

ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

Purpose

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at Perry Street Child Care Centre (PSCCC)
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at PSCCC
- requirements in relation to No Jab No Play
- the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into PSCCC
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

PSCCC is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting families to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at PSCCC.

3. 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)).

It is intended by 2022 that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to two years of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, Approved Provider's must adhere to their eligibility and priority of access criteria (refer to *Definitions* and *Attachment 1*) in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (refer to *Sources*), the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved child care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for families childcare package) Act 2017* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

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) (Administration) Act 1999*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *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)

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: is the only form of acceptable evidence of immunisation. 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. 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.

Approved child care providers: providers that operate services that have Australian Government approval to receive Child Care Subsidy (refer to Definitions) on behalf of eligible parents. Approved child care providers include centre-based day care, including long day care and occasional care, family day care, outside school hours care and in-home care.

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 form.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need to consider a risk assessment on an individual basis to determine if a person under the age of 18 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible families with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers (refer to *Definitions*). Further information can be found at: <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-0>

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

Deferral: When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the April data collection. DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DET funding in the following year.

Eligible child: as defined by the Kindergarten Funding Guide; a child that is at least four years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a 4-year-old program; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service. Or a child that is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment and is enrolled in a funded 3-year-old kindergarten program. Any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicate that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualify for the 16-weeks grace period.

Enrolment application fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

Enrolment application form: A form to apply for a place at the service (see *Attachment 3: Sample Enrolment Application Form*)

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; details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Fee: A charge for a place within a program at the service.

Grace period: allows specific categories of children of families 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 families 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 families to access immunisation services.

Priority of access: in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate spaces using the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (see *Attachment 1: Eligibility and priority of access criteria for a 3 and 4-year-old funder kindergarten program*), or if in receipt of the CCS, comply with the Commonwealth Government's policy for allocating places (see *Source*).

Vulnerable Children/Families: 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 being vulnerable include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, known to Child Protection, Out of Home Care, substance abuse, or mental health; Aboriginal and/or Torres 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*)

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- Australian Government Department of Health, *National Immunisation Program Schedule*: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-throughout-life/national-immunisation-program-schedule>
- Department of Health and Human Services, *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: www.acecqa.gov.au/
- Priority of Access Guidelines for child care service: <https://www.dese.gov.au/uncategorised/resources/priority-access-guidelines-child-care-services>
- 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): <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-legislation>
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (Department of Education and Training): www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at PSCCC, as described in The Kindergarten Funding Guide; and/or as describe under the Family Assistance Law for CCS recipients, and the service's philosophy (refer also to Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program)
- considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program
- complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (refer also to Attachment 2 – General enrolment procedures and Attachment 3 – Sample enrolment application form)
- providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) 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
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) required for enrolment
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit 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 (refer to *Definitions*)
- ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) has been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period (refer to *Definitions*) have a confirmed place in the program
- advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) 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 (see Attachment 4 – Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)
- taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)
- ensuring that the enrolment record (refer to *Definitions*) complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records (refer to *Definitions*) 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 (1a) (2d))
- ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- 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, 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 educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

- taking reasonable steps to contact non attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (refer to Attachment 5)

The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge and early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - make contact with educators at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.
- taking reasonable steps to contact non attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment (refer to Attachment 5)

All educators are responsible for:

- responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) required for enrolment
- developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into the service
 - become familiar with service policies and procedures
 - share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
 - share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities 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 from family members
- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information
- making reasonable attempts to contact non attending families (refer to Attachment 5) and consult with Nominated Supervisor of outcomes.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing the enrolment application form and the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement (refer to *Definitions*) of their child's immunisation status
- 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 (refer to *Definitions*) to the service
- ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur
- notify [Service Name] in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

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
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program
- Attachment 2: General enrolment procedures

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of PSCCC on April 2016

Reviewed April 2018 – No changes Made

Updated May 2021

REVIEW DATE: MAY 2022

ATTACHMENT 1

Eligibility and priority of access criteria for a funded kindergarten 3 and 4-year-old program

DET's Priority of Access criteria	Process that could be used to verify need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	The child is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending a three-year-old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten* or Access to Early Learning, or is referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Child Protection – Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) – Maternal and Child Health nurse, or – Out-of-Home Care provider
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' and record this information in KIM.
Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program • require a combination of services which are individually planned • have an identified specific disability or developmental delay 	The child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten • holds a Child Disability Health Care Card • has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the National Disability Insurance Scheme – Early Childhood Intervention Service – Preschool Field Officer, or – Maternal and Child Health nurse.

Note: DET's Priority of Access (POA) guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten programs are available to those children who stand to benefit the most from attending early education. In mixed age groups, POA guideline will equally prioritise three and four-year-old children that are considered vulnerable. Where programs for three- and four-year old children are provided separately, the POA criteria will be applied separately for each age cohort.

