

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

Please Note: Brimbank Preschool Association Inc. is referred to as BPA in this document.

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- the criteria for enrolment at services managed by BPA
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at a service managed by BPA, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into services managed by BPA.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

BPA is committed to:

- equal access for all children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- complying with 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 & Attachment 1*).
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided on enrolment forms
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into a service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider (BPA), Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at a service managed by BPA.

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)).

For services with a funded kindergarten program, 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 *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* (refer to *Sources*)

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 & Attachment 1*)

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

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* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions*).

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 Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers. Details are available at www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

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.

Child Care Benefit (CCB): A Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare services. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Benefit. Details are available at www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

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*).

Early Years Management: Early Years Management is an initiative that unites individual early education services together under a single organisation that takes responsibility for the management of these services.

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 registration form: A form to apply for a place at a 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.

Fees: A charge for a place within a program at a service.

Sources

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000: www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2006B01541
- *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/
- *Priority for allocating places in child care services*: <http://education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>
- *The Kindergarten 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*: www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit
- 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*

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider (BPA) is responsible for:

- developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program, and considering any barriers to access that may exist
- complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend a service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with a 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
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
- ensuring that enrolment records (refer to *Definitions*) comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162
- reviewing the enrolment record to determine its effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and management requirements of a 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 a service (Regulation 183)
- complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of a service
- ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families
- 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 a service can enter a 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, Certified Supervisor and other educators are responsible for:

- providing opportunities 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
- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at a service, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy (refer also to Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria)
- 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
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the child's immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

- 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 (see Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)
- 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).
- providing a copy of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy* upon request.
- reviewing enrolment records to identify children with additional needs (refer to the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- ensuring that enrolment records are completed prior to the child's commencement at a 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 a service
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending a service can enter a 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)
- developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into a 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
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - make contact with educators and carers at a service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child's progress with regard to settling in to a service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required
- complying with a service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- being aware of and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

- completing the registration 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.

Volunteers and students, while at a 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 BPA'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: Priority of Access Guidelines for child care services
- Attachment 2: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

AUTHORISATION

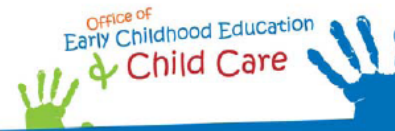
This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider, Brimbank Preschool Association Inc. on 22 February 2017.

REVIEW DATE: 22 FEBRUARY 2020

ATTACHMENT 1



Australian Government
Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations



Instruction sheet

Priority of Access Guidelines for child care services 10

It is a condition of approval and continued approval for Child Care Benefit (CCB) purposes that services must comply with Family Assistance Law.

The Priority of Access Guidelines are set out in the *Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000*.

The Guidelines apply to Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and In-Home Care services. Failure to meet these Guidelines is a breach of the conditions of continued approval and may result in a service being sanctioned under the Act.

Priorities for filling vacant places

The Priority of Access Guidelines must be used by approved services to allocate available child care places where there are more families requiring care than places available.

When filling vacant places, a service must fill them according to the following priorities:

- Priority 1** – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2** – a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test
- Priority 3** – any other child.

Within these main Priority categories, priority should also be given to children in:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- families which include a disabled person
- families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold of \$38 763 for 2010-2011, or who or whose partner is on income support
- families from a non-English speaking background
- socially isolated families
- single parent families.

Note: Where a service is funded by an employer to provide child care solely or primarily for the children of the employer's employees, the service may give priority to those children.

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

Requiring a child to vacate a place

Under the Priority of Access Guidelines a child care service may require a Priority 3 child only to vacate a place to make room for a higher priority child. The service can only do so if:

- the person liable for the payment of the child care fees was notified when the child first entered care that the service followed this policy, and
- the service gives the person at least 14 days notice of the requirement for the child to vacate the place.

Outside School Hours Care

Outside School Hours Care is primarily for school children. Where an Outside School Hours Care Service has no vacant places and is providing care for a child who has not yet started school, the service may require that child to leave the service in order to provide a place for a school child.

Employer sponsored places

Where a child care service has places sponsored by an employer, the service may require those places to be vacated for the employee's children.

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

ATTACHMENT 2

Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

[Service Name]

[Address]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at [Service Name] for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at [Service Name] in [insert year].

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided acceptable immunisation documentation.

Acceptable immunisation documentation includes evidence that your child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated
- has been assessed by our service as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

- your doctor
- [insert details of local government immunisation service]
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register Tel 1800 653 809
- Better Health Channel website: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/no-jab-no-play>

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by acceptable immunisation documentation. The new application would be considered in line with [Service Name]'s Enrolment and Orientation policy.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

[Service Name]