



1.7 Enrolment and Orientation Policy

QUALITY AREA 1: Educational Program and Practice

Policy Statement

Our service will implement a process to ensure enrolment and orientation processes are planned and implemented to meet the needs of the child and family as well as ensuring all legislative requirements, including the Australian Government Priority of Access Guidelines are adhered to.

We will ensure:

- Children are provided with support and comfort to settle into the service and establish new friendships and relationships;
- A thoughtful process is planned in consultation with families, to assist in separating from their child;
- Educators are provided with a clearly explained enrolment process; time to get to know families before children start; strategies to support families in introducing children to our service, time to develop close professional relationships with families; support from referral agencies; and information about custodial issues;
- Home language, cultural background and family priorities are considered at all times during the process.

Aim

Enrolment and orientation procedures form the foundation for strong relationships between families and early education and care settings and promote a quality experience of education and care for children. Good procedures include consistent information around service operation and authorisations, promoting compliance and a safe and secure environment for children and families.

Our aim is to allocate positions at Bellingden Community Preschool in an equitable and reasoned manner and to commence building a positive and ongoing relationship with children and their families.

Background

Bellingen Community Preschool is a state funded, community based, non-profit place of Early Childhood Education. Our school is open to all members of the community aged between 3 and 5 years, however resources and positions for children are finite.

The enrolment process must ensure that positions are allocated in an equitable manner. Priority of access guidelines are defined by NSW State Government funding Agreements – Please see Priority of Access Policy 7.3 for further information. Enrolment and Orientation procedures are an important aspect of building solid foundations for an ongoing relationship with children and their families. It is an important opportunity for sharing of information between the school, the child and their family. Good procedures include consistent information around service operation and authorisations promoting compliance and a safe and secure environment for children and families.

Relevant Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regs 168(2)(k), 160, 161, 162, 177, 183
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Health records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)
- Family Assistance Law www.dss.gov.au

Links to National Quality Standard

- 6.1.1 Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
- 6.1.3 Current information is available about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family well-being.
- 7.1 Governance supports the operation of a quality service.

Practices

Enrolments will be accepted according to the Australian Government 'Priority of Access'. Parents/guardians will be advised that families of children enrolled with lower priority of access may be required to alter their days or leave the service in order to provide a place for a higher priority child.

Priority of Access Guidelines

In line with the Early Childhood Directorate Priority of Access Guidelines, Bellingen Community Preschool will give equal priority of access to:

- children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school
- children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year and from low income and/or Aboriginal families. Some consideration will be given to siblings of children already attending the service
- children with English language needs
- children with disability and/or additional needs
- children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective).
- children who are already FULLY immunised as per the Immunisation schedule at the date of commencing education at preschool. NB: Where a catch-up schedule is required, the child must have received at least one immunisation as per the health schedule. Intent to continue the schedule must be discussed and clarified with the Director prior to enrolment at the preschool.
- children who do not already attend another NSW Community Based Preschool.

There is no order of priority assigned to the list of points above. Priority must be given to the groups outlined above before any other groups, including non-equity 3-year-olds.

The guidelines are intended to assist services with making enrolment decisions, in a way that seeks to allocate places to those in the greatest need. However, the community needs of the preschool will also be relevant. Services may consider the hours children are enrolled at other funded services when making enrolment decisions.

The department periodically conducts reviews of preschool services and may request a funding compliance review in these or other circumstances.

Offers of Enrolment

- In September/October each year, current families who have children returning in the following year are asked to select their attendance day/s.
- Positions are held for families of children where they have not decided whether or not to return to preschool the following year or send their child to primary school. Parents are encouraged to make these decisions by the end of Term 3 if possible.
- After consideration of access guidelines and availability of a position by the Director, the child/ren may be offered a position at the centre.

- In September/October each year, new families are advised of the Orientation process/session and what is required to enrol their child. Families are then offered positions for following year.
- Placement is offered in a two-day package offering at least 15 hours per week – 600 hours per year in line with Start Strong guidelines. **Monday/Tuesday** is the class group who **will** attend primary school the following year. **Thursday/Friday** are the class group of 3 to 4 year-olds **not** attending school the following year. Wednesday is offered as an additional day of education. This day is open to all children and as a shorter, consecutive day.

