

Montessori Works

Background

For many children and their families, commencing child care is their first experience of separation. It is an experience that can be daunting and should be managed so that the process is as smooth as possible for all involved, especially the child.

The experiences of families and their children during the enrolment and orientation processes strongly influence the quality of their future relationships with the Service.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the way the Service welcomes parents and their children, informs them about the Service's policies and procedures, and gathers the information necessary to ensure the safety, education and care of the children.

Strategies and practices

Pre-enrolment

- The Service follows the Australian Government's "Priority of Access Guidelines" for allocating childcare places. Once these Guidelines are met, the Service prioritises siblings of children who are already attending.
- During the initial contact, parents are provided with basic information about the Service, its programs, routines and fees, and are shown through the Service. When parents indicate their interest in enrolling their child, they are shown through the Service and provided with information about its operation (e.g. opening and closing times, program, meals, policies and procedures, fees, documentation required before commencing at the Service and tailored orientation). Possible start dates are discussed. Parents are also invited to ask any questions they may have. They are given a copy of the Parent Handbook to keep.
- The Nominated Supervisor ascertains if the child has any special education and care requirements (e.g. medical, English as a second language) so that these needs can be met by the Service from the child's first day of attendance. Parents are asked to complete the Family and Child Information Summary.
- Parents are reminded to contact the Australian Government Department of Human Services (Centrelink 136 150) or to apply online via their MyGov account to have their eligibility for Child Care Subsidy assessed. This is required prior to formal enrolment.
- The Nominated Supervisor informs parents that every child and family respond differently to starting childcare, especially if it is the first time that children and families have been separated for any lengthy period. They are also told that, at enrolment time, educators and parents will plan to ensure the child settles in as smoothly and as quickly as possible.

Enrolment and Orientation

Enrolment

- When a vacancy occurs, the Nominated Supervisor arranges for parents and their child to visit and become familiar with the Service before the child commences. During the visit, they are shown through the Service and introduced to the educators. At this time, some children like to participate in the activities while others prefer to watch.
- Once parents decide to enrol their child, they complete an enrolment form prior to their child commencing at the Service. The enrolment form contains the following details:
 - Full name, date of birth and address of the child
 - Name, address and contact details of: each known parent of the child; any person who is to be notified of an emergency involving the child if neither parent of the child can be immediately contacted; and, any person who is an authorised nominee.
 - The name of any person who is authorised to consent to medical treatment of, or to authorise administration of medication to the child, any person who is authorised to authorise the education and care service to transport the child or arrange transportation of the child; and, any person who is authorised to authorise an educator to take the child outside the education and care service premises.
 - Details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans provided to the approved provider relating to powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of any person in relation to the child or access to the child.
 - Details of any other court orders provided to the approved provider relating to the child's residence or the child's contact with a parent or other person.
 - Gender of the child.
 - Language used in the child's home
 - Cultural background of the child and, if applicable, of the child's parents.
 - Any special considerations for the child, such as any cultural, religious or dietary requirements or additional needs.
 - Parents are asked to sign an agreement on the enrolment form authorising the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or an educator to: seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service; arrange transportation of the child by an ambulance service; and, if relevant, take the child on regular outings. Refer to the Service's *Excursion Policy*.
 - Parents are to provide the following health information.
 - Name, address and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service and the child's Medicare details.
 - Details of any specific healthcare needs or known medical conditions such as allergies, asthma, diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis.
 - Any Medical Management Plan and Risk Minimisation Plan to be followed with respect to a specific healthcare need or medical condition (e.g. asthma, allergy, anaphylaxis).
 - Details of any dietary restrictions for the child.
 - Immunisation status of the child. Refer to the Service's *Immunisation of Children and Staff Policy*.
- Parents are asked to complete a Family and Child Information Summary which provides some background about the family and child:
 - Information about the child's interests, needs, likes and dislikes
 - Cultural background, and any special customs and religious requirements to be respected

Enrolment and Orientation

- Goals for the child
 - Food preferences
 - Routines at home
 - Toilet training needs
 - Names of family members and pets.
- Parents are provided with written information about fee structure, payment regularity and options available (e.g. cash, EFTPOS, direct debit). Parents nominate their preferred method of payment at this time.
 - The Service's Policies and Procedures are discussed, and parents' attention drawn to specific policies (e.g. *Sun Protection, Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Handwashing*) and aspects of those policies that require their support and cooperation (e.g. ensuring current contact information, appropriate food and drink items provided from home, providing a hat, labelling of all clothes and other personal items). Parents are then shown where they can readily access these Policies and Procedures, the Parent Library and other resources. They are also provided with a Parent Handbook.
 - Where relevant, the Service's commitment to supporting breastfeeding is communicated to families and families are provided with information about the Service's breastfeeding policy and practices.
 - The Nominated Supervisor then speaks to the parents about the various ways the Service communicates with them (e.g. face-to-face, notice boards, emails, newsletters, individual child pockets) and ways that parents can converse with the Service (e.g. face-to-face, suggestion box, surveys). The information provided by the Service is intended to be easily understood by all parents, including those for whom English is a second language.
 - Parents are also asked the most suitable way to exchange information about their child's specific needs so that the educators can work with the parents to meet those needs.
 - At this time, the Nominated Supervisor, the educators in the child's room and the parents devise an orientation plan to help the child settle during the transition from home to the Service (particularly during the initial settling in period), and how best to maintain continuity between home and the Service. Some children may need to visit the Service a number of times before feeling sufficiently secure to be left by their parents. Others can be left after the first visit. Others again may need to build from a short visit to a full day. The plan is flexible and can be altered at any time. It is crucial that the child feels secure, and that positive interactions are established between all parties – child, parents and educators.
 - Once the child commences at the Service, parents are contacted at any time the child becomes distressed. Parents are also informed about their child's day when they collect the child, and are welcome to telephone the Service throughout the day for updates.
 - At the end of the enrolment and orientation, parents are asked to complete an Enrolment and Orientation Checklist which provides feedback on how to improve these processes.

