

# Enrolment and Orientation

QUALITY AREA 6 : COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

## Introduction

Pacific Hills Early Learning Centre (PHELC) 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.

## Goals

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.

## Strategies

### Enrolment

To secure a child's position families are required to pay a \$200 enrolment fee to secure the position. Please note the withdrawal notice period increases to 4 weeks from the last Monday of November until the centre reopens in the following year.

Children with disabilities will be enrolled, if in the opinion of management, the PHELC can meet the child's needs. Additional resources and funding may be required through disability and inclusion programs.

When a family has indicated their interest in enrolling their child in our Service, we will organise an enrolment meeting to share information and build relationships.

Our service has a minimum two day enrolment requirement for children for the purpose of assisting children to settle as quickly as possible. One of these days must be a Monday or Friday to allow for consistent enrolments across the week in the Service.

Families will be provided with a range of information about the Service which may include :

- the service philosophy

- inclusion
  - programming methods
  - menu
  - incursions
  - excursions
  - fees
  - Child Care Subsidy
  - policies and procedures
  - SunSmart requirements
  - Regulations
  - Assessment and Rating process for NSW
  - Early Years Learning Framework
  - the National Quality Framework
  - signing in and out procedure
  - room routines
  - educator qualifications
  - introduction of educator in the room the child will be starting in
  - educator and parent communication strategies.
- Families will be invited to ask questions and seek any further information they may require
  - Families will be provided with possible vacancies and start date
  - Families will be invited to bring their child into the Service at a time that is mutually convenient to familiarise themselves with the environment and educators as part of the Orientation process
  - Any matters that are of a sensitive nature, such as discussing a child's medical needs, Court Orders, parenting plans or parenting orders, will be discussed privately with management. Families will be required to bring any documents required in relation to court orders, medical needs or plans.
  - Families will complete the enrolment form informing management of their child's interests, strengths and individual needs
  - If a family or child uses English as a second language or speak another language at home, we request that families provide us with some key words in the language/s the child speaks so that educators can learn these words. Educators may use visuals to assist the child's understanding and be able to communicate with others.
  - Families who wish to receive CCS as reduced fees must apply for CCS through the myGov website/app, this includes completing the Child Care Subsidy activity test.
  - Information about gap fees and absences will be discussed
  - It is a legal requirement that prior to the child starting at the Service we have all required documents including

- the completed enrolment form
  - medical management plans (if relevant) completed by the child's general practitioner
  - birth certificate or passport
  - a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) showing the child is up to date with immunisations for their age and
  - details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans
- It is a requirement of the Family Assistance Office that immunisation information held by the Service is kept current. Parents are reminded mid-way through the year to provide any immunisation updates to the Service in order to continue receiving childcare subsidy.
  - Parents must notify the Service if their child is not up to date with their immunisations for their age via the enrolment form and attach the required documentation on their *AIR immunisation History Statement*.
  - To attend childcare in NSW, children must be fully immunised or on an approved vaccination catch-up program. If a child cannot be immunised due to a medical condition they may still be enrolled at the service with supporting documentation (Medical Exemption Form). If a child is on a 'catch-up' schedule for immunisations they may still be enrolled at the Service. The child's immunisation history statement will indicate that the child is on a catch-up schedule.

## Priority of Access

Enrolments will be accepted according to the Australian Government 'Priority of Access'. PHELC aims to assist families who are most in need and may prioritise filling vacancies with children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment. Providers are asked to, but are not legally obliged to, prioritise such children. CCS Handbook p.51

## 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 families 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.
- 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 Statement is provided with the enrolment form which details :

- The name and contact details of the service;
- 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 required information.

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

## Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) offers assistance to families to help with the cost of childcare for children aged 0-13 years. There are three factors that determine a family's level of CCS. These are:

- Combined annual family income
- Activity test – the activity level of both parents
- Service type – type of child care service and whether the child attends school
- Documentation may be required such as Australian driver licence, Australian passport, Foreign passport, Australian birth certificate, Australian Marriage certificate, Australian citizenship certificate
- Families are provided with a Customer Reference Number (CRN)
- Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction
- Families will contribute to their childcare fees and pay the Service the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount- generally called the 'gap fee'
- Families may also be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy depending upon their circumstance.

## Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)

- The Provider and Parent must enter into an agreement regarding the planned arrangements for care of a child, this is called a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) and is an agreement to provide care in return for fees.

- The CWA must be recorded, and the parent must confirm the terms of the agreement either electronic or hard copy and this must be kept by the provider.
- The CWA must include the following information:
  - the names and contact details of the provider and the individual(s)
  - the date the arrangement starts
  - the name and date of birth of the child (or children)
  - if care will be provided on a routine basis and if so, details about the days on which sessions of care will usually occur
  - the usual start and end times for these sessions of care
  - whether care will be on a casual or flexible basis (in addition to, or instead of, a routine basis)
  - details of fees charged under the arrangement (providers can reference a fee schedule or information available on their website), which the parties understand may vary from time to time.
- Where there are certain changes (fees or booked days) to the individual Complying Written Arrangements (CWA) for care between the provider and an individual, the provider must update the arrangement in writing, and the families are required to confirm the changes by signing the updated CWA.
- An enrolment notice must be submitted within 7 days following the signed CWA and enrolment acceptance.
- Once the provider submits an enrolment notice the family will be asked to confirm the enrolment through their myGov account.

