

# WELCOMING CHILDREN AND FAMILY POLICY

**Quality Areas:** NQS 7 Governance and Management

**Policy Owner:** Safety and Compliance

Why this is  
*important*

## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

We welcome families and children into our centres from the moment we first communicate with them whether that is in-person, by email or phone. These first conversations form the foundation for strong partnerships between team members, families, and children.

The foundation of a successful care partnership commences with a thorough, informative and bespoke enrolment and orientation process. This includes implementing procedures where information around centre operations, authorisations, and information about the needs of the child and family are gathered and used to inform their experience

## 2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

All Team Members, Children, Families, and Contractors

## 3.0 What is our policy:

Our centres implement a process to ensure our enrolment / orientation (**'welcoming'**) processes are planned and implemented to meet the needs of each child and family as well as ensuring all legislative requirements are met.

Our welcoming processes:

- build a sense of belonging to our centre from the beginning
- provide support and comfort to settle into the centre and establish new friendships and partnerships
- support both child and family
- provide time to get to know families before children start
- develop strategies to support families and children become a part of our centre,

### 3.1 Concierge and Tours

Our Concierge Team are generally the first communication point with families. The team supports families to understand the centres in the area and provide general advice about the enrolment process. Initial information about the family is collected about their care needs. Tours are booked through the *Lead to Enrol* system that alerts the centre of upcoming interest from a family and the ability to update the Concierge Team of developments.

The opportunity for a family to undertake a tour is an important step in the welcoming process. Tours are used as an opportunity to showcase the centre and make connections with families. Tours are conducted professionally, in an unhurried way and are unique for each family. The centre will provide families with key information such as information about care routines and the program. The tours should be conducted by the Nominated Supervisor, Tour Champion or person who knows the centre well. More information about tours is available on the Guardian Way at *High Quality Tours*.

Every endeavour is made for a tour to be conducted in a home language. This can occur when a team member who speaks the same language is employed or available at the centre or asking the family to bring with them a support

person who is multi-lingual. This team member will either conduct the tour on their own or accompany the tour as a translator. All team members will be welcoming and acknowledge any family and child entering their space.

### 3.2 Stay and Play

A *Stay and Play* may be offered to families who are still undecided whether to proceed with their enrolment. The aim of *Stay and Play* is to support the family with their enrolment decision. This process involves the family staying with their child at the centre for a short period up to an hour so that families can experience how their children may respond to the program and gain greater understanding of the program.

Up to four Stay and Plays should be undertaken and the time and date that these are undertaken must be convenient with the centre and family. Families engaging in a *Stay and Play* must sign into the visitor's log. Families do not need to sign into Quik Kids as the child is not yet enrolled.

### 3.3 Orientation

Orientation visits occur prior to the commencement of care, and these occur when we have offered a family an enrolment and they have a planned commencement date. Families need to attend these visits, and it may mean we don't yet have fully complete enrolment information. Orientation visits must occur prior to the formal commencement of care. An orientation is the transition process that is undertaken to support the child into care. These sessions are based on the children's individual needs, and previous experience in formal care as well as circumstance of the family.

The orientation will consider and reflect the needs of both families and children. During this time the centre will gain additional information from the family to ensure that they have an in depth understanding of the child's needs and for families to build a relationship with the educators and centre. The educators and families should discuss in advance whether they will stay in the centre during orientation or leave. For further information review the *Family Journey Checklist*.

The aim to make the experience a positive and welcoming introduction to the centre.

Our centre will provide options for orientation to the centre for families which include:

- inviting new families to visit the centre with their child at times that suit them, to familiarise families with the centre.
- prior to the child's attendance providing all new families with a conducted tour of the premises which will include introductions to other Team Members, children, and families, and that highlights specific policies and procedures that families need to know about our centre.
- ensuring each family has a copy of the Family Handbook, medical conditions policy (if medical condition is identified) and an opportunity to have any questions answered.
- supporting family members with the opportunity to stay with their child during the settling in process.
- ensuring all new families are encouraged to share information about their child and any or questions they may have in regard to enrolling their child at the centre.

Where a family decides after the orientation sessions the date for care commencement, they may do so with full or reduced hours. A parent can only leave their child at the centre when all required enrolment documents and bond are received. Children must be signed into the centre.

### 3.2 Enrolment Form

Each enrolling family must fully complete an *Enrolment Form* prior to the child's commencement of care. This includes providing associated supporting documents, such as parenting and custody orders, reports to support any diagnosis, medical management plans and immunisation certificates etc. If a child's enrolment form is not fully complete and provided to the Centre Manager prior to their commencement date, they cannot attend care. The *enrolment form* is a legal document and must be completed in full and must contain detailed accurate information.

Families will be offered a digital enrolment form that upon completion will be automatically uploaded to their *Centre*

**Desktop Files.** The Centre Manager or Responsible Person will print a copy of all enrolment information and keep this at the centre so that it is always accessible to all team members.

To ensure information is current and correct, families will be reminded to update their enrolment information annually or earlier when a family's circumstances change, or if there has been a legislative change. These changes will be updated on the paper copy of the enrolment form.

