



Yarralea Children's Centre

Enrolment and Orientation Policy

PURPOSE

This policy will outline:

- The criteria for enrolment at Yarralea Children's Centre.
- The process to be followed when enrolling a child, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated.
- Procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Yarralea.
- Processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DE funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

VALUES

Yarralea Children's Centre is committed to:

- Equal access for all children.
- Meeting the needs of the local community.
- Complying with the *Education and Care Services National Law 2010* (Vic).
- Complying with the DE funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in government-funded kindergarten places.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the details on enrolment forms.
- Ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the committee, staff and parents/guardians who wish to have their child/ren enrolled, or have child/ren already enrolled, at Yarralea Children's Centre.

BACKGROUND and LEGISLATION

Yarralea Children's Centre is a non-profit incorporated association engaged in the running of the following programs for young children:

- Kindergarten for 3-4 year olds
- Kindergarten for 4-5 year olds
- Multiage kindergarten program
- Bush kindergarten program
- Holiday program

The *Education and Care Services National Law 2010* (Vic) requires approved childcare services to have available information about admission requirements and enrolment procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2) (k)). It is intended that all eligible children will have access to 2 years of kindergarten before school; however, demand sometimes outweighs supply.

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law 2010* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwlth)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* (Vic.)
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Cwlth)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cwlth).

DEFINITIONS

Bush Kinder - A component of the program which takes place in the “bush” at Darebin Parklands.

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

Department of Education (DE): The state government department responsible for the funding, licensing and regulation of children’s services in Victoria.

Eligible child: Child who meets the criteria outlined in the *Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*.

Enrolment application form: A form to apply for a place at the centre. i.e. completing the “Yarralea Waiting List” electronic form via the Yarralea website www.yarralea.com.au.

Enrolment form: A form that collects details regarding individual children. This is completed after a place has been offered by the centre and accepted by the applicant.

Fees: The amount charged to attend a program at the centre.

Funded Position: a position in the 3-4 year old or the 4-5 year old kindergarten program in respect of which Yarralea Children’s Centre receives funding by the state government via the Per Capita Grant “Free Kinder” (refer to Fees Policy).

Non-Funded Position: a position in the 3-4 year old or the 4-5 year old kindergarten program in respect of which Yarralea Children’s Centre does not receive funding by the state government via the Per Capita Grant and Free Kinder funding (refer to Fees Policy) who attend another kindergarten where they access funding.

Guardian: Person/s who have been granted lawful authority by a court order for child/ren. The definition of ‘guardian’ under the *Education and Care Services National Law 2010* (Vic).

Holiday Program: A non funded program which operates during Victorian school holidays for children aged 2 to 8.

3-4 year old Kindergarten: 3-4 year old Kindergarten is a play based early childhood program available for children who are aged 3 by the end of April of their kinder year

4-5 year old Kindergarten: 4-5 year old Kindergarten is a play based early childhood program available for children who turn 4 by the end of April of their kinder year

Lawful authority: A power, duty, responsibility or authority conferred in relation to a child at common law or under an Act or by an order of a court.

Multiage Kindergarten: A kindergarten program for 3-6 year olds (children from both the 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs) that operates between 8am - 6pm.

Siblings: Sisters and brothers by whole or half blood, adoptions or by marriage, including de facto or to whom foster care is provided by a parent (including an adoptive parent) or guardian of the first mentioned child.

Vacancy: A place in a program that becomes free as a result of a child leaving the centre, or is available because all places are not filled.

Vacant funded place: A government-funded place at the centre from which a child has withdrawn.

SOURCES and RELATED CENTRE POLICIES

Sources

- DE, Children's Services Guide
- DE, Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria

Centre policies

- Communication
- Complaints and grievances
- Fees
- Inclusion and equity
- Privacy

The committee is responsible for:

- Developing procedures that will ensure all eligible families are aware of and able to access a kindergarten program, including advertising, providing information in other languages and considering any barriers that may exist;
- Providing a locked secure filing cabinet for the storage of completed Enrolment Records (refer to Privacy policy);
- Complying with the inclusion and equity policy; and
- Providing opportunities (in consultation with staff) for interested families to attend the centre during operational hours to view the program or via an open day to view the centre.

The office manager is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy, which includes:

- The registration system and the general enrolment procedures, which are contained as Attachment 1.
- Ensuring letters of offer for a kindergarten position are sent to all successful families.
- Collecting, receipting and banking kindergarten deposit fees.
- Providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy.
- Providing regular updates to the committee regarding the status of enrolments and any difficulties encountered.
- Ensuring that enrolment forms are returned to the centre by the due date
- Storing completed Enrolment Records as soon as is practicable, in a lockable filing cabinet.
- Complying with the Privacy policy of the centre.