ATTACHMENT 2

General enrolment procedures long day care and funded kindergartens programs

Enrolments for Perry St are taken from our own wait list portal for long day care. Enrolments for 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten are taken internally from current Perry St families and remainder places from Darebin 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten registration.

Waitlist registration Process

You can register for Perry St's wait list through the Perry St website. www.perrystreet.com via the My family lounge platform.

Your child must be born and have a birth certificate. There is no fee charged to join the wait list.

Centre tours - Please ensure you have followed up your registration with a tour of the centre. Tours are by appointment only. Please call 03 9489 2949 or email director@perrystreet.com.au to arrange a time.

Priority of access - Perry St adheres to the federal government's priority of access guidelines - <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/instruction-sheet-10-priorityaccess-guidelines-child-care-services>

You do not need to be living and/or working in Darebin to go onto our wait list.

No Jab No Play – Perry St also adheres to the State governments policy that all children should be up-to-date with immunisations before attending childcare or kindergarten. You will need to provide an immunisation certificate upon enrolment. <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play>

Minimum days for enrolment at Perry St Kindergarten

- 4-year-old funded kindergarten requires a minimum of 3 enrolled days at Perry St to meet state government funding requirements.
- 3-year-old kindergarten requires one enrolled day at Perry St to meet state government funding requirements.
- All other places require one enrolled day minimum.

3 and 4-year-old kindergarten registration – If you are currently attending Perry St and would like your child to do 3 and 4-year-old funded kinder at Perry St you do not need to register with Darebin – You will automatically receive a kindergarten place at Perry St.

If you would like to attend a Perry St Kindergarten program but, do not have a child currently enrolled at Perry St – please apply through the Darebin kindergarten registration portal. <http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Darebin-Living/Community-support/FamiliesandChildren/Childrens-Services#Kindergarten/Preschool>

Internal allocation - Long day care days and priority of access for Funded Kindergarten children at Perry St.

After DET priority of access obligations have been met – allocation of kindergarten and long day care places is as follows

- Funded 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten places are allocated to current families enrolled at Perry St
- Long day care places are allocated to children enrolled in Perry St funded 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten
- Siblings of funded 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten Perry St children are allocated same long day care days if requested
- When all funded 3- and 4-year-old Perry St long day care and kindergarten places have been allocated, remaining long day care places will be offered to children enrolled in other funded kindergarten services.

Please also refer to fee policy and cancellation of kindergarten and or long day care places

External allocation - Long Day care offer procedure from Perry St wait list portal – When a place becomes available for your child and you are next on the waitlist, we will offer you a place via my family lounge platform. This will be in the form of an email and follow up phone call. If there is no response to the contact within 48 hours – we will withdraw the offer and move to the next family on the list. - When we make contact with you and offer a childcare place – we will give you 3 business days to consider and accept the offer. If you do not respond/accept – you will remain on the list unless otherwise advised to be removed.

If you accept the offer (via my family lounge platform) you will be then prompted to complete your enrolment form and provide you child's immunisation record. You will be invoiced for the childcare place from 7 days of accepting the offer. A \$500 deposit is required before commencement. This deposit is non-refundable. It will however go towards your fees. Please refer to fee policy and procedures.

- A copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of address must be submitted with all applications.

You will be asked to attend the centre for a short orientation process where you will meet your child's educators, receive remaining paperwork to complete the enrolment process, discuss any concerns and establish an orientation

procedure for your child. An official start date will also be decided on this visit. Your start date should be one week from when you contacted the centre. This is also the date you will be invoiced from.

Confirmation of funded kindergarten and long day care places at Perry St

Places are not confirmed until letter of offer is signed and returned to office and associated deposits are paid.

Cancellation of funded 3 and/or 4-year-old places at Perry St.

Please notify Perry St of intention to cancel ASAP.

Please refer to fee policy for notice period and deposits.

Cancellation of funded kindergarten place will also forfeit all associated long day care places.

Note: This process does not apply to vulnerable children (refer to *Definitions*). Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; Educators will need to inform their Case Officer

ATTACHMENT 3

Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

Perry St Child Care Centre and Elizabeth Gorman Memorial Kindergarten

129 Perry St

Fairfield 3078

Date :

Dear

Re: Enrolment at Perry St Child Care Centre and Elizabeth Gorman Memorial Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at [Service Name] in the [insert 3 year old or 4 year old program] in [insert year].

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided AIR Immunisation History Statement.

AIR Immunisation History Statement includes evidence that your child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age; or
- has been assessed by our service as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, and your child is not eligible for the 16 week grace period, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

- your doctor
- [insert details of local government immunisation service]
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Immunisation Register:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register>
- Better Health Channel website: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/no-jab-no-play>

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], we are happy to accept a new enrolment application accompanied by AIR History Statement. The new application would be considered in line with [Service Name]'s Enrolment and Orientation policy.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

[Service Name]