## Additional Child Care Subsidy Procedure (ACCS)

PHELC will ensure all ACCS applications are managed in line with the CCS Handbook

- Parents can apply for ACCS (grandparent), ACCS (temporary financial hardship) or ACCS (transition to work) through Centrelink directly
- The provider can apply for ACCS (child wellbeing) through the CCS software or PEP for children identified at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Once a child has been identified as 'at risk' the Service will check the ACCS eligibility requirements from the Guide to the ACCS (Child Wellbeing)
- If the Service deems the child is eligible for ACCS the service will submit an initial ACCS Certificate for a 6-week period
- The Service needs to provide a referral to an appropriate support agency in conjunction with the submission of an ACCS certificate
- If further ACCS (Child Wellbeing) is required following the initial 6-week certificate the service may apply for a Determination for a period of up to 13 weeks
- Following an application for an ACCS 6-week certificate the provider will abide by the requirement to make an ACCS (child wellbeing) referral to an appropriate support agency
- Following an application for an ACCS 12-week determination the provider will abide by the requirement that the application must be accompanied by evidence, dated less than 6 months old, or a statutory declaration that supports the provider's view that the child continues to be 'at risk'
- If the child continues to be 'at risk; after the initial 13-week determination, then the provider needs to lodge a subsequent determination application.

## Custody Arrangements

The Education and Care Services National Regulations requires PHELC 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. Parents/guardians will be encouraged to remain with their child when delivering or collecting them for as long a period as the parent/guardian 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 in regard to participating in orientation processes and aim to make the experience a positive and welcoming introduction to the service.

PHELC will provide options for orientation to the education and care service for families which includes:

- 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 Handbook 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.

## On the Child's First Day

Consideration will be made to each family regarding the initial settling in period and strategies may be offered to assist both parents and the child. Parents will be reassured that they are able to stay with their child for as long as they choose in the early days; speak to their child's educator at any time; contact the service during the day to 'check' in on their child and request help with separation if this is a problem for their child.

On the first day, the child and their family will be welcomed by the Director or Nominated Supervisor and shown where or how to sign their child in/out of the service.

- They will be greeted by an educator and walked to their room
- The educator will discuss what is happening in the room, and show where the child's locker is located
- Information about collecting their child at the end of the day will be discussed
- Educators will ensure information about the child's first day is shared with parents (through Xplor)
- Management will ensure the orientation checklist has been completed and all required documents and information has been received from families.

## Management will ensure :

- The enrolment form is completed accurately and, in its entirety
- Authorisations are signed by both parents/guardians
- A child with medical needs does not begin at the service unless a medical management plan is received and medication is brought to the service each day
- The child's Medical Management Plan is recorded, and this information is shared/distributed to educators
- Action Plans are completed in full (if relevant)
- Administration of Medication forms are completed (if relevant)
- Risk Minimisation Plans and Communication Plans are requested/completed with parents for children with medical needs before the child begins education and care at the Service
- The appropriate Room leader is informed of the new child including any medical conditions, interests, developmental needs, and strengths.
- Immunisation history statement and birth certificate have been sighted and photocopied
- The child is added to the Observation cycle
- The enrolment is lodged through Xplor
- A file for the Child's information is created
- Families are provided with an orientation survey to complete within the first 6 weeks of starting to gain feedback about the orientation and enrolment process.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Approved Provider

- 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 permitting the parent's entry would pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educator under the Law, or if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor reasonably believes that permitting the parent's entry would contravene a court order. (Regulation 157).

### Nominated Supervisor

- 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.

### Early Childhood Educators

- Acting in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- 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.
- Developing strategies to assist new families to:
  - 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

- Reading and complying with this policy.
- complete all documentation required by the Service for enrolment
- provide required authorisations as indicated on enrolment form
- notify the service of any specific health care needs of the child, including medical conditions and allergies and provide a medical management plan for child if applicable
- ensure all information about the child and family is kept up to date.

## National Quality Standard (NQS)

### QUALITY AREA 5 : RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

5.1	Respect and equity	Educators building positive, trusting and responsive connections with each child
5.2	Relationships between children	Creating an environment where children can collaborate, learn from each other and develop self-regulation skills

### QUALITY AREA 6 : COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

6.1	Support with families	Respectful relationship with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
-----	-----------------------	---

### QUALITY AREA 7 : GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
-----	------------	--

## Related Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010:

Section 167	Protecting children from harm and hazards within education and care services
-------------	--

Section 170	Requirements regarding unauthorised persons on education and care services
Section 176	Compliance directions to approved providers for non-compliance with prescribed provisions of the law

Education and Care Services National Regulations:

Regulation 102	Written authorisation for removal of child from premises is required
102D	Written authorisation before transporting a child from the service
160	Approved providers maintain comprehensive enrolment records for each child
161	Outlines the authorisations that must be kept in a child's enrolment record
162	Ensures that a responsible person is present at all times while the service is operating
168(2)(k)	Policies and procedures in place for management of complaints alleging a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours
177	Outlines the specific documents that approved provider must keep
183	Requirements for storing records and other documents related to the service

- Privacy Act 1988
- Public Health Act 2010 No 127: Part 5 Division 4, Section 87
- Health records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)
- Family Assistance Law [www.dese.gov.au](http://www.dese.gov.au)

## Relevant references

- Priority of Access Guidelines for child care services [www.dese.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-case-studies/resources/priority-access-guidelines-child-care-services](http://www.dese.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-case-studies/resources/priority-access-guidelines-child-care-services)

Review:

POLICY REVIEWED :

POLICY REVIEWED BY:

NEXT REVIEW DATE :

MODIFICATIONS :