Transitioning to a New Room

Enrolment and Orientation

- Children are transitioned to the next age group when they are developmentally ready to move to the next age group and a vacancy occurs. When educators identify that a child is ready to begin transition, and a vacancy is imminent, they contact parents to discuss the desirability of the move and to obtain their input. Refer to the Service's *Interactions with Families Policy*.
- Once all parties have agreed that the move is in the child's best interests, a letter is composed formalising the agreement. It details the day and date of the move, the names of the educators in the new room and any other relevant information.
- Before children are officially moved to a new room, their current educators talk to them about the impending move and the children then visit the next age group a number of times. The frequency depends on individual children.
- Immediately prior to the child's official move, parents are encouraged to visit the child's new room and to meet the educators to ensure that they are aware of such matters as room routine, location of lockers, and sign-in and sign-out sheets.

Transition to school

Attending school for the first time is a major change for the child and the family. The Service recognises that parents play a vital role in the success of the transition, and supports and works with parents to prepare children for school entry.

- Wherever possible, the Service provides families with information about the schools within the local community.
- The Service provides information to parents about children's readiness for school.
- Educators speak to children about starting school and ensure that the information they provide to children is positive and accurate.
- The Service liaises with the nearest government school and, towards the end of the year, arranges with the school for a number of familiarisation visits for the children who will attend the following year.
- The Service coordinates the transition statements to be completed by the educator (Transition Statement – Educator), parent (Transition Information – Family) and child (Transition Information – Child), and provides these to the school.

Additional safe practices for babies

- To be diligent in obtaining from parents upon enrolment all relevant information about their child, especially details on immunisation and medical conditions, together with dietary needs, and current sleep patterns, bottle times and other care routines.

Responsibilities of parents

- Lodge a child care subsidy claim
- Agrees with the Complying Written Agreement
- Confirms enrolment once service submits enrolment

Enrolment and Orientation

- To provide the Service with information about their family and their child's needs and interests.
- To provide all of the required documentation.
- To read and discuss Service policies and procedures.

Procedure and forms

- Enrolment and Orientation Checklist
- Family and Child Information Summary
- Transition Information – Child
- Transition Information – Educator
- Transition Information – Family

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling
- Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy Relationships with Children Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Sun Protection Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regulation	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation	78	Food and beverages
Regulation	79	Service providing food and beverages
Regulation	80	Weekly menu
Regulation	81	Sleep and rest
Regulation	85	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
Regulation	88	Infectious diseases
Regulation	90	Medical conditions policy
Regulation	92	Medication record
Regulation	93	Administration of medication
Regulation	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
Regulation	99	Children leaving the education and care services
Regulation	100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
Regulation	101	Conduct of risk assessment
Regulation	102	Authorisation for excursions
Regulation	102D	

Enrolment and Orientation

Regulation	157	Access for parents
Regulation	160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider
Regulation	161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
Regulation	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
Regulation	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Regulation	173	Prescribed information to be displayed
Regulation	177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider
Regulation	181	Confidentiality of records kept by provider
Regulation	183	Storage of records and other records

NQS	QA1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program
NQS	QA1.3.3	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.
NQS	QA1.2.3	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world
NQS	QA2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
NQS	QA2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
NQS	QA2.1.3	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
NQS	QA2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
NQS	QA5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included
NQS	QA6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
NQS	QA6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
NQS	QA6.2.1	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities
NQS	QA6.2.3	The service builds relationships and engages with its community
NQS	QA7.2.1	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place

Sources

- Australian Government. Services Australia. – *Child Care Subsidy: How to Claim* <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-claim>
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 (September 2020 Update): Section 4 – Operational Requirements <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf>

Further reading and useful websites (Consistent with the approach of the National Quality Framework, the following references have prioritised efficacy and appropriateness to inform best practice, and legislative compliance over state or territory preferences.)

- Australian Government Services Australia – <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/>
- *Dese Priority of Access* - <https://www.dese.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-case-studies/resources/priority-access-guidelines-child-care-services>

Enrolment and Orientation

- [DESE Enrolling Children: https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/child-care-provider-handbook/enrolling-children/enrolment-process#toc-step-1-the-individual-makes-a-claim-for-child-care-subsidy-with-centrelink](https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/child-care-provider-handbook/enrolling-children/enrolment-process#toc-step-1-the-individual-makes-a-claim-for-child-care-subsidy-with-centrelink)

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	
2	11 January 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references	
3	1 March 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated Child Care Subsidy information and links.	
4	6 September 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
5	29 November 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
6	30 December 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
7	May 2022	ACA NSW	Updated References Added Parent Responsibilities Regulatory Change in Enrolment section	
8	August 2022	Susan Chahwan	Adapted ACA NSW policy	