

# Quality Area 6

## Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

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## ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Education and Care services National Law Act 2010.

Education and Care services National Regulations: 177, 168

National Quality Standards: 6.1.1

### PRE-SCHOOL ENROLMENT POLICY –

#### INTRODUCTION:

The Centre is open to children of all denominations and nationalities; this includes culturally and linguistic diverse children, children with a disability, children who are at risk of harm, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Descent children.

We are a double unit Preschool Centre situated in New South Wales and are on the border of Victoria/ New South Wales. Echuca is the Victorian town and community that offers many fantastic preschool programs across its town and is funded by Victorian State Department. We welcome applications from families residing in Victoria, however, we do need to follow our NSW funding agreements and Priority of Access guidelines.

Our Centre accepts children with disabilities or challenging behaviour at the discretion of the Director. Final acceptance of the aforementioned from the Director will be dependent upon the degree of the disability and the Preschool having adequate physical, financial and human resources available. This can be reviewed by the Director also if sufficient information about the child is not supplied at the time of enrolment.

Once the Director has investigated all options thoroughly, a fair decision will be made.

The Centre is licensed to have 40 children in attendance at any one time within our two rooms. This number has been approved by the Department of Education and Community Services and must be strictly adhered to for funding agreements and guidelines.

We will maintain group sizes of 20 children, and if needed due to lack of relief staff some classes may be restricted to 19, to enable the Committee of Management to enforce the Education and Care Services National Regulation regarding having one appropriately trained staff member to 39 children, in a short-term situation to ensure the preschool children still have access to the educational program.

#### RATIONALE:

This policy has been developed to ensure the Centre complies with the Priority of Access Guidelines set by Family Assistance Law and defined by NSW State Government Funding Agreements. Failure by our service to meet these guidelines is a breach of the conditions of the continued approval for receiving State Government Funding from the Department of Education and Community Services.

This policy will endeavor to meet the needs of the children and families ensuring that all children have access to the Centre and that those children who will commence school in the following year have first priority. We also aim to make this policy clear for families when completing an initial enrolment application to ensure equity and consistency for the community.

#### GOALS:

Our Centre wants to provide high quality preschool programs to all NSW children eligible within our community who will be attending school the following year.

When there is space within the Centre's enrolment numbers, we will offer a Young Four-Year Old group.

The Centre must follow the Priority of Access Guidelines AT ALL times when enrolling children. The waiting list applications will reflect these guidelines to ensure that the educational program is provided to families using these priorities.

Our waiting list will also reflect New South Wales residents as next in line, after the Priority of Access guidelines are followed, as we are a New South Wales funded Preschool. Additionally, we feel Victorian residents do have access to high quality preschools in their home state and will encourage these families to enrol in their local Victorian funded preschool.

### **STRATEGIES – HOW WILL IT BE DONE?**

We will follow the Priority of Access Guidelines and our policy to ensure places are offered fairly and legitimately.

The Priority of Access Guidelines followed by State Funded preschools are defined by NSW State funding agreements. In no particular order, these are:

- Children who are at risk of harm
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children
- Children from low income families
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with disabilities
- NSW Children in their year before school (with highest priority given to children closest to school entry)

The Centre endeavours to meet the needs of the children and families in our community while complying with the above guidelines.

### **Four-Year-Old Group Preschool (prior to school group 15 hours attendance per week)**

The Centre also needs to ensure that children attending Four-Year-Old Group sessions must turn 4 before 31st July in that year of attendance. This ensures that the child will fall in line with school starting age as set out by the New South Wales Department of Education. Children in this category attending

15 hours per week also ensures the Preschool attracts NSW Start Strong Funding.

If parents of Victorian children are offered places then these families will also be made aware of Victorian Department of Education law that the child must turn 5 years of age at school prior to 30th April in that year.

### **Young Four-Year-Old Group Preschool**

This group was introduced to the Centre in 2014 to meet funding expectations as set out by the Department of Education and Communities, who are our funding body. This group can be offered if there is space and resources within our room set-up and we are not running four prior to school groups.

To be eligible for this group, children must turn four years of age between January 1st and July 31st of that preschool year due to the Centre receiving funding for these children. The preschool's ultimate aim would be for this group to also attend 15 hours per week as this attracts NSW Start Strong Funding.

This group is not geared towards school readiness. Families who are successful in gaining a position in this group will be made aware of this.

