

Enrolment, Orientation and Access Policy

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Operations and Administration Policy - Education and Care Services and Regulations 2012 – 99, 157; 160; 162; 168(2)(k); 169(2)(f); 170; 177(k) National Law Act 2010 National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (2010)

Policy statement:

Lipscombe Child Care Services Inc (the **Service**) enrolment, orientation and access aims to be efficient, legally compliant and effective with the assistance of its families.

Target Audience:

Educators, Families, Students, Visitors and Others

Aim:

- To offer enrolments according to the Australian Government suggested Priority of Access
- To provide families with a clear effective process for enrolment and orientation at the Service
- To outline how the obligation to give parents access to their child at the Service will be met.

Responsibilities:

Board, Management, Educators

Definitions

POLICY

1. ENROLMENT

Enrolments are made on a calendar year (or part thereof) basis. All enrolments end at close of business on the last business day of the year.

Enrolments for the next calendar year will be confirmed by December of the current year using the process and considerations outlined below.

The enrolment process steps are as follows:

Step 1 - Lipscombe sends out Application for Enrolment forms as per its Enrolment, Orientation and Access Policy

Step 2 – Lipscombe family returns completed Application for Enrolment forms

Step 3 – Lipscombe assesses all completed applications and determines offers of a place in accordance with its Policies and Procedures

Step 4 - Lipscombe sends out a *Confirmation of Care (contains all information required in a Complying Written Arrangement required under Family Assistance Law)* and a *Child Care Agreement* for those who have a place and notifies those families who have not secured a place

Step 5 – Lipscombe family returns completed and signed *Confirmation of Care* and *Child Care Agreement*

Step 6 – A series of settling visits will be arranged for new families or for children moving from one Lipscombe program and another.

The requirements for the enrolment process are:

- An *Application for Enrolment form* must be completed by each family for each child
- The required enrolment information will be information as set out in the Education and Care Services National Regulations, as a minimum
- The documentation process for enrolment must be completed before the child/children's first attendance
- All health information, including evidence of current immunisation, identified health care plans and medications must be provided prior to the child / children's first attendance.
- When a parent is not fluent in English, the enrolment process and orientation will, whenever possible, be conducted in their first language or with the help of an interpreter
- When children are initially enrolled with the Service families are invited to become a member of our Association

Enrolment and continuing placement with the Service will be offered in accordance with the following considerations:

- All current enrolments and new applications will be considered against suggested priority of access
- The Service wait list as outlined below;
- The ability of the Service to provide a safe and stimulating environment, which meets the needs of the child and other children in attendance will be assessed;
- The ability to obtain Insurance cover for a child wishing to attend care;
- Parent's meeting their financial and other contractual obligations to the Service,

and is subject at all times to the Service determining in its absolute discretion at any time not to invite, confirm, or continue care because it is not in its interests. Should it make this determination it will be entitled to not invite enrolment (including by deciding not to issue an Application for Enrolment), not confirm care or to terminate enrolment under the Child Care Agreement.

Priority of access:

The Service reserves the right to offer priority to:

- Children at risk of abuse or neglect
- Siblings of children currently attending the Service
- Children of Staff members of the Service

Outside School Hours Care:

As Outside School Hours Care is primarily for school children, the Service may ask a child not yet in school to leave care with 14 days notice if a child who is in school applies for a place.

Waitlist (External)

If a place is not immediately available due to the Service receiving more applications for care than places, a wait list application will be offered.

A child will not be waitlisted if the Service has determined not to offer or continue enrolment for that child.

Details about care needs will be required. Wait list families are asked to contact the Service regularly to confirm and update care requirements, and remain on the list.

- When a place becomes available, the family on the Waitlist will be contacted, a place offered and enrolment may proceed. With priority of access guidelines having been considered first, placements will then be offered to families in the following order:
 - families currently attending the Service (internal program wait list),
 - families with a child/children attending another Lipscombe Service program,
 - then by the date on which the wait list applications were received, as long as contact has been made during the past 3 months and care available matches care requirements indicated on the wait list application.

