



## Policy and Procedures Enrolment & Orientation

The Commonwealth Department of Human Services, Priority of Access guidelines will affect allocation of enrolment decisions. Currently priority of access for care is given to children at risk, and children with parents who undertake work, training, or study.

Acacia welcomes all children; in addition Acacia supports the integration of children with additional needs, where the Centre can provide appropriate support and it is in the best interests of the additional needs child and other children at the Centre. Additional needs children will be considered individually for their enrolment, depending on the place availability and taking into consideration available support.

Non-working families may be eligible for respite care; their eligibility for childcare will be regularly assessed and reviewed. Families using respite care may be required to alter their bookings to enable the Centre to meet the demand for families with parents who work, undertake training or study.

Priority will be given to families already using the Centre for the care of siblings. This will occur based on availability and within the Department of Education Priority of Access Guidelines. To assist staff with young children, Acacia allow staff and prospective staff to enrol their children with appropriate arrangements. Those families will still need to comply with the Priority of Access guidelines and will not be given any additional preference.

Children of Committee members will not be given any preference.

### Enrolment Procedures

On notification of a vacancy for their child, parents/guardians will be asked to make an appointment to commence the enrolment procedure.

During the enrolment process, parents/guardians are required to attend in person with their child and collect an enrolment pack which includes:

- An Enrolment form;
- An Orientation survey;
- Payment information;
- Information about our service and rooms;
- Details about what other information is required to be provided by families.

The Director or Nominated Educator will take the time to explain the information required by the Centre and ensure the family understands the purpose for this. The Director or Nominated Educator will ensure that enrolment is a supported process for families. If required, interpreting support services are available for non-English speaking families. Families who have not received a Centre tour will be able to conduct one at this stage.

During this time, the Centre staff will also discuss any specific requirements for the child and inclusive practices employed at the Centre. If additional support is required to facilitate the child's enrolment refer to the Inclusion policy. This may include, anaphylaxis medical management action plan, asthma action plan, medicines, diet, allergies, cultural requirements or a court order.

In addition, an initial orientation process including stay and play and short visits will be planned or commenced.



## Information Required to be provided by the Family

Before the child begins their first day at the Centre, Acacia must have all required documentation for the child. The child will not be accepted into the service without this being completed. Information that is required is as follows:

- A completed enrolment form;
- A completed Orientation survey;
- A copy of the child's Immunisation history statement from Australian Childhood Immunisation Register;
- A completed medical management plan which includes Action plans and any Medication or aides required to fulfill the Action plan requirements (if any medical condition has been confirmed);
- Child Care Subsidy requirements;
- Kindergarten enrolment form for children enrolled in 4-year-old kinder program;
- Outing authorisation form if applicable.

## Fees

The Director or the Nominated Educator will advise families of their individual daily or weekly fees which is to be paid on their commencement week. All fees are payable two weeks in advance. We have a range of payment options available to families and these will be provided upon commencement; the preferred payment type is Direct Debit.

## Information for Families

At the time of enrolment, families will be informed about policies and procedures that pertain to the family and their individual needs. Families will be informed about the location of the centre Philosophy, and the Policy and Procedure folder. Families are given a copy of the Parent Handbook to read and are invited to ask questions. They are also informed about how they can be involved in the Centre, including the Management Committee, sub-committee and other Centre activities.

The Director and Educators will bring parents attention to the:

- The Immunisation & Exclusion policy in relation to immunisation;
- Sun smart requirements;
- Clothing requirements;
- Arrival and collection procedure (including late collection);
- Role of the emergency contact person (Acacia's centres will not accept an enrolment without an emergency contact);
- Medication, accident, injury & illness record;
- Medical condition declaration;
- Payment of fees;
- Complaint & concern policy and procedure;
- Road Safety;
- Parent involvement and Acacia Code of Conduct.



## Orientation Process

Acacia recognises that a child's transition from home to the Centre is an important time and will ensure that children and families are supported to settle into their new environment. A child's experience of child care will be effectively formed by a successful transition into the Centre. Settling the child into a Centre can be a sensitive time for children, parents/guardians and educators. An orientation period will enable the child and family to familiarise themselves with educators, staff and the Centre. This will assist in making the child feel safe and secure in the Centre environment.

On notification of a vacancy for their child, parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the Director or Assistant Director to arrange the orientation process for their child.

