

BRISBANIA BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL & VACATION CARE CENTRE

ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT

TITLE: PRIORITY OF ACCESS

Status: CURRENT

Date of Origin: July 2012

Policy No: P2

Last Reviewed: August 2020

POLICY STATEMENT

Brisbania Before & After School & Vacation Care Centre, understands that for families, enrolling their child into Outside School Hours Care can be an important priority. However the demand for Outside School Hours Care sometimes exceeds the number of places our service is approved for and there may be a waiting list to manage family demands. When this happens, our service will comply with the Australian Government 'Priority of Access Guidelines' to ensure places are allocated to families with the greatest need for child care support. These Guidelines will be strictly adhered to and failure to meet these Guidelines is a breach of the conditions of continued approval for receiving Child Care Benefit and State Government funding.

The guidelines will be used during enrolment, when there is a waiting list for our service, or when a number of parents are applying for a limited number of vacant places.

PROCEDURE

a) **The Priority of Access Guidelines**

- Families will be advised about the Priority of Access Guidelines when they enroll their children in our service. Families will also have access to a copy of this policy.
- The Priorities are:
 - **Priority 1:** a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
 - **Priority 2:** a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the 'A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
 - **Priority 3:** any other child.

Within these three priority categories, precedence should also be given to children in:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- Families which include a person with a disability
- Families on lower incomes
- Families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Socially isolated families
- Single parent families

- When our service has no vacant places and is providing care for a child who is Priority 3 under the Guidelines, the service may require that child to leave the service in order to make room for a child with a higher priority. However, this can only happen if our service:
 - a) Notified the family that our service follows the Priority of Access Guidelines and this Policy when their child first entered care at our service, and
 - b) Gives the family at least 14 days notice of the need for their child to vacate their place.
- When filling vacancies, our service will give priority to school children over children who have not yet started school and may ask a child not yet in school to leave care if a child who is in school applies for a place.
- When considering enrolments for the following school year, the service will consider the physical space and accept enrolments ensuring compliance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law is maintained.
- If proposed enrolments exceed the current physical space, the service will investigate access to additional space. If suitable additional physical space cannot be secured, the service will place a cap on the number of enrolments and once that cap is reached a waiting list will be established. Families will be made aware of this process.

Special needs inclusion/exclusion

- The Centre will do its best to accommodate special needs children.
- Funding will be sought to undertake modifications wherever possible, however, under 'reasonable accommodation' considerations, financial realities and building regulations will be taken into account when considering provision of special equipment, building renovations and allocation of staff.
- Specialised training for staff to acquire specific skills in meeting the needs of special needs children will be undertaken wherever appropriate in order to meet the requirements of open & equitable service provisions.

EVALUATION

All enrolments will strictly adhere to the Priority of Access Guidelines to ensure equity and consistency for the community.

Adapted from, Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW), accessed on 19/7/2012 from <http://cccns.org.au/wp-content/uploads/priority-of-access.pdf>

CONSIDERATIONS

- Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000 (subsection 2051 Family Assistance (Administration) Act)
- Priority of Access Guidelines for child care services
- Department of Education and Communities Funding Agreement
- Family Assistance Act 1999
- Child Care Service Handbook. Section 6 Service Delivery

Sources

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – www.deewr.gov.au
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 108, 157
- Links to National Quality Standards/Elements: 6.1.1, 6.3.3, 7.3.2

Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs – Child Care Service Handbook 2011-2012

- Department of Education and Communities/ Early Childhood education and Care - www.det.nsw.edu.au/what-we-offer/early-childhood-education-and-care

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation
- Confidentiality
- Child Protection
- Management of Complaints

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