

Orientation and Enrolment

National Regulations: Regulation 168
National Quality Framework: Standard 6.1

Policy Statement

Enrolment is a vitally important step in providing and receiving information about children and the service and communicating expectations for each. Parents want to be reassured that their child will be safe, happy and well cared for and they will want to know that those entrusted with the care of their child is capable, knowledgeable, caring, trustworthy, honest and reliable.

From the services perspective this is the opportunity to proudly illustrate the value of early childhood and provide families with a range of information about what their child will be experiencing during their day in the setting.

Strategies and Practices

Enrolling Families and Children into the Service

Families will complete an enrolment package with the Nominated Supervisor. At this stage the service will determine if additional support will be required for the family. Links can be made with external support agencies for

- Children with additional needs
- Families who have English as a second language
- Families with low literacy levels

During the enrolment process the service and families will work through a checklist of information to assist with the evaluation of this process. This form includes the following points:

- Service tour
- Parent Handbook
- Enrolment form and profile sheet
- Educational program
- Fee structure and payment systems
- Bond payment
- Educator qualifications and introduction.
- Management structure
- What to bring
- DEEWR Information
- Immunisation
- Medication policy
- Drop off and pick up policy
- Priority of access policy
- Contacts
- Absence from the service
- Bus permission if necessary
- Sun smart Policy

During orientation there will often be a great deal of information for families to absorb. The process of information sharing needs to be established with the parent so that information can be shared over a period of time. This will help establish a routine and expectation of an ongoing exchange of information. This period of time is vital for establishing relationships with families and it should be one of mutual trust and respect. Parents should be encouraged to ask questions or clarify concerns.

Settling Children

The service understands that settling into childcare can be an emotional time for both children and their parents. It may be the child's first experience or your child may be transitioning to a new room in the centre. At times children have difficulty separating from their families and each child's reactions and length of time they take to settle into their environment depends on each child, their previous experiences and their age.

Families can assist their child by

- Spending time at the centre with their child before and as they settle into care.
- Show confidence about your decision for the child to attend the service. Displaying trust with the service will send the message of reassurance and that it is a wonderful place to be.
- Ensure you have informed educators about your child's likes, dislikes, routines and individual preferences for food and drink.

The service will assist your child by

- Ensuring that each family has participated in the enrolment and orientation process.
- Allowing the orientation process to be flexible to meet the needs of all families.
- Ensuring that there are effective procedures for moving to a new room.
- Rostering educators allowing for consistency for new children and families.

Early Childhood Educators will

- Be aware of new enrolments, their commencement day, their background information their interests and needs.
- Encourage a separation routine, does the child need to wave at the window, the gate or do they need to become involved in a favourite activity.
- Encourage the parent to let you know approximately what time they will collect their child as this will allow educators to honestly tell a child whether it will be soon or later.
- Immediately let children know where they can toilet, keep their bag or lunch box. Discuss with the child how they will receive their meals. All children need to know their basic needs will be met.
- Buddy new children with long term children. This will ensure that children feel welcome and accepted.
- Make the day fun filled and wonderful, so children leave and *want* to come back!!
- Children will often feel that their family is not ever going to return. A picture book made of photos of the centre routine can be compiled and discussed. This will reassure the child that at a specific time their parents will come back.
- A photo of the child's parents laminated may also comfort a child.
- Encourage the family to ring and check on their child's progress and provide honest feedback.
- Educators and parents may consider inviting an educator for a cup of coffee at the child's house. Taking chocolate cake and allowing the child to show you their room and their toys will most definitely establish strong bonds and can work wonders at dispelling separation anxieties. Take some photos while you are there to bring back and show the group. (Educator Warning!!! You'll be eating chocolate cake at children's houses forever but you will also create bonds forever, as they will never forget!!)

Putting Children First- Issue 20 Dec 2006

Communication with Different Stakeholders

Children

Children are important in the enrolment and orientation process. They should be allowed to explore their environment, meet their educators and be shown where their personal belongings are to be kept while at the centre. Children should be asked what they would like to do when they come so planning can begin.

Families

Orientation is the most valuable way of sharing information about care routines that best suit the child and it allows parents to observe the program and educator interactions. Reviewing how we orientate families is also an important way of improving customer service and the quality of the

service provided. Parents may often be asked to complete a questionnaire about how they felt upon entering the service and the enrolment process.

Educators

Educators will also have valuable ideas about the enrolment and orientation process and how children are transitioned into their group. Their feedback will be gathered through their appraisal process.

Management

Orientation will be reviewed by the Management on an annual basis. New parents will be sent a questionnaire that will then be posted back to the licensee. Families will be consulted on how the service met their needs and the satisfaction of their early childhood experience. This will then be used to generate professional discussions with the service and improve the overall quality of care.

Community

It is important to remember that our service is part of a wider community and the first impressions left on families and children will be discussed with their family and friends. The service reputation for the quality of care received rests on those that families encounter first - so ensure this valuable time counts for how you would like the community to perceive the service.

Sources and Further Readings



Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2009), *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Year Learning Framework for Australia*.

Carter M and Curtis D. (1998) *The Visionary Director*. Redleaf Press. USA.

Jorde Bloom P. (2005), *Blueprint for action: Achieving centre-based change through staff development* (2nd edition). New Horizons, Illinois. USA.

Kearns.K. (2007). *The Business of Child Care*. NSW. Pearson Education

Policy Created Date: January 2012

Policy Review Date: January 2014