- Communicating regularly with the Coordinator of the centre about enrolments.
- Keeping the Qikkids Database up to day to include all new enrolments and cancellations.
- Referring centre tour enquiries to the coordinator and taking bookings for centre tours.
- Providing interested families with information regarding enrolment.
- Allocating children to sessions in accordance with criteria of the City of Yarra and the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines*

The Coordinator is responsible for:

- Responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program in which they are considering enrolling their child.
- Conducting tours of Yarralea Children's Centre for interested families during operational hours to view the program and ask questions.
- Communicating regularly with the Office Manager and Administration Assistant about enrolments.
- Ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DE funding criteria.
- Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure they meet the objectives of this policy.

The staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that Enrolment Records are completed before the child commences attending the program.
- Reviewing Enrolment Records to identify children with additional needs (refer to the Inclusion and equity policy for procedures to follow) and/or Medical conditions (refer to Medical Conditions policy).
- Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to Yarralea's Website or Yarralea's Office Staff as required.
- Complying with the Centre's Privacy Policy in relation to the collection and management of children's enrolment information.
- Referring enrolment and Yarralea Children's Centre tour enquiries to the Coordinator.
- 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
 - make contact with educators 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.
- Taking reasonable steps to contact non attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with this Enrolment and Orientation Policy.
- Completing Enrolment Records prior to their child's attendance at the centre.
- Ensuring that all required information is provided to the service.
- Updating information by notifying the centre of any changes.
- Providing any current court Order documents (as per the enrolment form).
- Communicating, collaborating and agreeing with the other parent on all enrolment matters

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the committee will:

- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues relating to enrolment procedures.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy, or incorporate relevant questions in the general parents'/guardians' survey.
- Take into account feedback on the policy from the office manager.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the enrolment of children.
- Review the enrolment form to determine its effectiveness in meeting the regulatory and management requirements of the service.

ATTACHMENTS

- [Attachment 1](#): General enrolment procedures

AUTHORISATION

This policy was reviewed and updated in August 2023.

Review Notes

Aug- full days only and group descriptions updated to kinder for 3-4 year old and kinder to 4-5 year olds

GENERAL ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Program Overview

- Yarralea Children's Centre provides a 3-4 year old kindergarten program, a 4-5 year old kindergarten program, a Bush Kinder program, a Multiage Kindergarten Program and a Holiday Program. All programs operate from 8am - 6pm. Core kindergarten experiences occur between 9am - 3.30pm. There is no expectation to attend outside these hours.
- The 4-5 year old program incorporates 15 hours of funded kindergarten over two days. Within the 4-5 year old kindergarten program there are 2 groups (Walert and Dulaiwurrung) which operate separately at the times set out on the Yarralea Children's Centre website. Each group attends Bush Kinder once per week. *Bush Kinder is an integral and compulsory part of our 4-5 year old program.*
- Within the 3-4 year old kindergarten program there are two groups (Gurrborra) which operate at the times set out on the Yarralea Children's Centre website. The 3-4 year old kindergarten program incorporates 15 hours of funded kindergarten over two days, one day which is in a Gurrborra group, and one which may be within the Multiage kinder program. Children enrolled in the Wednesday Gurrborra program will attend Bush Kinder in the morning (commencing in Spring). *Bush Kinder is an integral and compulsory part of our 3-4 year old Wednesday program.*

1. Application for a place in the kindergarten programs

- All families who have children enrolled at Yarralea Children's Centre (Yarralea) will be sent correspondence from Yarralea in the first half of the year to ask their intentions for the following year. They do not need to reapply.
- Enrolment applications for new children may be submitted at any time after the child is more than 18 months old.
- A separate application form must be completed for each child.
- To facilitate the inclusion (refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy) of all children into the program, enrolment applications should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child.
- Applications will be entered in the waiting list using the eligibility and access criteria of the City of Yarra and the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines* (as set out in Appendix 1).

2. Closing dates for applications

There is no closing date for receipt of enrolment applications.

3. Offer of places – process

- Places will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and access criteria of the City of Yarra and the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines*. Families should note that the City of Yarra Priority of Access takes into account all residents of Alphington, including the area of Alphington which falls within the City of Darebin council's catchment.
- Families of children who are currently enrolled in Yarralea Children's Centre programs will be offered the opportunity to nominate to continue their enrolment in the following year and then all remaining places will be offered.
- Offers and allocation of places will be made for the following year in the following order:

1. 3-4 year old or the 4-5 year old kindergarten places are offered to children currently attending the centre in July.
2. 3-4 year old or the 4-5 year old kindergarten offers are then made to new families in July.
3. Any remaining Multiage Kindergarten places are offered to new families.

