

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**1. ADMISSION POLICY**

**AIM:**

**To provide an equitable basis for families to access to the University's Children's Services.**

**To comply with the Commonwealth government's Priority of Access guidelines.**

**PROCEDURE**

**1.1 Waiting List**

A central waiting list of all potential users is maintained, valid for one year. The list will apply for vacancies at the Queensberry Children's Centre, and the Swanston Street Children's Centre.

In October each year a new application for the following year is mailed to every family on the waiting list and to families who have expressed an interest in care for the following year.

The waiting list application should include the following details

- a) Name of child
- b) Date of child's birth
- c) Relevant contact details
- d) Parent status: student, staff, or other
- e) Centre preference
- f) Hours and days care required
- g) Date of application
- h) Desired date of commencement
- i) Other information relevant for establishing priority of access

A waiting list application can be lodged from the time of conception or, in the case of adoption, from the time the adoption is applied for. Children's Services should be informed of child details when they become known.

**1.2 Allocation**

The federal government's Priority of Access guidelines (Appendix) underpin our allocation policy, and ensure that the process is fair, equitable and transparent. All child care services are required to follow these priorities in order to access Child Care Benefit.

As services operated and supported by the University of Melbourne, we prioritise children from the University community – staff and students - over other families, and work to provide innovative high quality early childhood care and education for young children.

**Filling a vacancy**

The following steps are followed in filling any vacancy:

1. The particular sessions/days available and age group are identified. University families whose request for care, and child's age, match the vacancy are identified from the waiting list.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

(Regulations prescribe the number and age of children in any room in a children's centre.)

2. Priority is then allocated to any child 'at risk' (Priority 1).
3. Next, current service users who are part of the University (staff or students) are considered:
  - a. families who want additional care for currently enrolled child(ren)
  - b. siblings of currently enrolled children
4. University families (staff\*/student) on the current waiting list, prioritised according to the second set of criteria in the Priority of Access guidelines.
5. Currently enrolled children whose families are no longer part of the University#
6. Any other family on the current waiting list, prioritised according to the second set of criteria in the Priority of Access Guidelines.
7. Once this process is followed for Priority 2 families, then any other family from the waiting list is considered, following the same steps.

\* After University families are considered in relation to these priorities, when other factors are equal, Children's Services staff will have priority over other staff families as they are not allowed to use the service where they work, restricting their child care options.

# Families whose relationship with the University ends can maintain current care until the end of the next January care period.

### **Appendix**

(Excerpt from the Child Care Service Handbook 2006-2007, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.)

#### **6.3 Priority of access**

One of the main reasons the Australian Government funds child care is to meet the child care needs of Australian families. However, the demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply in some locations. When this happens, it is important for services to allocate places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.

The Australian Government has Priority Access guidelines for allocating places in these circumstances. These guidelines apply to centre-based long day care, in-home care, family day care and outside school hours care services. They set out the following three levels of priority, which child care services must follow when filling vacant places:

- 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 *New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- Priority 3 – any other child.

Within these main categories priority should also be given to the following children:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- children in families which include a disabled person
- children in families on low incomes

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- children in families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children in socially isolated families
- children of single parents.

There are some circumstances in which a child who is already in a child care service may be required to leave the service.

Where a service has no vacant places and is providing child care for a child who is a Priority 3 under the Priority of Access Guidelines, the services may require that child to leave the child care service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child, but only if:

- (a) the person who is liable to pay child care fees in respect of the child was notified when the child first occupied the child care place that the service followed this policy, **and**
- (b) the service gives that person at least 14 days' notice of the requirement for the child to leave the child care service.

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### **1.3 Enrolment**

**Aim:**

**To ensure that families using Children's Services are aware of the services' policies and procedures.**

**To ensure that Children's services maintains accurate information on children using the services and their families in order to meet legal and ethical requirements.**

**Procedure**

At enrolment, parents/guardians will be given a Children's Services Handbook which includes the centre philosophy. Family members will be given the opportunity to read and discuss the centre philosophy and policies before completing the enrolment form.

Parents/persons with lawful authority sign the appropriate section on the enrolment form to indicate that they are aware of, and accept, the current centre philosophy and policy.

To confirm a place parents must return the enrolment form, the signed child care contract, and pay a deposit equal to two weeks of the full fee of their booking, within 10 working days from date of offer. If these procedures are not complied with the place may be forfeited.

**Timelines**

Places for returning users are allocated in October each year.

New places are for the coming year normally allocated in the first two weeks of November each year. Changes over the December, January, February may lead to further offers of places or sessions.

Enrolment may take place at any time during the year to fill any vacancies.

### **1.4 Enrolment Form**

The enrolment form shows:

- a) The child's name, address, gender and date of birth.
- b) The place of birth, nationality and the primary language spoken by the child or, in the case of a child who has not yet learned to speak, by the child's parents/legal guardians.
- c) The names, occupations, addresses, email addresses and home and business

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

telephone numbers of each of the child's parents/ legal guardians. It has to be identified who the child resides with.

- d) The name, address and home and business number of any persons who should be contacted in an emergency if the child's parents/guardians cannot be contacted.
- e) The period for which the child is cared for in the centre.
- f) The name, address, and telephone number of the child's medical practitioner.
- g) The name, address and telephone number of any person with lawful authority authorised to collect the child from, or return the child to, the centre.
- h) Relevant details of home routines or expectations
- I) Details of any special needs - allergies, physical, food.
- j) Details of knowledge of centre philosophy and policies.
- k) Publicity permission.
- l) Immunisation details.
- m) Permission to call an ambulance in the case of an emergency.
- n) Permission for child to be observed by persons other than staff, eg students.
- o) Details of access rights where applicable.
- p) List of attachments to enrolment form, eg. court orders, medication forms etc.
- q) Siblings' names and ages
- r) Other relevant information as may be required.

### **1.5 Handbook**

Upon enrolment, each family receives a Children's Services handbook containing information regarding the centre's services and policies and procedures, and any other systems (eg front door).

### **1.6 Family transfer to another University Centre**

It is possible for children to transfer during the year to another centre, provided that a vacancy exists. If parents wish to transfer their child at the start of the new year, children will be allocated a place before places are allocated to new users.

### **1.7 Temporary Enrolments**

Children may be enrolled on a temporary basis if a short-term vacancy exists.

A normal enrolment form must be filled out for temporary enrolments.

### **1.8 Translating Information**

Information on the centre in a language other than English can be arranged through the Multicultural Resource Centre or the University.

It may be necessary to enlist the help of the Telephone Interpreting Service,

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

telephone 131450, for prospective families who do not speak English.

Staff will enlist the help of any bilingual staff, bilingual workers through the Multicultural Resource Centre, VICSEG, the Melbourne City Council Children's Services Resource & Development Officer, or bilingual parents who may be able to help with translation or interpreting.

Centre philosophy and enrolment form will be translated into other community languages, as required.