

Orientation and Enrolment

National Regulations:

- 160- Child enrolment records are kept by the approved provider
- 161- Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
- 162- Health information to be kept in enrolment record
- 168 – Education and care services must have policies and procedures
- 177- Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by the approved provider
- 183- Storage of records and other documents

National Quality Framework:

- 6.1.1 – Engagement with the service

Privacy Act 1988

Policy Statement

Enrolment is a vitally important step in providing and receiving information about children and the service and communicating expectations for each. Parents want to be reassured that their child will be safe, happy and well cared for and they will want to know that those entrusted with the care of their child are capable, knowledgeable, caring, trustworthy, honest and reliable.

From the services perspective this is the opportunity to proudly illustrate the value of early childhood and provide families with a range of information about what their child will be experiencing during their day in the setting.

Goals / What are we going to do?

- All families will receive a full service tour, introductions with educators and have highlighted specific policies and procedures in the parent handbook.
- Collect and store scan and upload completed enrolment forms before an enrolment commences.
- A signed orientation form must also be completed and filed.
- Encourage families to have some play dates at the service, where the parent stays and allows for the establishment of relationships with educators.
- Encourage families to share information about their child's health and wellbeing.

Procedures / How will we do this?

Enrolling Families and Children into the Service

During the enrolment process the service and families will work through a checklist of information to assist with their understanding of using the service. The Director will discuss the following;

- Parent Handbook
- Orientation Checklist
- Enrolment form and profile sheet

- Custody Arrangements
- Educational programs
- Fee structure and payment systems
- Bond payment
- Educator qualifications and introduction.
- Management structure
- What to bring
- Human Services Information
- Immunisation
- Medication policy
- Drop off and pick up policy
- Priority of access policy
- Contacts
- Absence from the service
- Bus permission if necessary
- Sun Protection Policy

Prior to or on the first day of enrolment, information will be required to be provided by the parent/legal guardian that includes:

- Enrolment Form
- Immunisation record
- My Routine Information
- Child Profile / background information
- Orientation Checklist and Complying Written Agreement

The service may at this point determine if additional support will be required for the family. Links can be made with external support agencies for;

- Children with additional needs
- Families who have English as a second language
- Families with low literacy levels
- Children with health needs such as Asthma / Anaphylaxis

All families need to take responsibility for arranging their own CCS for the Centre. The Centre unfortunately cannot register families for CCS; however, will assist with directing families to the correct organisations.

At the beginning of each year all families will re-enrol to ensure that all children and family information is up

to date. A Change of Details Form is available anytime from the office and parents can update their information. Changes in a child's ongoing permanent booking will require the families complete a new Complying Written Agreement.

Settling Children

The service understands that settling into childcare can be an emotional time for both children and their parents. It may be the child's first experience or your child may be transitioning to a new room in the centre. Children often have difficulty separating from their families and each child's reactions and length of time they take to settle into their environment depends on each child, their previous experiences and their age.

What we know can help;

- Spending time at the centre with their child before and as they settle into care. Families are welcome to visit the service by making prior arrangements with the Director.
- Show confidence about your decision for the child to attend the service. Displaying trust with the service will send the message of reassurance and that it is a wonderful place to be.
- Ensure you have informed educators about your child's likes, dislikes, routines and individual preferences for food and drink.
- Seek out a preferred educator that your child can be left with when you drop them off for the day.
- Allow time for drop off –often children do not cope when it is rushed.
- Contact the service during your child's first days to check how your child is settling.

The service can help by

- Ensuring that each family has participated in the enrolment and orientation process.
- Allowing the orientation process to be flexible to meet the needs of all families.
- Ensuring that there are effective procedures for moving to a new room.
- Rostering educators allowing for consistency for new children and families.

Educators will help by;

- Being aware of new enrolments, their commencement day, their background information their interests and needs.
- Encourage a separation routine, does the child need to wave at the window, the gate or do they need to become involved in a favourite activity.
- Encourage the parent to let you know approximately what time they will collect their child as this will allow educators to honestly tell a child whether it will be soon or later.
- Immediately let children know where they can toilet, keep their bag or lunch box.

Discuss with the child how they will receive their meals. All children need to know their basic needs will be met. (Maslow)

- Buddy new children with long term children. This will ensure that children feel welcome and accepted.
- Make the day fun filled and wonderful, so children leave and *want* to come back!!
- Children will often feel that their family is not ever going to return. A picture book made of photos of the centre routine can be compiled and discussed. This will reassure the child that at a specific time their parents will come back.
- A photo of the child's parents laminated may also comfort a child.
- Encourage the family to ring and check on their child's progress and provide honest feedback.



Links to Theory

Much research has been completed about childhood anxiety and the very importance for children to form secure attachments in early childhood settings.

A 2015 survey of the mental health of Australian children and adolescents called 'Young Minds Matter' identified that 40.5% of emotional or behavioural problems among children and young people aged 4 to 17 years were first identified by a school staff member. Research shows that effective approaches to promote mental health and wellbeing and prevent mental health problems should be prioritised, given the scale of human suffering and health, social and economic consequences of poor mental health.

