



ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- the criteria for enrolment at Wimble Street
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Wimble Street, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Wimble Street.
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Wimble Street is committed to:

- equal access for all children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided on enrolment forms through the provision of information
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Committee, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Wimble Street.

3. Background and legislation

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2) (k)).

It is intended that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to two years of kindergarten before commencing school starting in 2022 which includes access to 15 hours of kindergarten per week (600 hours per year) for 4 year old's and 5 hours per week for 3 year old's which is funded by the Department of Education and Training. Parents are asked to pay fees to cover the gap between this funding and the cost of running the centre, A shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, Approved Provider's must adhere to their eligibility and priority of access criteria (refer to *Definitions* and *Attachment 2*) policy in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*), the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2012*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved childcare (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for families childcare package) Act 2017* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to *Definitions*).

1.1.1.1 Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 177, 183
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic)
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

4. Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Acceptable immunisation documentation: documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* as acceptable evidence that a child is fully vaccinated for their age, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind their vaccinations; or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated; or has been assessed as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

Approved childcare: Approved child care services are services that have Australian Government approved to receive Child Care Subsidy (refer to Definitions) on behalf of eligible parents. Approved childcare includes centre based day care, including long day care and occasional care, family day care, outside school hours care and in home care.

Authorised nominee: (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need to consider a risk assessment on an individual basis to determine if a person under the age of 18 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible families with the cost of childcare. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers. Further information can be found at: <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-0>

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

Eligible child: A child attending an early childhood education and care service as described in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* or a child in a kindergarten program who meets the requirements of both *The Kindergarten Guide* and the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services*. Children who are 5 years of age by 30 April and have not previously attended a funded kindergarten program

Enrolment application fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

Funded Kindergarten Program.

A child attending Wimble Street Kindergarten Program is funded for 15 hours a week or 600 hour per year with a qualified kindergarten teacher

Waiting list application form: A form to apply for a place at the service

Enrolment form: A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

Enrolment record: The collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including the enrolment form; details of any court orders; and immunisation documentation as specified in the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services*. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Fee: A charge for a place within a program at the service.

Priority of access: in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate spaces using the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*), or if in receipt of the CCS, comply with the Commonwealth Government's policy for allocating places.

5. Sources and related policies

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register
- The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): <https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/compliance-child-care/family-assistance-law>
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: www.acecqa.gov.au/
- *The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training)*: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- Department of Health and Human Services, *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- Victorian Department of Health: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation>

1.1.1.2 Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Wimble Street Coordinator in consultation with the Committee of Management

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Wimble Street based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy (refer also to Attachment 2 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria)
- considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program
- Having an enrolment checklist so families have all of the information and are made to feel welcome to the centre
- complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the child's immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable
- assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* **prior to enrolment** to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week grace period
- ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
- advising parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services)
- taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- ensuring that the enrolment form complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183)
- ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria
- reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the

safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

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The Wimble Street coordinator is accountable for the following:

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
 - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
 - contact educators and carers at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.

The Educators are Responsible for:

- responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
- providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
- developing strategies to assist new families to:
 - feel welcomed into the service
 - become familiar with service policies and procedures
 - share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
 - share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs
 - discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing enrolment forms online prior to their child's commencement at the service
- ensuring that all required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur and inputting this into Qk Enrol

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENT 1 ORIENTATION PROCESS

ATTACHMENT 2 ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

2. Reviewed	3. Next Review Date	4. Changes
5. July 2022	6. August 2023	Links to government policies updated in section 5 sources and related policies.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Wimble Street Childcare Co-operative in March 2015

Attachment 1. ORIENTATION PROCESS

Note: Below is a basic guide to our orientation process. However, educators are aware of differing needs of the individual and encourage parents to discuss their child's progress and orientation on a day to day basis.

DAY ONE

This is usually a short visit to give both child and parents a feel for the centre and a chance to meet and interact with primary educators and other children in the group. A good time to arrive is 9.30am when the children are settled and involved in planned activities within their own rooms, lending opportunity for the child to explore activities and encouraging interactions with peers and educators. It is necessary for the parents to stay close by as a reassuring familiar face and to communicate with staff to guide a suitable length of time to stay during the morning based on how the child is settling into their new environment.

