

Enrolment and Orientation Long Day Care

Quality Area 6 | Version 1.0

Purpose

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for:

- enrolling a child at NERPSA
- the orientation of new parents/guardians and children into NERPSA
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Family Assistance Law

Policy Statement

Values

NERPSA is committed to:

- engaging collaboratively and respectfully with parents/guardians during enrolment and orientation to learn about their expertise, culture, values and beliefs and priorities for their child's learning and wellbeing
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- ensuring the enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting parents/guardians to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information and communication
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information gathered for enrolment.

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of NERPSA.

Responsibilities

		Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted						
1	Ensuring that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and <i>National Regulations</i> are met	R	✓			
2	Ensuring that the <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i> is readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families, and available for inspection (<i>Regulation 171</i>)	R	✓			
3	Ensuring that the <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i> and procedures are followed (<i>Regulations 170</i>)	R	✓	✓		✓
4	Ensuring not to exceed the maximum number of children whom the service is licensed to provide care for	R	✓			
5	Enrolling children as per the <i>Family Assistance Law</i> for all children who attend NERPSA	R	✓			
6	Ensuring all enrolled children are six years of age and under. Children aged six years old will require to complete an exemption from school form from the Department of Education	R	✓			
7	Communicating to parents/guardians the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays) service philosophy and governance	R	✓			
8	Providing parents/guardians easy-to-read information about how the service operates and	✓	✓	✓		

	what the service will provide (including information about inclusion and learning)					
9	<p>Ensuring parents/guardians have access to and aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parent handbook</i> • <i>Statement of philosophy</i> • <i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</i> • <i>Fees Policy</i> • <i>Privacy Statement</i> • <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> • <i>Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations</i> • <i>Dealing With Medical Conditions</i> • <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness</i> • <i>Delivery and Collection of Children</i> 	R	✓	✓		
10	Developing strategies on how to communicate with parents/guardians with varying literacy skills, or where English is not a first language	✓	✓	✓		
11	Complying with the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>	R	R	✓	✓	✓
12	Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R				
13	Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	✓	✓	✓		
14	Providing parents/guardians with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	✓			
15	Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	✓	✓
16	Providing opportunities for interested parents/guardians 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 except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or	R	✓	✓		

	conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the <i>National Law: Section 167</i>					
17	Seeking information from parents about any specific health care need, allergy or medical condition, including whether a medical practitioner has been consulted in relation to a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition	R	✓	✓	✓	
18	Ensuring that medical management plan has been provided and that the risk minimisation plan has been developed and both documents are kept in the child's enrolment records	R	✓	✓	✓	
19	Providing any required authorisations, such as for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service and, if required, transportation by an ambulance service				✓	
20	Gathering information from parents/guardians to support continuity of care between home and the service	✓	✓	✓		
21	Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and accessing immunisation services	R	✓	✓		
22	Ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period	R	✓	✓		
23	Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (<i>refer to Source</i>) for early childhood education and care services 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 (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)	R	✓	✓		

24	Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have confirmed place in the program (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	✓	✓		
25	Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and who are not eligible for the grace period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services	R	✓	✓		
26	Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (<i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E</i>)	R	✓	✓		
27	Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) of their child's immunisation status (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)				✓	
28	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 (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to the service				✓	
29	Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (<i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E</i>)	R	✓	✓		
30	Once payment has been made to secure the placement, providing parents/guardians a	R	✓			

	confirmation letter stating the starting date, days and hours (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)					
31	Once an enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) has been completed for a child, review the enrolment record to ensure that no section/question has been left blank.	R	✓			
32	Ensuring all authorised nominees (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) have been completed on the enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) (<i>Regulations 160 and 161</i>) as well as authorisations from parents relating to medical treatment, regular outings, health information and transportation	R	✓		✓	
33	Ensuring that the enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of <i>Regulations 160, 161, 162</i> and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	✓	✓	✓		
34	Ensuring that enrolment record (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) is kept up to date if family circumstances change	R	✓	✓	✓	
35	Ensuring that enrolment records (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) are kept confidential (<i>Regulations 181, 182</i>) 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 (<i>Regulation 183 (1a) (2d)</i>)	R	✓	✓		
36	Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	R	✓	✓		
37	Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (<i>refer to Definitions</i> and the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	R	✓	✓		
38	Review enrolment to see if the family qualifies for CCS preschool exemption	✓	✓			

39	Ensuring that the orientation program meet the individual needs of children and parents/guardians	✓	✓	✓		
40	Communicating with parents/guardians when their child will be eligible for a funded year of kindergarten	✓	✓	✓		
41	Supporting families make an informed decision on when is the best time for their child to start kindergarten	✓	✓	✓		
42	Reviewing the orientation processes for new parents/guardians and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	R	✓	✓	✓	
43	Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for (<i>Regulation 157</i>), 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, early childhood teachers or educators under the <i>National Law Section 167</i>	R	R	✓	✓	✓
44	Encouraging parents/guardians during orientation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period make contact with educators at the service, when required 	✓	✓	✓	✓	
45	Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	✓	✓	✓	✓	
46	Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	✓	✓	✓	✓	
47	Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
48	Developing strategies to assist new parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel welcomed into the service 	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become familiar with service policies and procedures • share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe • share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs • value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests 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 					
49	Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>	R	R	R	R	✓
50	Notifying NERPSA in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				✓	

General Orientation Procedures

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- Offer parents/guardians the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service
- Providing reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation and once the child commences
- Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- Reassure the family:
 - they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time
 - they may call and speak to their child's educator(s) at an agreed
 - the educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in time
 - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Further considerations may include but are not limited to:
 - send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (*refer to the Information and Communication Technology Policy*). **Note:** For children in out-of-home care, the educator may need to seek permission from Child Protection before taking and distributing photos of the child

- asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.
- Refer to *Attachment 1* for the general enrolment procedure

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)*).