- Once offered, the care must be accepted or declined within 1 week. If care is declined, the family may opt to remain on the waitlist, in the same position. If care has been offered and declined, care may not be re offered within 3 months.

- Care will be offered at the age appropriate program for any new child enrolling at the Service. For 3 – 5 year olds, care may be offered at Seagulls or Nutgrove, according to families’ preferences and subject to availability of places. These programs may be accessed simultaneously, by parent choice or if the need arises to meet care requirements. However for consistency of care for children, this will not be encouraged. In the event a child attends both Nutgrove and Seagulls, this child will be a wait list priority for care in the preferred program as soon as available.

- Children confirmed to transition from Playhouse to Nutgrove or Seagulls are to be considered ahead of enrolments of new families to the Service. Places in 3-5 year old programs for children due to transition from Playhouse will be held at the discretion of the Service.

- Programs and age groupings are as follows:
 - Bumble Bee 12 weeks - 2 years
 - Playhouse 2 - 3 years
 - Nutgrove 3 – 5 years (incorporates Before Kinder Care and Before School Care)
 - Seagulls 3 - 5 years
 - Sandy Bay OSHC 4 - 8 years (After Kinder Care and After School Care)
 - Waimea 4 - 5 years After Kinder Care
 - Waimea 5 -12 years After School Care

Note: Access to the Waimea Vacation Care program may be limited to children who have commenced their formal Kindergarten school year. A specific Kinder Program may be offered.

Waitlist (Internal)

Families currently attending the Service, requiring additional care that is not immediately available will be placed on an internal waitlist and are given priority over external waitlist families.

A child will not be waitlisted if the Service has determined not to offer or continue enrolment for that child. Internal wait list positions will be offered to the family who has been waiting the longest for the relevant day, unless the following circumstances apply:

- a child attending 3-5 year old programs are attending both programs simultaneously to meet care requirements
- If offering the available position to someone further down the wait list allows the Service to place multiple children within the one family, co-ordinating care in multiple programs
- A child is due to move from Playhouse to a 3-5 program and available spaces are required to continue to offer all currently booked days for the child moving

Maintaining Enrolment Records

It is the responsibility of the custodial parent/guardian to update contact or other details as changes become relevant.

This includes changes to:

- Court Orders, including adjustments to court orders (only court orders that are on file at the Service can be used. These are required to be handed to the Director as the Nominated Supervisor)
- Family circumstances
- Bookings, either daily or permanent cancellations

Any changes to enrolment details need to be provided in writing to the Service by a parent /guardian as soon as it becomes relevant.

The Service will attach all updated information provided to the child's file.

The Service will require enrolment details including authorisations to be updated at re enrolment for:

- Administration of medication (Paracetamol , Zyrtec /allergy, Asthma reliever, or EpiPen)
- Excursions permission
- Emergency contacts authorisation for:
 1. Collection of child
 2. Emergency release
 3. Medication permission
 4. Excursion permission
- Sign in / out records are to be completed upon arrival each day and when a child is collected each day. This is our record of the child being in attendance and is a requirement for the Commonwealth Government body.
- Enrolment information for each child will be kept in a confidential file in accordance with our Confidentiality, Privacy and Records Policy. Access to this information is only available to the Director, Assistant Director, Finance and Administration Officers, Certified supervisors, parents / guardians of the child, the State regulatory authority and Commonwealth department officers.

Cancellation of enrolment

Enrolment terms are contained in the *Child Care Agreement*. As per that agreement permanent cancellation of an enrolment by a parent/guardian is a termination of contract and is required to be in writing, with 14 days notice. Where the notice period is less than 14 days, a fee will be charged equivalent to the days of care at the allowable absence rate.

Enrolment may be cancelled by the Service where children are absent without explanation for more than 2 weeks, or, if the account for fees remains outstanding for an excessive time (as defined in the Fee and Credit Policy).

