

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

Early Years Services

1. Purpose

This policy and procedure aims to support new families during the enrolment and orientation process when commencing at the service as required by Education and Care Services National Regulations

2. Policy

Stonnington Early Years Services aim to provide care and support during the enrolment and orientation process while meeting the needs of each child and their family.

The enrolment and orientation procedure allows for parents/guardians to be provided comprehensive information, time for completion of enrolment records and other required documentation and an opportunity to develop a collaborative partnership and a sense of belonging within the service community.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Early Years Coordinator
- Team Leaders
- Educators
- Administration Officers
- Parents/Guardians
- Students on placement
- Volunteers
- Agency Educators engaged at the service

4. Responsibilities

The following roles are responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy:

- Early Years Coordinator
- Team Leaders
- Administration Officer
- Educational Leaders
- Educators

5. Procedure

Tours & Waiting Lists

- Team Leader/Administration Officer will provide tours to show prospective parents/guardians and children through the service
- Tours will provide a general overview of the service, the philosophy, hours of operation, care provided, enrolments, and waiting lists
- Parents/guardians on arrival for the purpose of tours, enrolment, or orientation appointments, should complete the *Visitor book for Tour/Orientation Visitors' record*
- Parents/guardians may then choose to proceed based on the information provided; or complete a Placement Application form for a Long Day Care place (either paper based or via the My Family Lounge account)
- Through discussion with the parent/guardian at this time, Team Leader/Administration Officer will gain basic information relating to the child to ensure their health, safety, and wellbeing to ascertain *Priority of Access* information
- Commonwealth government *Priority of Access* criteria for funded places recommend places are prioritised for children
 - At risk serious abuse or neglect
 - Child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment
- Victorian Government has *Priority of Access* criteria that apply only to funded kindergarten places. The criteria requires services to give priority of access to children in the following order:
 - Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in out of home care
 - Aboriginal 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:
 - require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program
 - require a combination of services which are individually planned
 - have an identified specific disability or developmental delay

Princes Close Early Years Service – Enrolment

- On commencement a child must be at least three months old and can continue through to school age attending the integrated funded kindergarten program provided
- Once a place is confirmed, parent/guardian must complete an online Enrolment record and submit as well as a current up to date *Immunisation History Statement* via their My Family Lounge account
- Team Leader/Administration Officer provide further information including the *Early Years Service Philosophy, Child Safety Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians, Child Friendly Code of Conduct, Storypark Privacy Collection Notice and Storypark Consent Form, Fees and Payment of Fees Policy – Princes Close, Sleep and Rest Policy* as well as *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy* if applicable
- At this time, a deposit must be paid to secure the place

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Version: 6 Date issued: 26 October 2011
Date reviewed: 17 August 2023
Next review: 1 July 2025

Winter Street Early Years Service – Enrolment

- On commencement a child must be at least six months old and can continue through to school age, although funded kindergarten is not provided
- Once parent/guardian has accepted a place (Sessional Care or Long Day Care) orientation can commence
- If commencing with Long Day Care a deposit must be paid to secure the place, if commencing with Sessional Care a registration fee is charged to the first session
- Information provided to parents/guardians at the child's first orientation session, includes *Child Safety Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians* and *Child Friendly Code of Conduct, Fees and Payment of Fees Policy – Winter Street*, and *Sleep and Rest Policy* via email as well as paper-based enrolment documentation including *Storypark Privacy Collection Notice* and *Storypark Consent Form*
- Parent/guardian must complete paper-based Enrolment record and return including a current and up to date *Immunisation History Statement* to the service before sessions can commence

Enrolment

- Once child's enrolment is confirmed, orientation visits for new children are arranged in consultation with Educators in the appropriate room
- Team Leader, Room Leader, and parent/guardian may meet to discuss care arrangements and needs of the child if applicable. If a child has a diagnosed health care need, allergy, or medical condition this provides an opportunity to discuss child's health care needs and complete a *Risk Minimisation Plan* if required. In this instance a copy of the *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy* will be provided to Parents/Guardians
- If there is any court order relating to a child an original or certified copy of that court order are kept in the child's file. The court order is to be in its original form and only a further court order can alter the restrictions outlined
- Children's enrolment records are stored in locked file drawers or electronically (where applicable) in accordance with *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, *Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653)*, as well as the *Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014*

Orientation visits

- Orientation visits support a child's transition to the service, families spending time with the child before leaving them on their own can provide a smoother transition help build trusting relationships
- Educators in the relevant room are given background knowledge of the child, taking into consideration the cultural background, language, health care needs, allergies, or medical conditions. Educators will use this knowledge and information to assist with being prepared for the orientation visits
- Visits are usually 30 minutes to 1 hour with a minimum of at least two visits prior to the child commencing at the service. The service recognises parents/guardians may not have time for extended orientation periods due to other circumstances
- Relationships between Educators and families begins at orientation, information sharing occurs such as family values and practises in relation to religion, diet, feeding, sleeping, toileting, clothing, and footwear. Educators have opportunity to provide information regarding the service, the philosophy, practises, and programs