Childcare services providing approved child care (*refer to Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017* (*refer to Legislation and standards*). Australian families receive help with the cost of child care through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The Australian Government, through the Department of Education (DE) and Services Australia, administers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Providers must be approved by the department to receive CCS.

DE is responsible for the legislation that underpins CCS. This legislation is called Family Assistance Law (FAL). All providers that receive CCS must follow the rules under FAL. DE monitors providers' compliance with FAL.

The Australian Government subsidises the cost of child care. State and territory governments are responsible for the health, safety, wellbeing and educational outcomes of children.

CCS is paid directly to approved providers and passed on to families as a fee reduction.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (*refer to Sources*) provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. This support recognises the preventative and protective influence of quality child care on a child's health, wellbeing and development; and the importance of continuity of care.

There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing): to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent): to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship): to help families experiencing financial hardship.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work): to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.

The Inclusion Support Program is designed to assist early childhood education and care services to include children with additional needs by providing support, in the form of practical and tailored advice and strategies on effective inclusive practice, from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

The Community Child Care Fund is designed to help eligible child care providers address barriers to child care participation, particularly in disadvantaged communities, including Indigenous communities.

The Australian Government considers that immunisation is an important health measure for children and their families, as it is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against harmful and often deadly diseases. To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the standard vaccination schedule, be on an eligible catch-up vaccination schedule or have an approved exemption from being immunised.

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
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
- 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, 170, 171, 177, 181, 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 Regulations 2019 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. approved provider, nominated supervisor, notifiable complaints, serious incidents, duty of care, etc. refer to the [Definitions file](#).

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: 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 (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable). 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.

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 record

Centrelink: The agency that delivers payments and services to individuals and parents/guardians on behalf of the Australian Government.

Child care software: software developed and provided by commercial providers to interact with the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy System (information technology system) and to support other administrative and management activities for child care providers.

Child Care Safety Net: Targeted assistance to vulnerable and at-risk children and their families, as well as supporting child care services in disadvantaged communities to address barriers in accessing child care.

The Child Care Safety Net has three components:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy
- Community Child Care Fund
- Inclusion Support Program.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers (*refer to Definitions*).

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): 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 experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, , substance abuse, or mental health; known to Child Protection; in statutory Out of Home Care; 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)

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances (*refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy*) (*refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition*).

Complying Written Arrangement: a written arrangement between a child care provider and an individual to provide child care in return for fees. The arrangement includes certain required information.

Enrolment: An enrolment occurs when the provider has an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide care to a child and the provider submits an enrolment notice in the Child Care Subsidy System. It is a requirement under Family Assistance Law for all children who attend child care (or have an arrangement for care) to have an enrolment notice regardless of their Child Care Subsidy eligibility status

Enrolment notice: The notice given by a provider through the Child Care Subsidy System that they have an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide care to a child.

Enrolment record: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (*Regulations 160, 161, 162*) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Grace period: allows specific categories of children of parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians to access immunisation services.

Inclusion Support Program: A program that assists child care services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

Sources and Related Policies

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au
- Department of Health, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.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 Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing): www.education.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au

- Priority of Access Guidelines for child care service: www.education.gov.au
- 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): www.education.gov.au

Related Policies

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Compliments and Complaints
- Dealing with Infectious Disease
- Dealing With Medical Conditions
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Fees
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).

Attachments

- Attachment 1: General enrolment procedure

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of NERPSA on June 2024.

Review Date

June 2025.

Attachment 1: General Enrolment Procedures

Priority Of Access

General enrolment procedures for long day care programs

- Enrolments are accepted at any time.
- Enrolment forms are available from the individual service
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment forms should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy).
- Completed enrolment forms are to be forwarded to person responsible for the enrolment process at the service
- Access to completed enrolment forms will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process and staff at the service, unless otherwise specified by NERPSA

Offer Of Places

- Places will be offered if vacancies are available, as soon as possible after enrolment
- If places are not available, the enrolment will be placed on a waiting list and offered in accordance with the priority of access criteria.

Priority Of Access Criteria

- Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out of Home Care
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
- Children with additional needs
- A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test
- Families who are currently enrolled at the service
- Order of receipt

Immunisation Information

In order to be offered a place at a Kindergarten, Victorian legislation which commenced on January 1, 2016 requires that a child must be:

- Fully immunised or up-to-date according to the Immunisation Schedule Victoria; or
- On a catch-up vaccination schedule; or
- Has a medical condition prevented them from being vaccinated.

An immunisation status certificate will be required to accompany the Registration Form in order for the enrolment to be considered. The required certificate from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) can be requested at any time by contacting Medicare:

- Phone 1800 653 809
- Email acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au
- Visit the Medicare website
- Visit your local Medicare office

If the required certificate is unable to be provided, options will need to be discussed with NERPSA as to the enrolment registration.