

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
- requirements in relation to No Jab No Play
- 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 by 2022 that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to two years 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 are based on a service's philosophy, values and beliefs, The Kindergarten Funding Guide and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children.

Childcare services providing approved child 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* and *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*). To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule (refer to *Sources*) set out by the Australian Government Department of Health.

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, 181, 183*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

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.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: is the only form of acceptable evidence of immunisation. The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. Parents/carers must provide a copy of their most recent AIR Immunisation History Statement, which shows that the child is up to date with their immunisations upon enrolment and when a child has received or been due to receive a vaccination while attending the service. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form, and supplies it to the AIR. In order to confirm enrolment, the Immunisation History Statement must show the child is up to date with the vaccines they can have medical contraindication and indicate the due date for the next vaccinations the child is able to receive in the future if applicable.

Approved providers: legally responsible for the compliance with the National Law (section) and National Regulations (Regulation)

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.

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: as defined by the Kindergarten Funding Guide; a child that is at least four years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a 4-year-old program; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service. Or a child that is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment and is enrolled in a funded 3-year-old kindergarten program. Any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicate that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualify for the 16-weeks grace period.

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) emergency contacts; authorised nominee; details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Fee: A charge for a place within a program at the service.

Grace period: allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) or when the statement is assessed as not being up-to-date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with families during enrolment, and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the grace period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) and to encourage families to access immunisation services.

Immunisation Details: The Government's No Jab No Play laws require all children to be age-appropriately immunised before enrolment can be confirmed. Further information on immunisation requirements for enrolment in early childhood services is available on the State Government's Better Health Channel at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play

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)

Priority of access: in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate spaces using the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (see Attachment 1: Eligibility and priority of access criteria for a 3 and 4-year-old funder kindergarten program), or if in receipt of the CCS, comply with the Commonwealth Government's policy for allocating places (see Source).

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

Vulnerable Children/Families: Children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child being vulnerable include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, known to Child Protection, Out of Home Care, substance abuse, or mental health; Aboriginal and/or Torre Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the *Kindergarten Funding Guide*)

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>
- Department of Home Affairs, translating services: www.translating.homeaffairs.gov.au
- *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, as described in The Kindergarten Funding Guide; and/or as describe under the Family Assistance Law for CCS recipients, 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 registration, 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 registration and the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a place when a **child's proof of age and immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register is provided and assessed as being acceptable** or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation **prior to enrolment** to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements. Unacceptable documentation is a letter from a doctor, a document indicating homeopathic immunisation, immunisation history other than from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) or a statutory declaration from parents.
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
- advising parents/guardians who do not provide or do not have acceptable birth certificate and AIR Immunisation History Statement that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to the registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria and / or Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)
- advising parents/guardians who are not eligible for Medicare that they will need to take a translated copy of their child's overseas immunisation history to a general practitioner (GP) or immunisation nurse. Confirmation and registration with the Australian Immunisation Register will occur of the child's vaccines and any additional vaccines which are required in Australia
- advising parents/guardians a free translating document service can be applied for by most permanent and some temporary residents. Applicants are submitted through www.translating.homeaffairs.gov.au
- advising parent/guardians that the approved provider will complete the Grace period eligibility assessment form 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).
- advising parent /guardians that if a communicable disease outbreak occurs the child who is under a grace period or who is not up to date with their immunisation will be excluded under the Immunisation and Exclusion (schools and children's service) schedule.
- taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year, timing reminders

to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)

- 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.
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- 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 a medical action plan, and 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 AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) 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 application form and the enrolment record prior to their child’s commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) of their child’s immunisation status and Proof of Age document
- where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks grace period, ensuring that the child’s immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) 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 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

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the **Approved Provider of BCYF on:**

REVIEW DATE: **2022**

ATTACHMENT 1
Eligibility and Priority of Access Criteria

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

Priority Criteria	Determined by:
<p>Priority 1 Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care • Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children • Asylum seeker and refugee children • Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy • Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program • require a combination of services which are individually planned • have an identified specific disability or developmental delay 	<p>The child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending a three-year-old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning, or is • referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Child Protection – Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) – Maternal and Child Health nurse, or – Out-of-Home Care provider. <p>As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families ‘is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?’ and record this information in KIM.</p> <p>An appropriate visa identifies the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran’s Affairs Card, or • multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets). <p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten • holds a Child Disability Health Care Card • has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by: <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><u>Priority 2 Criteria:</u></p> <p>One year before school children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who turn 4 before 30th April, who will be attending school the following year, have not yet had their Year Before School subsidised Kindergarten year and <i>have prior association with the service</i> then: Children who turn 4 before 30th April, who will be attending school the following year and have not yet had their Year Before School subsidised Kindergarten year. 	<p>Identified by the family. Verified on enrolment database system</p>
<p><u>Priority 3 Criteria:</u></p> <p>Two years before school children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who turn 3 before 30th April in the year of enrolment and <i>have prior association with the service</i> then: Children who turn 3 before 30th April in the year of enrolment 	<p>Identified by the family. Verified on enrolment database system</p>
<p><u>Priority 4 Criteria:</u></p> <p>Colac Children and their family who reside, work or study within the Colac Otway Shire municipality Children whose families are in the process of relocating to Colac Otway Shire municipality Children who are cared for within the Colac Otway Shire municipality</p> <p>Geelong Children and their family who reside, work or study within the City of Greater Geelong municipality Children whose families are in the process of relocating to City of Greater Geelong municipality Children who are cared for within the City of Greater Geelong municipality</p>	<p>Identified by the family. Family to provide evidence that they reside, work or study within the Colac Otway Shire municipality</p> <p>Identified by the family. Family to provide evidence that they reside, work or study within the City of Greater Geelong municipality</p>

* BCYF will try to accommodate your first choice; however, a ballot system may be implemented should the interest exceed available places.

ATTACHMENT 2

WORK INSTRUCTIONS - Registration and Enrolment Process

PURPOSE

This work instruction outlines:

- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at BCYF Education and Care Services
- requirements in relation to No Jab No Play
- the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

PROCESS

Registration

- BCYF EYM management will set the enrolment timelines each year
- BCYF EYM management will open the enrolments at the start of the calendar school year
- BCYF EYM management will commence advertising that kindergarten registration are open
- BCYF EYM management will develop marketing materials relating to the Kindergarten registration process
- Parent / Guardian are required to complete the BCYF EYM registration form and provide the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) of their child's immunisation status and Proof of Age document
- EYM administration team assess the documents provided and will correspond with parent / guardian if AIR Immunisation History Statement and / or Proof of Age document is not provided or deemed non-compliant
- EYM administration team will explain the enrolment offer will not be made until Proof of Age and AIR documents are provided. EYM administration can advise parent/guardians that the approved provider will complete the Grace period eligibility assessment form of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: once the child has commenced, the child can continue to attend the service even if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- EYM administration team will advise parent /guardians that if a communicable disease outbreak occurs the child who is under a grace period or who is not up to date with their immunisation will be excluded under the Immunisation and Exclusion (schools and children's service) schedule.
- EYM administration will keep accurate records of information received.

Enrolment Offers

- EYM administration will send a letter of offer to parent / guardian who have provided AIR and Proof of Age document as per the enrolment offer timeline

- EYM administration will send enrolment pack to families that have accepted the kindergarten place
- EYM administration will data entry all enrolment information into software program
- EYM administration will collate a hard copy of enrolment information for each kindergarten on or before the first organizational day of the year