### 3.3 Custody Arrangements

All Centres must have details of all custodial and access arrangements that impact the care of the child.

Enrolling family members are responsible for informing the Nominated Supervisor of custody and access arrangements on enrolment and must advise the Nominated Supervisor immediately of any subsequent alterations to these arrangements.

As a condition of enrolment, all relevant current legal documentation must be provided to the Centre Manager or Nominated Supervisor and will be maintained in the child's confidential enrolment record.

## 4. Responsibilities

### 4.1 Approved Provider will:

1. Ensure that the *Enrolment Form template* complies with current legislation
2. Ensure that centres are provided with facilities or recommendations about how to store enrolment records safely and securely in accordance with privacy legislation

### 4.2 Centre Manager / Nominated Supervisor (NS) will:

#### Pre-Enrolment / Tours

1. Maintain a waitlist and continually work on building the waitlist for future enrolments
2. Provide information upon request to the Approved Provider regarding the status of enrolments
3. Ensure that the Lead to Enrol system is updated with accurate and timely information related to enrolment
4. Offer places in line with priority access guidelines as outlined in the *Fee and Enrolment Policy*
5. Work with the Concierge Team to plan and provide a tour time that is suitable for team members and families
6. Ensure that the centre appoints Tour Champions who are confident and capable of facilitating a tour
7. Communicate tours in advance (where possible) with team members to ensure staffing arrangements are maintained
8. Ensure that families are introduced to team members during a tour and where appropriate provide time for families to ask questions
9. Where families would like to speak with an educator extensively about the room or care practices ensure that this educator is not in ratio, or this discussion is scheduled for a different time
10. Conduct the tour in the family's home language where the centre has an educator who shares same language as the family
11. Discuss the centre philosophy, curriculum and approach to education and documentation
12. Gain information about the child including any medical conditions and or specific care needs. Review these specific requirements in accordance with the *Enrolment Decisions Policy and Medical Conditions Policy*

#### Orientation

1. Discuss the orientation process with the family including dates and times
2. Add the family to any mailing list or correspondence so they can develop relationships with the centre community, including their Storypark account
3. Review and discuss the *enrolment form* and make any changes required and gather further clarity if necessary

4. Discuss important information about their child, such as any medical conditions, goals and expectations for their child and ensure that documents and requirements set out in the policy are met prior to orientation
5. If family identifies that their child has a medical condition, then provide a copy of the *Medical Conditions Policy* to the family
6. Record all information required into QikKids, and set up a file that is stored in a locked filing cabinet
7. Ensure all documents required for enrolment of a child is collected as outlined on the *Enrolment Form*
8. Enter direct debit details into the computer, then shred the direct debit form as per the confidentiality policy

#### **Before Child's First Day**

1. Ensure that all team members know the date of all new children commencing and have access to the enrolment form and any information that supports their orientation and commencement
2. Communicate any specific guardianship and custody arrangements with the team and how these requirements will be managed

#### **4.3 Team Members will:**

1. Escalate any enrolment enquiries to the Responsible Person or Centre Manager
2. Ensure that the room is prepared for a new child's commencement that includes allocating a locker and a locker label, a photo of their child displayed in the room and that all educators know the families' names and information about the child
3. Ensure that during tours, Stay and Play and Orientation arrangements Introduce yourself, say hello and smile when families and children are touring the centre
4. Communicate with families regularly about their care experience so that they feel welcomed and comfortable to share information about their child
5. Discuss and develop a strategy with families about arrivals and departures and how to support the child from the home to the centre
6. Use the orientation process to ensure that information is gained about the child and their family and to use the opportunity to learn about the child's interests, likes, dislikes and establish ways to interact positively with them
7. Ensure that the *My First Day Learning Story* in Story Park on the child's first day of attendance. Contact the family if their child is not settling so families can collect their child if necessary

#### **4.4 Families and communities will:**

1. Provide all relevant information to support a complete enrolment process. This includes Medical Management Plans, Custody Orders and immunisation status, payment of the bond and a direct debit form
2. Discuss and devise a plan for orientation
3. Ensure that you understand and adhere to terms & conditions
4. Update the centre when any information changes that impacts your care arrangement or the needs of your child

### **5. Tools and Resources**

<p><b>The most important documents I need are:</b></p> <p>Enrolment Decisions Policy</p> <p>Enrolment Form</p> <p>Medical Conditions Policy</p>	<p><b>Other supporting documents will include:</b></p> <p>Moving On Up</p>
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## 6. Sources

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010  
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
 Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018

## 7.0 Links to the National Law and Regulations

Section 175 Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents  
 Regulation 92 Medical record.  
 Regulation 99 Children leaving the education and care service premises  
 Regulation 157 Access for parents.  
 Regulation 160 Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider Regulation 161 Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record.  
 Regulation 162 Health information to be kept in enrolment record.  
 Regulation 168 Education and care services must have policies and procedures.  
 Regulation 177 Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by the approved provider.  
 Regulation 183. Storage of records and other documents.

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