerable families engaged with family violence and child protection services
- children at risk of abuse or neglect or in out of home care
- refugees or asylum seeker children
- children eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- children with disability etc

Corangamite Shire Council Kindergarten programs are unable to have children attend until after their third birthday. This is due to staff/child ratio constraints. Family should follow the enrolment process knowing their child will not be able to commence until their third birthday. Fees will be charged pro-rata from the date the child turns three.

Child Care Program Priority of Access

Where there is a waiting list for placement at a service and a place becomes available the following criteria will be used to prioritise offers of place

- Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- A child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment
- Date of registration on waiting list

Allocation of After Kindergarten and After School Places

After Kindergarten and After School Care programs operate in some services for kindergarten and school aged children (up to year 6).

At times demand exceeds places available and child care priority of access guidelines apply to all wait lists. Offers for places in this program are made as follows.

Round One

Places offered to enrolled kindergarten children in the year of attendance

Round Two

Places offered to existing users of the program

Round Three

Places offered to new school users to the program.

Responsibilities

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- Establishing and applying the criteria for priority of access to programs at Corangamite Shire Family and Children's Services based on funding requirements
- 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
- providing opportunities for interested families to 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 that acceptable immunisation documentation is received unless there are circumstances to provide a grace period, prior to enrolment being accepted
- 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 complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and Vic Regs 108, 109,110 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for twenty-five years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by 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 educators under the Law (Regulation 157, Vic Regs 106).

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day to Day Charge are responsible for:

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with specific requirements
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- assisting the child to develop a sense of belonging to the service
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling into the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required
- 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, Vic Regs 106).
- Where updated information is provided by a family to a service, a copy must be provided to the Family and Children's Services Team for updating databases, filing and linking to the original enrolment form.

All educators/staff 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 approaches 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
- assisting the child to develop a sense of belonging to the service
- complying with the service's [Governance, Management Confidentiality of Records Policy](#) in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this Enrolment and Orientation Policy

- completing the registration and enrolment forms prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child's immunisation status and proof of birth if required
- Providing photocopy of current health care card or pension card if the parent/guardian wishes to claim a kindergarten subsidy for kindergarten
- 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 e.g. court orders and medical plans and any relevant agreements
- updating information by notifying and providing documentation to the service of any changes as they occur.

Reference to linked Policy, Procedure or Guidelines

[Authorisations, Acceptance and Refusal](#)

[Complaints and Grievances](#)

[Administration of First Aid - Incident, Injury, Trauma, Illness and Infectious Disease](#)

[Fees](#)

[Governance Management Confidentiality of Records and Privacy](#)