



Priority of Access & Waiting List Policy

Date adopted:

Date last reviewed:
January 2021

Reviewed by:
Board of Management, staff

Date of next review:
January 2023

Policy context:

This policy relates to:

National Quality Standards.	Element 6.1.1— <i>Engagement with the service</i> Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
Legislation/Act.	Family Assistance Law - Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017

Documents related to this policy

Related policies	
Forms or other organisational documents	Enrolment Agreement Enrolment Forms
References	NSW Community Preschools Start Strong Guidelines – Section 6 NSW Department of Education https://education.nsw.gov.au/ Child Care Provider Handbook Australian Government Department of Education https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook/managing-child-care-places

Policy Review:

Policy review frequency: This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Organisations Review Policy.	Responsibility for review: The Board of Management.
Where appropriate staff will be part of the review process.	
Documentation and communication: Policy documentation to be held in Policy and Procedure manuals. Where appropriate copies of new or reviewed policies will be given to staff, volunteers and families.	

Purpose

Document priority of access related to children's enrolment.

Rationale

Inform families of processes related to children's enrolment at WWPCCC.

Meet Legislative requirements for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Meet funding guidelines for Start Strong Preschool Funding (State Government).

Procedure

Waiting List

- Your child's name is placed on waiting list.
- Eligibility/preference for preschool/long day recorded and date of registration.
- Position offered due to eligibility (criteria) and duration of registration.
- When your child's name is on the waiting list please inform us of any changes e.g. work status, address, etc.
- Once every 12 months an update is emailed. Failure to respond will result in your child being deleted from the waiting list e.g. incorrect email address; changed address; child has position at another Centre.

Priority of access

The Commonwealth Government resources child care with a major purpose of meeting the child care needs of the families with recognised work or work related commitments.

Where the demand for child care exceeds the available Child Care Subsidy (CCS) places, the 'Family Assistance' legislation requires that long day care, family day care, in-home care and outside school hours care services who are 'approved' for CCS, allocate those places to families with the greatest need for child care.

The categories of priority for child care are as follows:

1. First Priority - a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
1. Second Priority - a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under Family Assistance Legislation (refer to Services Australia for guidelines).
2. Third Priority - any other child.

Within each category mentioned above, the following children are to be given priority:

- Children at serious risk of abuse or neglect
- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Children in families that include a disabled person.
- Children in families on lower incomes
- Children in families with a non-English speaking background.
- Children in socially isolated families.
- Children of single parents.

The above list is not in any particular priority order and children may fall into more than one category.

Preschool Enrolments	Long Day Care Enrolments
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<p>Services are required to give equal priority of access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school · children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July and from low income and Aboriginal families · children with English Language needs · children with disabilities · children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective). <p>There is no order of priority assigned to the list of points above.</p> <p>The guidelines are intended to assist services with making enrolment decisions, in a way that seeks to allocate places to those in the greatest need. However, the particular community needs of the preschool will also be relevant.</p> <p>In line with Start Strong Guidelines preferences will be given to maximise enrolments for children with 2 day bookings. Additional days may be available after the waiting list has been exhausted.</p>	<p>Providers can set their own rules for deciding who receives a place.</p> <p>Providers are asked to (but are not legally obliged to) prioritise children who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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. <p>This meets the Australian Government's aims of helping families who are most in need and supporting the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.</p>
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To avoid problems or complaints from the users of the service concerning Priority of Access, the Centre provides written information to parents regarding:

- Appropriate service policies dealing with booking and allocating places, taking into account the above priority groups.
- That these policies are followed when appropriate eg. When a service has a large waiting list and a number of parents are competing for a limited number of vacant places.
- The possibility that families in the third priority category may need to vacate their place, should a child in a higher priority category need care.
- Where the service has no vacant places and provides care for a child who is third priority in the Priority of Access, the service may require that the child leave the service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child but only if:
 - The person who is liable to pay child care fees in respect of the child was notified that the service followed this policy when the child first occupied the child care place.
 - The service gives that person at least 14 days notice of the requirement for the child to leave the service.