### **Other:**

Applications will be accepted for Victorian children who have attended the Preschool in the year prior to this enrolment. However, families must remember that these children will also need to apply for a position in their own state, and is not the Preschool's staff responsibility to remind families of this. It is their own responsibility to read the policy and be familiar with this. Additionally, attendance at the Preschool in the previous year will not guarantee acceptance the following year.

These applicants will be given priority by the Director over other Victorian children who have not attended our Centre the previous year, only after we take into consideration the State Governments priority of access guidelines and NSW residency and if there places available.

### **Sources:**

- Early Learning Australia (CELA), priority of access policy 2015
- Department of Education and Communities Funding Agreement (Statutory Legislation)

## **ENROLMENT PROCEDURES**

1. In June and July, applications for enrolments are to be advertised internally (newsletters, noticeboards) and externally through local media (newspaper), the preschool website and social media. Applications will always close on July 31 the year prior to placement.

Parents are expected to give written notification on the application form stating child's details:

- full name
- other names by which the child is known
- current local address (at time of enrolment)
- date of birth
- indication if the child falls into a Priority of access
- parent/carers names
- contact number
- email address
- school to attend (if this age group)
- any additional needs/concerns you may have

Staff will be required to sight proof of age of the child and proof of current local residential address (last three months at time of enrolment), driver's license is not sufficient. In all instances, rates or rental notice. (REFER TO APPENDIX 1 for application form).

Those wishing to enrol but live outside the local area cannot proceed to the enrolment list until proof of local address is presented. Applicants moving to NSW or Victoria must be residing before the child's name can be listed for enrolment. If building, a letter from the builder certifying that place of residence being built and signature on a letterhead will be acceptable. Copies of purchase of a house need to be sighted by staff for the child to go on application list or a copy of a rental agreement.

A copy of the child's current Immunisation History Statement must be provided. The enrolment application cannot be accepted without all of these documents.

At this point of enrolment parents will be notified that children **MUST** be toilet trained to commence preschool. That is, adequately able to toilet themselves in a hygienic manner without requiring adults help. Exceptions are made for children with disabilities or medical conditions.

Successful applicants are notified in August regarding the position for their child and need to confirm this within 14 days along with the enrolment fee. Failure to do this will pass the position onto the next child on the waiting list.

**2.** After the confirmation of acceptance as per Enrolment Policy a date is organized in November for parents to complete a detailed confidential enrolment form regarding individual children (REFER TO APPENDIX for copy of Confidential Enrolment form).

Parents will also be given details of group session times, Centre information, a copy of the handbook, starting dates, a copy of the fee policy and fee information in an Information Pack (REFER TO APPENDIX for copy of Parent Information Book) and a date for the Parent Information Night in November.

#### **Enrolment Fee:**

Families will be notified in August regarding a place for the following year. Parents will be required to confirm acceptance of the position within 14 days along with an enrolment fee.

A standard letter of acceptance for parents to respond will form part of the letter to parents.

Failure to return the application form and enrolment fee within the 14 days will mean the position will be passed to the next child on the waiting list. This enrolment fee is determined by the Committee of Management.

All parents must pay for the full 2.5 days per term for Four-Year-Old groups even if they are going to send their children for less hours/days.

#### **Waiting list:**

In the situation where the Centre cannot place all those who have enrolled by the closing date and cannot offer a position in the first round of offers to all those who applied, a waiting list will be created. The waiting list will follow the above priority of access guidelines and policy at all times.

Families are welcome to make applications after the closing date of 31st July these will go on the waiting list and positions offered as per the policy.

#### **NOTIFICATION OF PLACEMENT FOR APPLICATIONS ON WAITING LIST**

The Nominated Supervisor/Director will be responsible to notify families of a position by telephone giving 7

days for contact to be made. If no response is forthcoming in this time the position will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.

## **TERMINATION OF ENROLMENT**

A position will be declared vacant in the following instance;

- After a 2 week absence without notification, a phone call will be made to the family asking for an explanation.
- If there is no contact made by a phone call, then a letter will be sent via registered mail asking for interest in the position.
- If no response is received within 14 days of the mail being sent, the position will be given to the next child on the waiting list.
- The parents/carer will be responsible for the payment of fees up until the termination of the position. This will be explained in the letter of interest.

