



# Early Childhood Policies

## Enrolment and Orientation of Children

### Aim

To ensure that enrolment procedures are conducted in accordance with the law and to provide children, families and educators with an orientation process that supports continuity between the home and service, opportunities for building trust and rapport, and to support emerging partnerships between educators and families.

### Legislative Requirements

- The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

### Implementation

### Waiting Listing and Enrolment

Families seeking a place at the service will be offered a place based on a number of factors. These are:

- presence of siblings

- availability of places
- maintaining age group balance
- maintaining gender balance
- date of application
- commitment to Montessori philosophy and
- commitment for continuing Montessori education from cycles 1-3.

To join the waiting list, families are welcome to make an appointment with the Nominated Supervisor to complete a tour of the service and submit a completed waiting list application form. Tours are run every Wednesday during term time.

Families are informed of the Priority of Access Guidelines, and have their position assessed against this prior to attendance at a waiting list appointment.

The tour of the service will be led by the Nominated Supervisor or appropriate employee designated by them and families will be provided with information about the service including, but not limited to:

- Educator qualifications
- Age group and ratio
- Curriculum information and the documentation process
- Meals provisions and routine
- Toileting or nappy facilities
- Fees
- Policies
- Procedures
- The National Quality Framework
- The service philosophy
- The Montessori philosophy

Families are also invited to ask any questions they may have.

Tours of the school are run weekly to minimise the impact on children attending the service, (as frequent interruptions from visitors can be disruptive).

Families will only be offered a placement at the service if they have previously joined the waiting list. The service accepts enrolments of children who have turned 18 months old until they reach the age of 3 years or if they commence in Cycle 1 in the School.

Enrolments are accepted providing the maximum daily attendance does not exceed the approved number of places of the service, (unless in the case of emergency care), and child-educator ratios are maintained across the service.

Once offered a placement, families will be provided with 7 days to accept or decline the position.

On acceptance, families must attend the service for an enrolment interview which is conducted by the Nominated Supervisor. During this interview, the family is provided with an enrolment pack, and introduced to the service educators.

## **Orientation**

Orientation is discussed and expectations from all stakeholders clarified.

Orientation is a condition of enrolment at the service. All families commit to a minimum number of orientation visits to the service where the family remains onsite prior to official commencement.

Educators recognise that each family's orientation needs are unique and that this process will be tailored to suit individuals, (notwithstanding the services expectation for families to commit to a minimum number of orientation visits prior to formal commencement).

The minimum number of orientation visits is typically 2 to 4 visits for a period of 1 to 2 hours in the 2 weeks leading up to each child's commencement. Educators recognise that some families require more orientation than others and accordingly this schedule is varied where appropriate.

On initial enrolment, details regarding the recommended orientation period is provided to each family. These details include the name and contact details of the Nominated Supervisor so initial contact can be made by the family, when the family are ready to organise their first visit.

The first orientation visit is usually held at the family's enrolment interview. During this visit, the family is introduced to each educator and given another tour of the service. Families are further encouraged to book subsequent orientation visits with the Nominated Supervisor.

Children will start the program in a graduated way, to ensure the child is supported through the transition to the school. The number of hours per day will start at 1 and then transition to a full day over the course of two weeks. Previous experience demonstrates that this can assist each child's long-term transition into the centre.

During orientation children are encouraged to participate in the service curriculum with the support of a primary educator. Educators recognise that a number of young children prefer to observe the room and experiences rather than participate at the beginning of the orientation process. Positive interactions at this time (between the family, educators and the child) are a priority to enable the child to build trust and rapport with educators.

During the orientation period, educators inform each family of the flexible routine, curriculum and other necessary information. Families have an opportunity to discuss their child's routine, and any individual requirements of the child or family.

Families are encouraged to bring along their child's special comfort or attachment item during orientation, as well as a family portrait to be displayed in the room fostering each child and family's belonging within the service. Educators provide a locker space for each child's belongings.

Educators and families engage in conversations relating to the settling in period, (i.e.. the period after orientation has finished and the child is formally enrolled at the service), and tailor an attendance pattern to ease each child into the service environment, leading up to the family's ultimate care requirements.

Families always farewell their child at the door when leaving the room or service, whether it be for orientation or care.

Educators contact families should a child be unusually distressed, or unable to be settled during the orientation or settling period. Educators and families negotiate each child's acceptable level of "distress" and make arrangements for the minimisation of this.

Educators communicate positively and honestly with families regarding their child's transition period. Educators support each family's needs for orientation and settling, with the priority being the partnership, trust and rapport built in the first few months of enrolment at the service.

Any matters that are sensitive of nature, such as discussing a child's medical needs, Court Orders, parenting plans or parenting orders, are discussed privately with the Nominated Supervisor at the enrolment interview.

Should a child who is culturally and linguistically diverse enrol at the service, families are required to provide educators with relevant key words in the child's home language prior to the child's first day at the service if it is deemed appropriate.

## Transition to Cycle 1

Educators work with families to prepare each child for the transition for cycle 1. Early childhood educators recognise that children become ready for cycle 1 naturally, and educators support the child and family for the transition to cycle 1. Educators talk with children and families in a positive manner about cycle 1 to reinforce a healthy attitude towards the change.

## Sources

- Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments 2009. *Belonging, Being & Becoming-The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, viewed 13 September 2018, <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/2632>
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- Victoria State Government, *Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents 2018, Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, viewed 13 September 2018, [http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/LTObject\\_Store/ltobjst10.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/D38DBD79C4A26CCECA2582270002C054/\\$FILE/10-69aa012%20authorised.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/ltobjst10.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/D38DBD79C4A26CCECA2582270002C054/$FILE/10-69aa012%20authorised.pdf)

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