DAY TWO

Again, the morning is the best and as on day one it is important that the parent is there to provide encouragement and support. The child is encouraged to investigate their environment and participate in activities whilst the parent takes a background role allowing the child to feel supported as well as being able to move around the room exploring the varied experiences offered.

If the orientation progress is encouraging, the visit may be extended to lunchtime allowing the child to participate in an enjoyable group routine.

DAY THREE

With the child visiting for their third day we encourage parents to step out of the room once their child is settled (e.g. enjoy a cup of coffee in the kitchen or browse through the other areas- often a good opportunity to look through our parent resource area). The educators are then able to take on

a more supportive role, allowing the child to rely on educators for guidance, reassurance and involvement with the child to develop greater trust and confidence in educators and their surroundings. It is often encouraged that the child stays for a little longer (i.e. lunchtime) as we gradually move towards a full day

DAY FOUR

By now the child is familiar with their environment and new friends and ready to try a day without Mum or Dad. Although the initial separation may be difficult for both it is important that parents promote a positive approach to the day so as to reassure the child that they are in a safe and happy environment. We encourage parents, to stay long enough to comfortably settle their child into play and then letting the child know that they are leaving and will return. It is often a good idea to attach the return or pickup to a routine time so the child is able to anticipate this time and feel reassured. Educators spend time with the child involving them in activities and routines, guiding them through the day, encouraging and comforting the child. If the child is having trouble settling or is not being able to feel comforted educators will contact the parents. Some children by this stage are ready to join their friends for sleep/rest time, and if so parents are asked to pick them up after sleep - usually 2.00pm, to help keep the day short and positive as this was a BIG step forward! Well done!

DAY FIVE

A similar day to yesterday with the child becoming familiar with his/her routine and able to anticipate what will be happening and therefore a little more comfortable. As for yesterday, parents are also able to talk with the educators and pass on any relevant information (i.e. Child's night, how they slept, ate) that may tie into child's behaviour through the day and discuss a suitable time to collect their child after a sleep/rest time or later, depending on the child's day and overall orientation progress.

CONCLUSION

Although still a relatively new environment the child is given opportunity to further explore and involve themselves in their surroundings at their own pace with the constant support and encouragement from educators. As educators we are aware of the many differences in us all and understand that some children do need a little longer to feel comfortable with new environments. Providing a warm, relaxed and happy atmosphere with varied activities that offer opportunities and new challenges. We look forward to spending time with the children and are flexible and open for parents to discuss their child's orientation progress at any stage.

Children in the centre who are moving rooms have time to visit and get to know their new peers and educators before officially moving to the room on a permanent basis. The children are able to move freely from each room under supervision until they feel comfortable with their new surroundings.

ATTACHMENT 2

Eligibility and priority of access criteria

1. Eligibility and priority of access criteria for the funded kindergarten program

The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded kindergarten program:

- children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with *The Kindergarten Guide* available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx
- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
- children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET (refer to *The Kindergarten Guide*, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/default.aspx>)
- children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs
- three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx> www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx

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When demand exceeds availability, the Approved Provider will refer to the service's values, philosophy and *Inclusion and Equity Policy* to determine the priority of access. This will include:

- children who have received funding for a second year of kindergarten
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred or withdrew from the service prior to the April data collection.
- priority of access criteria as outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide see below*

High priority children	Process that could be used to verify need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	<p>The child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending a three year old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning, or is • referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Child Protection – Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) – Maternal and Child Health nurse, or – Out-of-Home Care provider.
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' and record this information in KIM.
Asylum seeker and refugee children	An appropriate visa identifies the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker.
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or • multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets).
Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program • require a combination of services which are individually planned • have an identified specific disability or developmental delay 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten • holds a Child Disability Health Care Card • has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the National Disability Insurance Scheme – Early Childhood Intervention Service – Preschool Field Officer, or – Maternal and Child Health nurse.