The Australian Government's BeYou organisation sees;

"Partnering with families as a key factor in supporting positive mental health outcomes.

Families are the first educational setting for children, and are a major influence on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. As children move through the life span, –educational settings – early learning, primary and secondary schools –

also become critical influences for children and youth.

Building partnerships between educators and families supports communication and consistency in responses, and can assist in supporting children and young people's mental wellbeing. Family-education partnerships have been found to have personal, social and academic benefits for students, families and educational settings, through enhanced staff retention."

Psychologist Karen Young advocates that when children are anxious they are seeing a threat and it is our job to bring them back to safety.

Children need an attachment BATON that is passed from one trusted adult to another. Use the same trusted adult and the same routine. In thinking about a voice for a child with anxiety a low and monotone voice will register as a threat use your sing song voice!

Encourage breathing. Karen states that breathing is the best way to calm the brain!

Validate "I can see this is big for you and your going to miss your mum" avoid saying "your ok" this tells the child I actually don't get you causing greater anxiety.



Vagus Nerve- The longest nerve in your body! Jordan Fallis writes "The vagus nerve is a key part of your parasympathetic "rest and digest" nervous system. It influences your breathing digestive function and heart rate, all of which have a huge impact on your mental health" Research shows that rubbing in the middle of the back / neck can stimulate the vagus nerve and reduce stress. Humming also stimulates the vagus nerve.

National Quality Framework – Staffing arrangements

4.1. Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.

National Quality Framework – Governance and leadership

7.1.2. Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

Belong, Being and Becoming – Children have a strong sense of identity

1.1. Children feel safe, secure and supported.

Culturally Valued Perspectives

When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enter Early Childhood Services it is usually in a contemporary Western way. We draw on socio cultural theories, learning socially and expanding on what children currently understand.

Being, Belonging and Becoming challenges us as educators to question our practices and develop a diverse ways of experiencing the concepts of Being, Belonging and Becoming across culture.

[Foundations for Success](#) (2013) introduces the concept of "learning bridges"

"A learning bridge is a means of being valued, respected and in safe relationships for learning and living."

Adding further successful learning bridges are built when we;

- Nurture strong respectful family and community partnerships and engagement.
- Critically reflect their own values, views and understanding of childhood, children and learning.
- Value and utilise the culturally valued knowledge about children's learning and development held within the community
- Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing their own as well as children's cultural competence
- Build our own awareness and understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, history and contemporary societies.

Reflective questions about this policy.

How do we settle children into our service?

Do educators understand their role and how to assist a child with separation anxiety?

What other strategies could we implement?

In what ways do we build on our learning of others cultures?

When answering the reflective questions did you have areas identified for improvement:

If change is required:

- Discuss any proposed ideas or changes to the orientation and enrolment processes.
- Have any situations arisen that we could improve during orientation?
- What procedures could we improve?

To implement the changes effectively:

- Trial the changes

Review of change is an important step:

- Evaluate whether the changes have improved the orientation process.

Document in your Quality Improvement Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities in Orientation and Enrolment.

Approved Provider, Area Manager's and Director

Persons in day to day charge

- Provide opportunities for families to attend the centre during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to commencing in the program.
- Ensure that all enrolments forms are completed and comply with regulation 160, 161, 162.
- Ensure that enrolment records are stored safely and securely and are held for 3 years after the child's last day of care.
- Maintain a waiting list.
- Review the orientation policy every 2 yrs.
- Families will be consulted on how the service met their needs and the satisfaction of their early childhood experience.
- Show children where their bag will go, how they will get their lunch, where the toilets are!

Educators

- Ensure you contribute to ideas about the enrolment and orientation process and how children are transitioned into their group.
- Educator feedback will be gathered through their appraisal process.
- Ensure that any enrolment forms you receive are completed in their entirety.
- Ensure new families feel welcome at the service.
- Ensure separation routines are established.
- Share information with parents / guardians regarding their child's progress settling into the service.

Families

- Spend time completing the orientation process for your child.
- Be confident during drop off you could say- "Here is Miss Bec, she is going to take you and then you're going to play playdough and I will hear about it this afternoon".
- Consider short periods at the service e.g. until lunch time, for the first couple of weeks. Note: All children will be different and it may be different for your child.

Community

- It is important to remember that our service is part of a wider community and the first impressions left on families and children will be discussed with their family and friends.
- The service reputation for the quality of care received rests on those that families encounter first - so ensure this valuable time counts for how you would like the community to perceive the service.

Sources and Further Reading

ACECQA Starting Blocks- *Pre-paring for child care* : www.startingblocks.gov.au

www.acecqa.gov.au *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Year Learning Framework for Australia.*

Australian Government Department of Education and Training: *Child Care Provider Handbook* (2018) Version 1 www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook-0

Jorde Bloom P. (2005), *Blueprint for action: Achieving centre-based change through staff development* (2nd edition). New Horizons, Illinois. USA.

Queensland Government (2013) *Foundations for Success: Guidelines for extending and enriching learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the kindergarten year.* QLD