\*Please see fee policy regarding further information about this policy

## **MUTUAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

Families/Carers will be given a copy of the Mutual Confidentiality Agreement form to sign in the child's Enrolment Package that is part of the Confidential Enrolment form.

By signing the following document parents/carers are giving permission for their child's teacher to complete daily diaries, reports, individual records and programming in their own time which may involve removing some information from the centre in regard to individual children. Staff must take every opportunity to ensure that the information remains confidential and respect the rights of the families and children in regard to this.

Parents/Carers will have an opportunity to revoke this at any time and will stay current for the time the child holds a position within the centre. (REFER TO APPENDIX for a copy of Mutual Confidentiality agreement)

# EXCURSIONS

Education and Care National Regulations 2011: 101,102

National Quality Standards: 6.2.3

As part of our educational program we occasionally go to places of particular interest to extend the children's experiences beyond those offered at the centre. Parents/Carers will receive a note about this, and then need to return appropriate signed permission forms to the Centre. The note will state the date, time, route, first aid trained qualifications of staff; staff ratio's and parents will need to provide an emergency phone number.

(REFER TO APPENDIX for a copy of Authorization form for excursions)

These are conducted in accordance to regulations:

- At times normal preschool sessions may be altered to accommodate excursions.
- Families help will be requested in order for excursions to occur - to comply with adult/child ratio as per regulations.
- Depending upon the excursion staff may reduce the adult/child ratio, ie more adults than required for safety reasons.
- For some excursion's families may be required to pay a small fee.
- Whilst on and before the excursion, staff will remind family members/friends helping and the children attending of appropriate road safety that needs to be abided by. Discussions are also held with the group of children with regards to the Risks that may be encountered.
- In notes informing families of the excursions we will remind parents/carers that we prefer if alternative arrangements are found for toddlers and other family members.
- A Risk Assessment Form will be completed before the excursion is undertaken by Staff to ensure the safety and well being of the children, volunteers and staff participating in the excursion. (REFER TO APPENDIX for a copy of Risk Assessment form)

# Online Privacy Policy

National Regulations 2011: 177-184  
National Quality Standards/Elements: 6.1.1, 6.1.2

## Introductions

The Moama & District Preschool Centre Inc. has a website and Facebook page in an attempt to stay in touch with families and to celebrate our wonderful Preschool, it is used as a resource for families to access newsletters, enrolment information, policies and forms.

We will at all times respect the rights of the child, families, educators and visitors to our Centre.

## Strategies – How will it be done?

### The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure that no confidential information can be gained from the Moama & District Pre-School Centre Inc. website. Individuals and services are not obliged to give personal information through the website.
- If an individual chooses to provide information to the service via email, that information will remain confidential.
- Ensure that information gained via email can only be used by Office Manager or Nominated Supervisor.
- Ensure that information gained about users from the website will only be used for statistical research for the Moama & District Preschool Centre Inc. to ascertain future development of the website.
- Encourage families and educators to give feedback on the website and how it can be improved to meet the needs of the community.
- Not disclose or publish any information related to educators, children or families without written consent from that individual or their family.
- Develop guidelines for educators regarding their participation with families currently connected with the Moama & District Pre-School Centre Inc. on social media sites such as Facebook and twitter. (See Social Media Site Policy).

### Educators will:

- Follow guidelines for educators regarding their participation with families currently connected with the Moama & District Pre-School Centre Inc. on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

### In Addition:

- The Moama & District Preschool Centre Inc. website is an information resource available to

prospective families as well as current families and educators and abides by current legislation. The privacy and protection of children, families and educators will not be compromised at any time.

- **ONLY THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR AND OFFICE MANAGER WILL HAVE PASSWORDS TO ACCESS AND UPDATE THIS WEBSITE.**

#### **In relation to families:**

- Administrators **will not** post clearly identifiable images of children e.g. photos that have children's faces to the camera.
- Administrators **will not** post children or family names.
- Administrators will always respect the right to privacy for families, staff and Committee of Management.

#### **Definitions:**

A website is a unified collection of webpages or files linked together and available on the World Wide Web.

A web page may incorporate any combination of text, graphics and other media as appropriate, and may use hypertext links to move between its different parts and other web pages.

A web server is a computer connected to the internet. The web server stores web pages and makes those pages available when requested by the user seeking information.