2. ORIENTATION

The orientation process provides time for our Service to share information with families about how we operate and for families to share information about their child and their expectations of the Service. It will be carried out in accordance with the following process:

- A mutually convenient time will be arranged to meet and tour the program/s prior to the enrolment process commencing
- Each family will receive a copy of the new parent package, including Family Handbook and Service Policies.
- For children joining Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), there may be occasion when families opt not to participate in an orientation visit. In this circumstance, families will receive relevant information by email or post.
- Children joining OSHC who have not attended an orientation visit with families will be required to be introduced to OSHC staff prior to the enrolment commencing.
- Educators in OSHC will ensure children are closely supported in early days of attendance. A buddy system supports the settling process.

3. ACCESS

Visiting at the Service

- The Service will ensure that the custodial parent /person/guardian can access the child at any time during the hours the child is at the Service. Prior notification is encouraged if a visit is going to be at a time other than when delivering or collecting the child.
- Visits by others who have been authorised on the enrolment record are also welcome, however prior arrangements should be made with the Service.
- At time of visit, photo identification will be required for anyone not familiar to management or staff at the Service. All visitors are required to sign the visitor's register.
- If visit /s become unsettling to the child or disruptive to the program or the visitor, the arrangement will be reviewed and negotiated in a collaborative way between the visiting family, the staff and Director.
- Parents who are considered a risk to the safety of children, educators and/or staff of the Service may be denied entry to the premises of the Service. The Service reserves the right to have parents / guardians who are physically or verbally aggressive, intimidating or disruptive to the operation of the Service to be removed by the police.
- A person who has been forbidden by court order from having contact with a child attending the Service will be denied entry to the Service. The Service will:
 - Not provide any information concerning the child to the restricted person
 - Contact Director / Assistant Director for assistance
 - Prevent the person, where possible, from entering the premises of the children's Service while the child is attending the Service.
 - Prevent the person, where possible, from collecting the child from the Service
 - Contact the residential parent / guardian and advise them of the situation, and provide opportunities to discuss relevant issues with the legal custodian concerning the situation
 - Seek assistance from Police if required
 - Act only on court orders that are on file
 - Seek independent legal advice for clarification if required and if this occurs this is the advice

that will be followed

Links to other Policies:

Duty of Care
Grievance and Complaints Management Policy
Privacy and Records Policy
Program Planning
Delivery and Collection of Children
Fee and Credit Policy

Links to NQF:

Standard: 2.2 Safety: Each child is protected Element 2.2.1 At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervisions ensure children are protected from harm and hazard Element 2.2.3 Child protection: Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect
Element 4.2.2 Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
Standard: 6.1 Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
Standard: 7.1 Governance supports the operation of a quality service

References:

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations 2010
Commonwealth Department of Human Services
Family Law Act 1975
Child Care Provider Handbook – version 1.0, May 2018

Policy Review:

The Service Early Years Education & Care will review this policy and related documents, every 2 years, or more often as required when new information becomes available.
Families are encouraged to collaborate with the Service to review the policy and procedures.
It is essential for all staff to familiarize with the policy and / or review and acknowledge in writing any changes to policy.

Changes made at review:

Review last 2008
Addition of program enrolment guidelines, break down of groups, access to Waimea vacation care guidelines
Addition of QIAS
Addition of references
Review August 2012
New policy format
Extra information with regards to priority of access
Removed reference to Fahan program
Added in additional information with regards to family law guidelines
Removed avenues for involvement in program as this is covered in other policies
QIAS links changed to NQF
Review May 2013
Added definition for third priority
Added Regulations
Added information acceptance/refusal of permissions
Added changes to bookings.
Association membership
Addition of orientation guidelines (May 2013)

Addition of cancellations (August 2013) KA

Adjusted format (August 2013) KA

Significantly updated October 2015

Reviewed September 2017, include enrolment part 2 in process, which was updated to streamline process KA

July 2018 – updated for NQS and CCS and other JO & KA

October 2019 – Updated reference to Government Priority of Access; amended wording related to forms “Child Care Agreement’ and ‘Confirmation of Care’; added reference to ‘Complying Written Arrangement’. KA