

**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 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 (BPA), Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge, 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 (Jobs for families childcare package) Act 2017* (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* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions*).

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**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 (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
- *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. The Approved Provider may request that proof of eligibility be provided to ensure the child meets the 16 week grace period – eg. Health Care Card, letter from family support services.

**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/](http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/)

**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 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: [www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/](http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/)

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**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 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 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**

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:  
[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register)
- The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS):  
<https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-legislation>
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: [www.acecqa.gov.au/](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/)
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: [www.acecqa.gov.au/](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/)
- *The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training)*:  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)
- Department of Health and Human Services, *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- Victorian Department of Health: [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation](http://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*

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**PROCEDURES**

**The Approved Provider (BPA) is responsible for:**

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at a service managed by BPA, based on funding requirements and the below eligibility and priority of access criteria;
  - Priority 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
  - Priority 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies or of parents w both satisfy the work, training, study test (this includes parents on maternity or parental leave)
  - 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
- 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*
  - appointing a person to be responsible for 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 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
  - supporting services to assess 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 (refer *Definitions*)
  - 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 1 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)
  - 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).

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**The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge and other educators are responsible for:**

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at a service managed by BPA, based on funding requirements and the below eligibility and priority of access criteria;
  - Priority 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
  - Priority 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies or of parents w both satisfy the work, training, study test (this includes parents on maternity or parental leave)
  - 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
- 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
  - responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
  - reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
  - 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 (see Attachment 1 – 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)

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- 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:
  - 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
- 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, reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- 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.

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### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

### **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider, Brimbank Preschool Association Inc. on 25 September 2019.

**REVIEW DATE: 25 SEPTEMBER 2022**



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**ATTACHMENT 1**



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## ATTACHMENT 1

[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 the [insert 3 year old or 4 year old program] 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.

As per the No Jab, No Play legislation an ACIR Immunisation History Statement is the only form of acceptable immunisation documentation, this statement 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

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]