



Priority of Access, Enrolment, Orientations and Transitions

National Law & National Regulations 2011: Regs: 168 (2) (k),

National Quality Standards: QA6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families & Community (6.1.1, 6.3.2). QA7 - Leadership & Service Management (7.3.2)

EYLF Practice – Continuity of Learning & Transitions

Priority of access

Sometimes, there may be a waiting list for Education and Care Services and to ensure the system is fair, the Australian Government has 'Priority of Access Guidelines' for allocating places in these circumstances. The guidelines only apply to Child Care Benefit approved child care. They are used when there is a waiting list for an Education and Care Service or when a number of parents are applying for a limited number of vacant places.

Every Child Care Subsidy approved Education and Care Service has to abide by the guidelines and tell you about them when you enrol your child into care.

Priorities

First Priority: a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

Second Priority: a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the 'A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999'

Third Priority: any other child.

*An Education and Care Service may require a **Priority 3** child to vacate a place to make room for a child with a higher priority. They can only do so if you are notified when your child first entered care that your service follows this policy and are given at least 14 days' notice of the need for your child to vacate.*

Within these main categories' priority should also be given to the following children:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- children in families which include a disabled person
- children in families from a non-English speaking background
- children in socially isolated families
- children of single parents.

Enrolment, Orientation and Transition

We aim to ensure that each child and family receives an enrolment and orientation process that meets their needs, allowing the family and child to feel safe and secure in the level of care that we provide. Our orientation procedure aims to assist the child and family to transition to their child being in care, or making the transition to a new room within the service.

Enrolment Aims:

- To establish procedures for new families enrolling at the service
- To ensure the enrolment system has in place procedures for the waiting list
- To ensure fair and equitable dealings with families according to Commonwealth guidelines
- To promote the aspects of the services' provision in a professional manner
- To ensure prospective families are provided with a thorough overview of the service
- To ensure families are given the opportunity to look at policies and procedures
- To enable families an opportunity to evaluate the enrolment and orientation process
- To familiarise families with the Confidentiality and Privacy Act

Orientation Aims:

- To enable children to develop a sense of security and build secondary attachments to new educators
- To gather information about the child to ensure their needs are being met
- To develop a relationship with the families so as they feel valued and respected
- To ensure a smooth transition allowing parents and the child to feel comfortable, safe, and welcome
- To maintain continuity between home and the service, which helps the child adjust to the new setting
- To help make the transition from home to care as smooth as possible

Orientation process:

The orientation and settling process can be an important basis for establishing the effective partnership between families and educators that are vital in promoting positive outcomes for children. The aim is for a primary carer to be selected before the child attends the service for their first orientation.

During orientation educators will:

- Demonstrate a supportive and accepting attitude towards families, different cultural backgrounds, family lifestyles and child rearing practices
- Ask questions to gain a better understanding of the child and their family. If the family, speaks a language other than English at home, the educator will seek key words in that language to be used at care to support the child and families' sense of belonging
- Recognise that having a child begin childcare can be a major milestone for families and that it can be an anxious time for them
- Ensure that the main primary carer spends as much time as possible with the child during orientation to develop confidence and trust with the child
- Organise visits that are convenient for the family, number of visits depending on the child/family
- Discuss the settling in period – recognising some parents choosing to gradually build up to a full day so the child is reassured that the parents will return to collect them
- Educators will discuss and encourage parents to say goodbye when dropping off – reassure the parent that if the child remains distressed over a period of time, that educators will contact them
- Parents are welcome to stay as long as needed to reassure their child, but sometimes it's easier for the educator to settle the child if the parents come earlier on collection to spend time with their child – rather than do this at drop off time

Transition from one room to another

The service aims to arrange for room transitions when a vacancy occurs. As each room has different challenges and expectations, children will only be transitioned when they are developmentally ready for the next age group - the opportunity to transition between rooms at the service is based on many factors other than just age

Change is harder for some children than others, however, by making this transition as smooth as possible for children and families, we are helping build the child's confidence and success.

In order to minimise any distress that transitioning may cause, we will consider and implement the following:

- Families will be informed of their child's transition to another room occurring and it will be paced at individual children's ability to cope with change
- Primary carers will talk to families about how their child handles change and the strategies they use to help their child cope with change
- Think about the timing of the transition knowing the individual child and how they will cope
- New primary carers will have opportunities to get to know the child, and will share information and insights from the child's current primary carer
- Plan to have the child and family visit the new room and meet the new primary carer
- Where possible, transition children with a peer
- If necessary, start the transition with small periods of time, gradually increasing until the child is comfortable in their new surroundings

Policy Source Acknowledgements:

<http://aussiechildcarenetwork.com.au/>

Consultation with Management, Staff and Families

N.C.A.C.

(Family Assistance) Act 1999

Go to ACECQA website www.acecqa.gov.au