

Policy 6.21 Orientation, Enrolment and Transitions Policy

Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to provide the children and families with an orientation and enrolment process that will assist the family to effectively transition their child to being in care, or transition to a new room within the service. This will help children and families to quickly feel a part of the Service and develop meaningful relationships with the educators, children and other families.

Orientation:

- We believe that the orientation process is vital for establishing relationships with families and should be based on trust and respect. During orientation there is often a great deal of information for families to absorb and parents are regularly encouraged to ask questions to clarify concerns. Families are able to discuss any specific requirements for their child and the Nominated Supervisor can explain inclusive practices used at the service and fee assistance options available to families.
- We believe that orientation is an important process where educators are able to learn important information about the newly-enrolled 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 of maintaining continuity between the home and Service to help the child adjust quickly to the new settings.
- The Nominated Supervisor will arrange for the new child to attend the service (together with the parent/guardian) to visit and meet the educators and familiarise with the environment. Positive interactions at this time are important for children to build positive attitudes toward the service environment. Educators are aware that some children respond to new experiences faster than others and will adapt more readily to the care situation.
- During the orientation process, educators acknowledge the uniqueness of all new children and families enrolling at the Centre and are respectful of various parenting styles. Educators recognise that families are the most significant people in a child's life and the process is designed to take on board all the information provided by the family about their child.

Enrolment Process:

Families are encouraged to visit the service to take a tour of the facilities and collect printed information and forms required to be completed prior to their child attending the service. Information about the service such as Centre policies, Parent Handbook and routines are made available to families at this time. Details of care requirements are collected and the offer of care is made by the Nominated Supervisor, or details are collected for the family to be included in the Waiting List.

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Families are encouraged, where necessary, to make arrangements regarding a series of visits for orientating their child where parent/guardian must remain on the premises to allow familiarisation with the Centre, room, educators and other children. Individual care routines and information such as eating, sleeping, feeding and play preferences of the new child are collated through the use of background information sheets and also through spontaneous conversations throughout the orientation process.

Once enrolment has commenced, family members are encouraged to call in as often as they like to check on their child's progress. Educators are to make families feel welcome at all times acknowledging that further information provided about the child by the parent is valuable to the educator and will assist in the daily provision of education and care. The only exception to this entry policy is where the Nominated Supervisor believes permitting the parent's entry would pose a risk to the safety of the children and staff of the Centre, or where the Nominated Supervisor reasonably believes that permitting the parent's entry would contravene a court order.

Transitions:

A primary educator will be assigned to each new child for continuity purposes, however all educators will be made aware of each child's needs. This is designed to provide a level of emotional security to both the child and the parent/guardians bringing the child into care.

The Service understands that settling into childcare can be an emotional time for both children and parents. To assist with this process, educators are practised in implementing routines that will assist newly enrolled children to transition into care as smoothly as possible.

Room transitions generally occur at the beginning of a new year, however when a vacancy occurs in an older group, children already attending the service are considered for graduation based on a number of factors including age, developmental readiness including language and social/emotional maturity, levels of independence and self-help skills. If opportunity for graduation presents itself, parents are consulted throughout the process and transition is only undertaken with their approval. Feedback is sought from parent/guardians about how the child is adjusting to the new orientation/transition so that we can work together, toward a successful outcome for the child.

Family Participation

Parents have opportunities to be involved in the service and to contribute to service decisions. This will occur primarily through operation of the Ballan Community Childcare Parent Committee (BCCPC). This group, which is due to commence in 2015, will be comprised of parents of children enrolled at the centre plus other interested members of the community. It will be one mechanism whereby family's views and recommendations can be heard and considered by BDHC management. It will also facilitate communication between parents and the service.

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Specifically, the group will provide: improvement related feedback and recommendations on topics such as service performance and future planning; participate in policy review and continuous improvement planning; and, contribute to goal setting. It is hoped that the group will help to promote service initiatives, such as family get togethers, fundraising efforts or working bees etc, designed to strengthen community partnerships and involvement.

Provision of Information to Families

Current information about the service is available to all families of children enrolled at the service and to prospective parents considering enrolling their child. This includes through the Parent's Handbook, through the centre's policies and Statement of Philosophy; through regular newsletters, and through the childcare section on the BDHC website <http://www.ballanhospital.com.au/index.php>. Information is also made available through brochures and special displays for families, and through observations and photos of children which are shared with families.

Links to Legislation:

National Regulations: 157, 168

National Quality Standards

- 6.1.1 – There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families.
- 6.1.2 – Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
- 6.1.3 – Current information about the service is available to families

References:

- Karana Downs Childcare Centre Policy Manual
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011