

# EARLY YEARS POLICY

<b>Early Years Services Orientation of Children and their Families</b>	Policy No:	QA 6.3
	Document No:	D15/16306
	Approved Date:	1 April 2014
	Approved By:	Manager Aged and Family
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Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Early Years	
Authorising Officer:	Manager Community Strengthening	

## 1. Purpose

To ensure that there is an effective enrolment and orientation process that is based on active communication, consultation and collaboration with families that supports all children and families accessing the Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services.

## 2. Scope

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 6.1.1, 6.3.2  
 Children's Services Regulations 2009 (Vic); r 63  
 Maternal and Child Health Service Program Standards 2009  
 Maternal and Child Health Service Program Guidelines 2011

## 3. Application

All children and their families accessing Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services, staff and Family Day Care educators

## 4. Definitions

Not applicable

## 5. Policy

### 5.1 Orientation to the Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services

Staff and educators within the Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services will ensure that all children and their families are made welcome and orientated to the service (and the routines) upon commencement and provide the required support to the family during the settling in period.

When planning for orientation a family's cultural and linguistic background will be taken into account. Early Years staff/educators may need to seek external support to facilitate the enrolment and orientation process.

#### Enrolling Families will be encouraged to:

- Visit and become familiar with the service before their child commences.
- Talk with the staff member, Nominated Supervisor, educators or Team Leader about the values and expectations they hold in relation to the service; their child's experience at the service and individual transitional needs based on each individual family.
- Share information about other child-related services accessed by the family.
- Share understandings of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs.
- Contact the primary staff member / educator during the day if they wish.

#### Staff/Educators will also:

- Assist families to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child.
- Closely observe and offer reassurance to a child who is distressed on separating from their parent/guardian.
- Share information with families about how their child is settling into the service.

#### Occasional Care

- New families are invited to visit the service and participate in the program at times mutually suitable to both parties before the child starts at the service.

- Where appropriate, opportunities for families to settle children into the service gradually will be facilitated.
- Early Years staff/educators encourage parents to say goodbye to children before they leave.

#### Kindergarten Programs

- For children commencing in Kindergarten programs orientation arrangements will be provided at the time of enrolment.
- Children and families individual needs will be taken into consideration and plans made for collection of additional information and resources to support a child's inclusion and participation in the program where required.
- Kindertartens may stagger entry times for children at the beginning of term 1 in some cases to support children in a smooth transition into the program.

#### Three Year Old Kindergarten

- For children commencing in Three Year Old Kindergarten program orientation arrangements will be provided at the time of enrolment.
- Children and families will be notified about orientation sessions prior to commencement.

#### Family Day Care –

Family Day Care orientation and enrolment process provides a smooth and comfortable transition into the educators home. Educators work collaboratively with families to help their child/ren feel safe and secure within the Family day Care home environment.

The Co-ordination Unit will play an active role in monitoring each placement at the service to ensure the needs of each child and their parents are met. – *refer to Family Day Care Orientation works Instructions*

Maternal and Child Health – refer to *Maternal and Child Health Service Bookings Works Instructions*.

### **5.1 Family Participation**

Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services actively encourages family involvement in the development of the services.

The Service Team Leader in collaboration with staff/educators has the responsibility to ensure that:

- Families are encouraged to participate in surveys and quality improvement activities and processes.
- Annual evaluations are conducted to allow families to have input into the future planning of the service.
- Informal evaluations of the service occur throughout the year.
- Families are encouraged to participate in ways that acknowledge and value diversity.
- Families are encouraged to attend the service throughout the year, view the service and meet the staff/educators.

### **5.3 Parent/Guardian Requests**

- Staff/educators will consider all requests from parents/guardians in regard to their children and where a request cannot be fulfilled an explanation will be provided.
- Discussions will be held with families in regard to the benefits of the experiences provided to the children in the service and/or documentation will be displayed or available.
- Respect is given to families in regard to their right to make decisions on behalf of their child.

### **5.4 Access to Children**

Families enrolled in Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services are welcome to attend the applicable service at any time.

Refer to:

*Early Years Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*

*Early Years Services Families Rights and Responsibilities Statement*

## **6. Records**

Records shall be retained for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention/Disposal Responsibility	Retention Period	Location
Enrolment & Consent Forms	Records	Dispose of seven years after conclusion of action providing all individuals have reached 25 years.	Off-Site

## 7. Attachments

Not applicable

## 8. References

### Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

D14/ 94981 Early Years Emergency Management and Evacuations Policy

D15/16297 Early Years Enrolment Policy

D15/16286 Early Years Access and Inclusion Policy

D14/94973 Early Years Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

### Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms

D14/28940 Maternal and Child Health Service Bookings Work Instructions

D14/28709 Family Day Care Enrolment and Orientation Work Instructions

D14/95703 Early Years Enrolment & Consent Form

D16/20238 Kindergarten Central Application Policy and Forms

### Other References

Education and Care Services National Law 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

National Quality Standards 2011

Child Care Services Handbook (Department of Education)

AECA Code of Ethics

UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child

<b>Approval Date:</b>	01/04/2014	<b>Approved by:</b>	General Manager Culture and Community
<b>Amendment/Review 1:</b>	01/06/2015	<b>Approved by:</b>	Manager Aged and Family
<b>Amendment/Review 2:</b>	26/09/2017	<b>Approved by:</b>	Manager Aged and Family
<b>Amendment/Review 3:</b>	04/07/2019	<b>Approved by:</b>	Manager Community Strengthening