Enrolment Form

The enrolment form must be completed by each enrolling family. Where enrolling families are not fluent in English the enrolment meeting will, wherever possible be conducted in the family's primary language. At enrolment, parents are encouraged to provide any further information about their child that will support continuity of care between home and the service. The enrolment record will include the following information for each child:

- Full name, date of birth and address of the child.
- Name, address, and contact details of each parent of the child; any emergency contacts; any person nominated by the parent to collect the child from the service; any person authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication to the child; any person authorised to give approval for an educator to take the child out of the service.
- Details of court orders, parenting orders or plans.
- Details of court orders relating to the child's residence or contact with a parent or other person.
- Gender of the child.
- Language used in the child's home.
- Cultural background of the child and child's parents.
- Any special considerations for the child (e.g. cultural, religious or dietary requirements or additional need).
- Authorisations for our service to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service, and transportation of the child by an ambulance service.
- Authorisation for the service to take the child on regular outings.
- Authorisation for the children to be relocated in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Name, address and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service.
- Child's Medicare number (if available).
- Details of any specific healthcare needs of the child including any medical condition.
- Details of any allergies or anaphylaxis diagnosis.
- Any medical management plan, anaphylaxis/asthma/diabetic management or risk minimisation plan.

Enrolment and Orientation PAGE 3 Reviewed: Nov 2019 QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

- Details of dietary restrictions for the child.
- Immunisation status of the child
- All information will be checked before enrolment is complete including the child's immunisation status.

A Privacy consent form is attached to the enrolment form which details:

- the fact that enrolling parents/guardians are able to gain access to their information;
- why the information is collected;
- the organisations to which the information may be disclosed;
- any law that requires the particular information to be collected;
- the main consequences for not providing the information.

Enrolment forms will be updated annually or when a family's circumstances change, to ensure information is current and correct.

Custody Arrangements

The Education and Care Services National Law requires our service to have details of all custodial and access arrangements. Enrolling family members are responsible for informing the Nominated Supervisor of custody and access arrangements on enrolment and must advise the Nominated Supervisor immediately of any subsequent alterations to these arrangements. All relevant legal documentation is to be shown to the Nominated Supervisor and a copy will be maintained in the child's enrolment record.

Orientation

The orientation and settling in period will consider and respect the needs of both families and children. Families will be encouraged to remain with their child when delivering or collecting them for as long a period as the family member and/or educators feel may be necessary to ensure the child's wellbeing. We will always consider the feelings and time constraints that families may have regarding participating in orientation processes and aim to make the experience a positive and welcoming introduction to the service.

Our service will provide options for orientation to the education and care service for families which includes where possible:

- Inviting new families to visit the service with their child at times that suit them, to familiarise families with the service prior to the child's attendance.
- Providing all new families with a conducted tour of the premises which will include introductions to other educators, children, and families, and that highlights specific policies and procedures that families need to know about our service.

- Ensuring each family has a copy of the Family Guide and an opportunity to have any questions answered.
- The opportunity to stay with their child during the settling in process.
- Ensuring all new families are encouraged to share information about their child and any concerns, doubts, or anxieties they may have in regard to enrolling their child at the service.

*** The orientation process is subject to COVID restrictions and considerations at the time.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility for
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times. • Providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and staff) 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. • Ensuring that enrolment forms comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162. • Ensuring that enrolment records 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 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 staff under the Law (Regulation 157).
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing enrolment application forms. • Maintaining a waiting list. • Maintain an immunisation register. • Collecting, receipting and banking enrolment fees. • Offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy. • Providing a monthly report to the approved provider regarding the status of enrolments. • Storing completed enrolment application forms in a lockable file (refer to privacy and confidentiality policy) as soon as is practicable.
Educators/ Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.

Person on Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required. • Ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child’s commencement at the service. • 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 staff under the Law (Regulation 157). • Developing strategies to assist new families to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » feel welcomed into the service; » become familiar with service policies and procedures; » 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 the service.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and complying with this policy

Key Resources:

- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF02-Guide-to-ECS-Law-and-Regs-130902.pdf>
- Priority of Access Guidelines for Childcare Services https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/instruction_sheet_10_-_priority_of_access_guidelines_for_child_care_services_0.pdf
- Public Health Act 2010 No 127 www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2010/127/full

Review

POLICY REVIEWED	AUGUST 2018	NEXT REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2024
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of Monitoring section • Addition of COVID considerations 		