All children must have at least one orientation session before their first day. Families will be consulted on how many more sessions after their first orientation session will best suit their individual needs to ensure a smooth transition into Acacia. Orientation will be of no charge to families and will be organised at a time suitable for the room, educators, and families involved. The Director or Nominated Educator will show families around the centre and introduce them to educators and staff in the child's room.

Children may feel confused by their new environment, new routine and new faces. We recommend that families gradually introduce a child to their new Centre. A family member can start by staying with their child for a few hours then slowly increasing the length of time the child spends at the Centre without them.

During orientation, the parent/guardian is required to provide adequate supervision for their child at all times. The only exemption is when the room leader suggests the parent leave the room to try and assimilate the child in the room alone. During this time, the parent/guardian must remain on the Centre premises. No Parent is to leave the building whilst undertaking an orientation session.

Parents/guardians will advise educators of their child's routines, sleep, feeding and comforting needs. Comfort objects from home will be encouraged and be available for the child. We encourage families to share their expectations, ideas and information about their cultural background. Educators should take the opportunity to share information with children and their family about Acacia's programs and operations, the Centre philosophy and the children's indoor and outdoor environments.

Some families and children experience levels of anxiety during the initial stages of orientation, which is very common. Children will sense the anxiety that family members may feel, therefore a lengthy and planned orientation is vital. Throughout our training and experience we can suggest ways and develop a specific/individual plan to assist both children and families.

### First day

Children developmentally have no sense of time; they may not be able to comprehend that their parent will come back. Therefore, it is vital that a parent communicates with their child that they are leaving, even if it is for 1 minute. This builds a trusting relationship and reassures the child that parents will come back. Parents are encouraged to undertake positive conversations with their child at home before commencing childcare; explaining what the adults will do whilst they are in childcare or what the child's day might look like in care to ease feelings of anxiety. Furthermore, it is recommended that parents explain to their child where they are going (work, school) before entering the building and at time of drop off.



Children do not think the same way as adults. However, children are very adaptable and usually within a short period, they are able to adjust to their new environment. They learn by looking, feeling and experiencing things. Thus, we hope that parents/guardians will co-operate positively in carrying out the gradual introduction of the program.

Some children settle very quickly while others may take longer. Parents can help their child adjust by:

- Initially only leaving the child for short periods (not for 8 hours the first few days);
- Being confident (if parents are anxious they can easily influence the way a child feels);
- Ensuring that the child has his or her "security object" such as teddy or blanket;
- Always telling the child that you are going and that you will be back;
- Writing out your child's routine and discussing it with staff.

Where a parent is unable to stay with their child during the settling period, staff will do their best to settle the child as much as possible. Parents are able to ring the Centre at any time to see how their child is progressing.

Where a child is having difficulty with the transition, a plan will be completed in consultation with families, and parents will be encouraged to stay until the child has been able to form an attachment with staff or is able to manage without undue stress.

Where a child shows signs of separation anxiety, the staff will continue close consultation with parents and seek other advice, in the best interests of the child.

### **Moving into the next room**

Children who are currently enrolled at Acacia have priority over children on the waiting list to move up into the next room. Due to Regulatory requirements a child may not be able to move up due to their age. Every attempt is made to cater for all children and the educators of their current room will ensure that the program suits each individual child's developmental needs. Children will also have many opportunities to participate in other rooms that they are not designated to throughout the day.

Orientation also will take place when a child moves up to the next room. Together with both parents and educators a date will be discussed when this will commence. This usually occurs when a vacancy becomes available and/or a few weeks before their next birthday. This orientation process enables a child to familiarise themselves with a new room, children and educators. This process can take some time until the child feels comfortable in their new room.

Acacia acknowledges that families also need orientation information when their child moves into a new room. Families are invited to communicate with their new educators in their preferred method, verbally or via email. Each room also has information packs that families can access upon commencement in the new room.

Information sessions are held at the end of each year for all children entering the kindergarten program in the following year.

### **BREACH OF THIS POLICY**

Any educator or staff found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.



### References

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority,

- *National Quality Framework Resource Kit, 2011*

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*  
Commonwealth of Australia 2009

Early Childhood Strategy Division DET and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, November 2009*

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**It is the responsibility for all staff to read understand this policy within 14 days of publication. All staff are to date and sign below once you have read and understood the content of this policy.**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Print Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>