Upon accepting a place families are asked to indicate their preferred days. Days will be allocated using the following process:

- a. 4-5 year old Kindergarten Program and additional days – to the extent that they get at least the same number of days as they had in the previous year
 - b. 3-4 year old Kindergarten Program and additional days – to the extent that they get at least the same number of sessions/days as they had in the previous year
 - c. Multiage Kindergarten Program places – to the extent that they get at least the same number of sessions/days as they had in the previous year
 - d. New children enrolled in the 4-5 year old kindergarten program on other days in accordance with the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines* and *The City of Yarra Priority of Access Policy* (Appendix 1)
 - e. New children enrolled in the 3-4 year old kindergarten program on other days in accordance with the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines* and *The City of Yarra Priority of Access Policy* (Appendix 1)
 - f. New children enrolled in the Multiage Kinder program
- Families will be notified of their allocated days via a confirmation email from Yarralea in August to October of the year before their child is due to start kindergarten.
 - Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the allocated days, or intend to withdraw their enrolment, will be requested to notify Yarralea as soon as possible. Second and third round offers will then be made.
 - A deposit payable to Yarralea Children's Centre must be paid by the date prescribed, to hold the place for the following year in accordance with the Fees Policy.
 - An Enrolment Record and other relevant information will be provided after the place is accepted and deposit paid.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until their outstanding account is settled in full, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the Centre. (Refer to the Fees policy.)

5. Subsequent Offer of places – process

- If places in any Yarralea kindergarten program become available throughout the year, the places will first be offered to children who are already enrolled in a program at Yarralea
- Any remaining places will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and access criteria of the City of Yarra and the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines* as set out in Appendix 1.
- Applicants who are offered and accept a place in the second half of the year (after correspondence regarding their intention to attend the following year has been circulated)

cannot be guaranteed ongoing enrolment the following year.

6. Eligibility and access criteria for MultiAge Kindergarten Program

Children are eligible to access the Multiage Kindergarten Program if they are at least eighteen months of age. Children over 3 can attend all day 8.00-6.00pm. Children who are under 3 years of age may only attend a morning session 9am-12pm or an afternoon session 1pm-4pm on any one day. Places in the Multi-age Kindergarten Program will be allocated in the manner set out at sections 3 above.

7. Eligibility and access criteria for Holiday Program

Bookings for the Holiday Program are made through My Family Lounge (online account accessed via the website or app). Booking requests can be submitted via My Family Lounge for the entire year in advance or 7 days prior to the commencement of the relevant holiday period. Children are eligible to access the Holiday Program if they are at least eighteen months of age. Children who are under 3 years of age may only attend a morning session (9am - 12.00pm) or an afternoon session (currently 1.00pm - 4.00pm) on any one day. Places in the Holiday Program will be allocated in the following order of priority:

- a. Children who are enrolled in any kindergarten program during that year are entitled to priority enrolment in the Holiday Program for those days which correlate to the kindergarten sessions in which the child is enrolled at the time.
- b. Children who are enrolled in any kindergarten program during that year for days which do not correlate to the kindergarten sessions in which the child is enrolled at the time.

c. All other children in accordance with the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines* and *The City of Yarra Priority of Access Policy* set out in Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1

Eligibility

Eligibility and priority of access criteria for the 4-5 year old kindergarten program in accordance with the eligibility and access criteria of the City of Yarra and the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines*

The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded kindergarten program and are offered a place:

- Children who will have turned four years of age by 30th April in the year she/he will attend kindergarten.
- Children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten
- Children turning six years of age in their year at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by their regional office of the DEECD (Refer to DEECD Victorian Kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria)
- Children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted a written request for their child to attend school the following year to their regional office of the DEECD, or the non-government school their child will be attending (a copy of the written request must be attached with the application).

(Parents/guardians are to be advised that very few requests are approved by DEECD. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed on to school the following year, the child will be unable to access another year unless they are funded by DEECD for a second year.)

- Three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children whose families are in receipt of a concession card are able to attend up to fifteen hours a week of a funded early childhood program planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher

Eligibility and access criteria for the 3-4 year-old kindergarten program in accordance with the eligibility and access criteria of the City of Yarra and the *Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines*

Children are eligible for attendance in the 3-4 year old kindergarten program provided they turn three years of age by 30th April in the year of commencement and are offered a place.

Priority of Access

See City of Yarra's Priority of Access Policy attached.