- Educators inform parents/guardians of the sign in/out procedures, clarify what to bring, show them where to place their child's belongings and advise them of the methods of communication in the room, online communication tools, program planning procedures and any other relevant information
- The service realises that flexibility within the orientation and settling in period is essential but is necessary to find the right balance for Educator and child wellbeing

Settling in period

- During orientation and the settling in period Educators support children and their families' emotional needs so they develop trusting relationships and a sense of belonging within the environment
- Educators ensure they communicate with parents/guardians regarding how their child is managing, particularly during this settling in period.
- Parent/guardian are contacted if a child is upset and distressed for a prolonged period, recommending the child is collected and continues with reduced hours until the child settles
- Educators spending time developing respectful, inclusive relationships during this time will assist families feel connected with their children's experiences and helps them develop trust and confidence in the service
- Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the service at any time or call throughout the day to discuss their child's day or any other feedback/concerns they may have. (Unless court orders are in place prohibiting a parent/guardian from having access to the service or their child)

Communication

- Exchange of information should occur at arrival/departure times with Educators gaining or sharing information relating to the child's health and wellbeing, achievements, experiences, and general interests
- Daily information regarding child's day and routines should be shared by parent/guardian on arrival and by Educators throughout the day
- Daily exchange of information is necessary to provide adequate care both during the day at the service and then at home in the evening. This exchange of information may be in the form of:
 - Verbal exchange of information
 - Whiteboard (bottle, sleep information)
 - Daily diary
- Other ongoing communication tools used to share information may include:
 - Online communication platform - Story Park
 - Noticeboards – displaying current program, daily routine, parent/guardian education, service news & events, name, and photographs of Educators, relieving Educators and student/volunteer information
 - Fliers – for parent/guardian sessions and/or information
 - Newsletters – distributed regularly and contain relevant information about the service, current service practises, achievements, the assessment and rating process, other events or special activities happening in the program

- Parent/Educator meetings – arranged on request from parent/guardian or the service to discuss child’s care and/or development, program, or any other concerns
- Educators will apply their qualifications, knowledge and experience and strive to balance and prioritise the needs and attention of each individual child within the group
- Educators working with children will endeavour to gain further information and understanding therefore strengthening relationships with families Educators will acknowledge parents/guardians’ requests regarding their child’s routine and needs
- Services recognise effective, ongoing two-way communication is achieved through mutual respect and understanding
- Parents/guardians are given opportunity to provide feedback through a satisfaction survey bi-annually which includes service delivery, staffing, hours of operations, provisions, programs etc. Information provided will be used for future planning and quality improvement of services

Children transitioning to a new room

- When children are scheduled to change rooms, Educators will discuss the orientation and transition process confirming the parent/guardians are comfortable
- Children will have opportunities to visit and spend short periods of time in the new room before moving, visits increase in time until the child, Educators and parent/guardian are happy with the transition
- Parent/guardian are provided with a *Transition Information Form* to complete with up-to-date information about the child for Educators in the new room
- Educators working with children will discuss individual needs and complete the *Transition Information Form* to assist with the transition

Ceasing Care

- In line with the Fees and Payment of Fees Policy’s parents/guardians must provide ten business days’ notice to cease care, failure to pay fees may also result in parent/guardian being asked to cease care immediately unless full payment is received
- Children who are due to attend school must cease care the Friday prior to school year commencement date e.g., around the 25th of January

6. Relevant Legislation, Policies & Sources

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACEQA)

ACECQA - Guide to the NQF [Guide to the National Quality Framework: July 2023](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/guide-to-the-nqf)
([acecqa.gov.au](https://www.acecqa.gov.au))

Child Safe Standards

Child Safety Code of Conduct Council Officers

Child Safety Code of Conduct for Parents and Guardians

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Child Safety Code of Conduct for Children and Young People

City of Stonnington Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653) - Version 1st July 2023

Fees and Payment of fees Policy – Princes Close

Fees and Payment of fees Policy – Winter Street

National Quality Standards

Priority of Access Guidelines Priority of access policy in early childhood services | Victorian Government (www.vic.gov.au)

Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014

Sleep and Rest Policy

Victorian Department of Health No Jab No Play for early childhood education and care services | health.vic.gov.au

7. Relevant Service Forms

Enrolment Record

Getting to know your Child Form

Parent Handbook

Placement Application Form

Risk Minimisation Plan

Storypark Privacy Collection Notice

Storypark Consent Form

Tour/Orientation Record

Transition Information Form

Visitors book