The URL, or Uniform Resource Locator, is the unique address given to every web page. A shortened URL is a succinct web address which redirects the user to the correct web page.

#### **Sources:**

- This policy has been developed from a draft document prepared by Community Child Care Cooperative.
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner [www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)
- Australian Legal Information Institute [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au)
- Early Childhood Australia [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)
- Guide to developing a Social Media Policy [www.inc.com/guides/2010/writing-a-social-media-policy.html](http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/writing-a-social-media-policy.html)

#### **Statutory Legislation & Considerations**

- Privacy Act 1988 [www.privacy.gov.au/law/act](http://www.privacy.gov.au/law/act)
- Privacy Amendment Private Sector Act 2000
- National Privacy Principles [www.privacy.gov.au/materials/types/infosheets/vie/6583](http://www.privacy.gov.au/materials/types/infosheets/vie/6583)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- ECA – Code of Ethics
- Guide to the National Quality Standards (3) ACECQA (2011)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

# Social Networking Policy

Education & Care Services National Regulations  
National Quality Standards: Quality Area 6.1

## Introduction:

In general, Moama & District Preschool Centre Inc. views social networking sites (e.g. Myspace, Facebook, and twitter), personal web sites and blogs positively and respects the right of employees to use them as a medium of self-expression.

If an employee chooses to identify him or herself as an employee of the Moama & District Preschool Centre Inc. on such internet venues, some readers of such websites or blogs may view the employee as a representative or spokesperson of the Moama & District Preschool Centre Inc. The Office Manager and Nominated Supervisor/Director are the official representatives of our Centre for these type of sites.

Moama & District Pre-school Centre Inc. will host a social networking page on Facebook to promote its work.

In light of this possibility, Moama & District Preschool Centre Inc. requests as a condition of employment that employees observe the following guidelines when referring to their place of employment and the organisation that employs them, it's programs or activities, it's families and children, and/or other employees, in a blog or on a web site:

- Employees must be respectful in all communications and blogs related to or referencing the organisation, its families and children, and/or other employees.
- Employees must not use obscenities, profanity, or vulgar language.
- Employees must not use blogs or personal web sites to disparage the organisation, families and children, or other employees of the organisation.
- Employees must not use blogs or personal web sites to harass, bully, or intimidate other employees, families or children. Behaviours that constitute harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, comments that are derogatory with respect to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, colour or disability; sexually suggestive, humiliating or demeaning comments; and threats to stalk, haze or physically injure another employee, family or child.
- Employees must not post pictures/videos of families, children or other employees on a web site without obtaining permission.
- Employees must not refer to the names of children, families or colleagues in reference to comments about their place of work.
- Employees are reminded of the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics under which our organisation aligns itself. At all times employees should consider their behaviour in light of ethical conduct and to present themselves in a professional manner at all times.
- Employees are reminded of the link this policy statement has to our organisations statement and obligations on privacy and confidentiality.
- Employees must not take photos or videos on their private phone or video camera while at the centre.
- Social networking sites should not be accessed by staff at the centre unless the staff member needs to look up an educational page or is on their break and not counted within ratio. The Director/Nominated Supervisor or Office Manager may need to update pages and therefore are able to during work hours at the Centre.

Please be aware that social networking websites are not a private means of communication but can be accessed by the public. Therefore, it is important not to share information about the Centre, families or other staff members on social networking websites.

Should a staff member be found to be in violation of any portion of this Social Networking Policy they could be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Sources:

- Griffith Early Learning Centre
- Moama & District Preschool Centre Inc
- Privacy Act 1988
- ECA Code of Ethics
- Deniliquin Children's Centre

# FAMILY PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION

Educational and Care Services National Regulations: 75, 76, 80, 86, 111, 157, 168, 172, 185.

Links to National Quality standards/elements: 1.1, 1.3.3, 2.1.2, 2.2.2, 3.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.1.

## **Introduction:**

Family participation in our service is an important part of making us a true part of the community. It helps to create an environment that is inclusive, welcoming and supports a sense of belonging for children, families and educators.

“Partnerships with families contribute to a strong, inclusive community with the service. Continuous, honest and open two way communication with educators assists families to feel connected and help the families to develop trust and confidence with the Centre. Shared decision making with families supports consistency between children’s experiences at home and at the service, helping children to feel safe, secure and supported.” (Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011), p 142).

