

Orientation Policy

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities	
6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
6.3.2	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider

Being flexible and sensitive to each family and their children will assist to make the orientation process a positive experience. The Nominated Supervisor along with the Educators will consider the individual needs of children and families at this time as well as any previous experiences that the family may have had with other children's services.

To enable children to feel safe & secure and to set the foundations for a trusting partnership we feel that it is necessary for the family to attend orientation visits.

When planning an orientation process for a family the following factors may be considered:

- The cultural and/or linguistic background for families from non-English speaking backgrounds (external support may be required)
- The family's needs in relation to work or other commitments
- The family's previous knowledge or experience of other children's services
- Any additional needs of the child and/or their family
- The child's age

Purpose

To provide children and families with an orientation procedure that allows the child and family to transition to their child being in care, transition to a new room within the service or transitioning to school.

Implementation

We believe orientation is an important process where educators are able to get important information about the new child's needs and those of the family. This process helps to make the transition from home to care as smooth as possible with the aim to maintain continuity between home and the service, which helps the child adjust to the new setting.

The Nominated Supervisor will arrange for the new child to attend the service (together with parents/s) to visit and meet the staff, and familiarise with the environment. The children may participate in the activities if they so desire. A number of young children prefer to just watch, rather than do. Positive interactions at this time (between parents, educators and the child) are important for the children to build positive attitudes to the service environment. Educators are aware that some children respond to new experiences faster than others and will adapt to the situation.

At this time, the daily timetable and program will be discussed, as well as routines and any special requirements for the child that may need to be accommodated. Parent/s will also be encouraged to send any special comfort items (teddy etc) to help the child in the initial settling in period. Parents will also be invited to ring and check on their child at any time if there are any concerns.

Part of this orientation visit is also to explain/collect the required documentation for the child (enrolment form, birth certificate, immunisation record and Medicare number etc). Staff will also explain modes of fee payment and communication (newsletters, communication box etc), what the child will need, the importance of labelling personal items and also show the parent library where they can access the service's policies and other resources.

Educators will also discuss how best to tailor the child's settling in period – with some parents choosing to gradually build up to a full day so the child is reassured that the parents will return to collect them. Educators will encourage parents to say goodbye when dropping off – and reassured that if the child remains distressed over a period of time, that educators will contact them. Parents are able to stay as long as needed to reassure their child, but sometimes it's easier for the educator to settle the child if the parents come earlier on collection to spend time with their child – rather than do this at drop off time.

Parents will be kept informed about how their child is settling in on collection and are welcome to discuss any aspects with the Nominated Supervisor at a convenient time.

Orientation is available at any time throughout the year. The best time to visit is between 10am and 11.30am to experience exploration time, morning group and morning tea and should be negotiated with the office to arrange a suitable date for both parties.

A few points that we are mindful of:

- The parent must remain present at the centre to enable the Service to stay within its licensed staff/child ratio.
- Families are welcome to stay with their child throughout the settling in process and we encourage families to use this time to communicate and share as much information with staff to help with programming and goal setting.
- The Service is committed to adjusting the orientation process to suit individual families and their needs.

- The Service relies on information gathered from family input and surveys to review and assess our orientation experience for our new families.
- Educators will assist both adults and children with the daily routine so that the Service is a familiar place by the time the child's first day arrives.
- Families are encouraged to ask any questions they may have.

An **Orientation Feedback Form** will be provided to new parents to complete and return to the Service. This will allow Educators to reflect upon the orientation process and gain ideas to better provide for individuals and meet needs, interests and cultural beliefs/diversity.

Families can expect that:

Management will:

- Provide all families with an enrolment package
- Ensure that an effective orientation process promotes children's and families sense of belonging to their new environment
- Maintain children's enrolment records
- Ensure all required forms are completed and any relevant paperwork is sighted and copied
- Ensure any medical information included on the enrolment form is accompanied with relevant management plan (If applicable)
- All information is treated confidentially

Educators will:

- Provide families with all relevant information about the educational program
- Develop relationships with each child and their families
- Consistently record child interactions, interest and needs according to the Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Standards.

The Service asks that families:

- Participate in parent/Educator meetings
- Provide the Service with as much information about their child as possible
- Ensure all information about their child and family is up to date
- Provide feedback on the program and observations relating to their child

Transition

The service aims to arrange for room transitions when a vacancy occurs or at the beginning of the New Year. As each room has different challenges and expectations, children will only be transitioned when they are ready in all aspects of their development. The opportunity to transition between groups / rooms at the service is based on many factors other than just age. When the child becomes of the age to attend school, the service will work with the parents and the school to prepare the child for school entry.

Transition from one room to another

Change is harder for some children than others, however, by making this transition as smooth as possible for children and families, we are helping build the child's success. Separation can evoke children's deep feelings which can trigger restlessness, frustration etc.

Implementation

As to minimise any distress that the transfer may cause;

- Think about the transition ahead of time. Lay the groundwork for a new teacher to get to know their child by sharing information and insights you have gained.
- Talk to families about how their child handles change and the strategies they use to help their child cope with change
- Plan to have the child and family visit the new group more than once if possible.
- Invite the new teacher to visit the child in their room numerous times
- Talk about change, starting from 4 weeks before the transition
- Don't talk about the transition in terms of concern or sorrow
- Talk about their new teacher everyday in general conversation
- Celebrate the child's last day in the room with a special snack or by singing a special song you have made together
- Be sure to say goodbye.

Transition to school

When a child first attends school, there is a great change for that child and for their family. We believe that the child's parents are the most important link in this transition.

- The better the transition between home and school, the better the education: that's the message of recent research.
- The Service will always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.
- If possible, information on local schools will be made available to parents.
- Toward the end of each year an excursion is arranged to visit the local school so as to familiarise the children with the school environment.
- Parents with children who are of eligible age to commence school in the following year will be given a school readiness report.
- Information regarding school readiness is issued around July.
- Children will be encouraged to bring a school lunch for fourth term to help prepare for school. Parents will be provided with information regarding appropriate nutrition and lunches for school

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015,
Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care - 5th Edition (2005)

Review

- This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and will be conducted by Management, Employees, Families and Interested Parties.

Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
25.10.16	25.10.18