## **Goals**

Our service will welcome family participation and open communication by encouraging families to engage with their children’s education. Families are always invited to attend Committee Meetings, assist with special projects, assist with working bees, assist with preparing morning tea or afternoon tea, assist with incursions and excursions, fundraisers and social events.

We value the input of families, educators, colleagues and the wider community to help create a service that meets the needs of the children who attend.

We encourage open communication through the enrolment and orientation process, policy review, feedback forms, formal and informal meetings, documentation, emails from teachers, office manager, conversations and share any special skills or talents. Educators may discuss a communication plan about how families want to be consulted about how they would like to receive information about their child’s progress.

## **Strategies –**

### **The Approved Provider will;**

- Ensure that parents may enter the service at any time unless such entry would pose a risk to the safety of children, educators or breach court orders regarding access to children.
- Ensure that educators provide information to families regarding the content and operation of the educational program in relation to their child and that a copy of the educational program is available for inspection at the service.
- Ensure families have access to documents regarding the assessment of the child’s developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program and assessments of the child’s progress against the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework.
- Ensure that parents are notified of any incident, injury, trauma or illness that occurs for their child while at the service. Parents will also be given a copy of this report once completed.
- Ensure that parents are notified of changes to policies or fees and given adequate notice as per the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Ensure that administrative spaces are adequate for the purpose of consulting with parents and for conducting private conversations.

- Ensure that a copy of the Education and Care Services National Regulations is available for parents/carers to access. Copies of this will always be in the main foyer, administrative office and staff offices.
- Ensure that policies are on our website for families to access at their will.
- Ensure that the enrolment and orientation process provides families with information about the philosophy, policies and practices of the educational service prior to the children's first attendance.
- Establish a Voluntary Parent Committee at an Annual General Meeting in February of each year to encourage family involvement in the service and to ensure the Preschool continues to operate. The voluntary Parent committee will elect representatives to oversee and chair meetings.
- After each Parent Committee meeting will have an agenda and all families will be invited to participate in the meeting. Copies of the agenda and minutes of meetings will be in a folder available to families in the foyer. Parent Committee attendees will have input into the continuous improvements with the Centre, budget and overall running of the Centre.

#### **The Nominated Supervisor will;**

- Develop systems for families to provide feedback regarding the enrolment and orientation process and when reviewing policies and procedures to improve processes and practice.
- Ensure that parents may enter the service at any time unless such entry would pose a risk to the safety of the children, educators, staff or breach court orders regarding access to children.
- Inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints.
- Develop an enrolment and orientation procedure that ensure families are provided with information about the philosophy, policies and practices of the education and care services prior to children's first attendance.

#### **Educators will;**

- Be available for families at pick up and drop off times to pass on important messages and information about their child's participation in the program.
- Inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints.
- Encourage families to be involved in the educational service through feedback, visiting the Centre, bringing in items from the home environment and giving feedback on children's emerging interests and needs.
- Promote continuous and honest two way communication with families to assist them to feel connected with their children's experiences in the Centre and to develop families trust in the service.
- Value parents as the first and most important educator in their child's life, seeking to share the understandings, knowledge and preferences for their child and seeking to balance individual needs with practice in the Centre.
- Recognize that because families, and parents in particular, are often busy with many competing priorities, they will need to consider a range of strategies to build and maintain relationships with each family.
- Make documentation available to families and prepare documentation in a way that is readily understandable to the parents of the child and other educators.
- Make themselves available to attend family events held by the preschool.

#### **Families will;**

- Provide accurate information on enrolment and medical information forms during the enrolment process and notify educators when any information changes.
- Be invited to contribute to the quality improvement process within the service.
- Be encouraged to attend excursions to help meet required ratio's and to support their children's knowledge of and engagement in their community.
- Be invited to assist with working bees at the Centre. These will be arranged from time to time to help maintain equipment and indoor/outdoor environment and will be a family event where children can

participate.

- Be invited to family events to be held periodically to help family's network and develop friendships in the local community.
- Respect the rights of confidentiality of other children and families whilst at the Centre.
- Respect the rights of confidentiality of educators and staff whilst at the Centre.
- Not contact educators and staff on home phone numbers unless given permission to do so.
- Sign the Code of Conduct agreement within the Enrolment Pack.

Sources:

- Acknowledgement to Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework (3) ACECQA (2017)