

6.01AV ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY (LDC)

QUALITY AREA 6 | VERSION 1.0



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines for:

- enrolling a child at LEVNT EC Services
- the orientation of new parents/guardians and children into LEVNT EC Services
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Family Assistance Law

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

LEVNT EC Services are committed to:

- engaging collaboratively and respectfully with parents/guardians during enrolment and orientation to learn about their expertise, culture, values and beliefs and priorities for their child's learning and wellbeing
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- ensuring the enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting parents/guardians to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information and communication
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information gathered for enrolment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, parents/guardians, student educators, volunteers and contractors attending LEVNT EC Services.

BACKGROUND

The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2) (k)).

Childcare services providing approved childcare must abide by the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017 (refer to Legislation and standards). The Commonwealth Government supports working parents/guardians in making early childhood education and care more affordable and accessible through the Child Care Package (The Package). The Package includes the Child Care Subsidy and Child Care Safety Net. Together, they enable parents/guardians to participate in the workforce by making early childhood education and care affordable and accessible.

The Child Care Subsidy helps by assisting families with their childcare fees and provides greater assistance to low and middle-income families.

The Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged or located in a regional or remote community. The Child Care Safety Net includes:

- The Additional Child Care Subsidy which provides extra payment on top of the Child Care Subsidy for families who need more help. There are five different payments:
 - o for families who need help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
 - o for grandparents who care for their grandchildren
 - o for families experiencing significant financial stress
 - o for parents transitioning from welfare to work
 - o Community Child Care Fund

- The Community Child Care Fund which helps services stay open and available to children in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities.
- The Inclusion Support Program which provides support to Early Childhood Education and Care services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services
- Subsidised Care for Low Income Families who earn \$69,390 or less a year can access 24 hours of subsidised care per child per fortnight without having to meet the activity test.

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 have legislative responsibilities under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement. To meet the Child Care Subsidy immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule (refer to Sources) set out by the Australian Government Department of Health.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms refer to the Definitions file of each LEVNT EC policy folder.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement: The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. Parents/carers must provide a copy of their most recent AIR Immunisation History Statement, which shows that the child is up to date with their immunisations upon enrolment and when a child has received or been due to receive a vaccination while attending the service. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable). In order to confirm enrolment, the Immunisation History Statement must show the child is up to date with the vaccines they can have, medical contraindication and indicate the due date for the next vaccinations the child is able to receive in the future if applicable.

Authorised nominee: (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment record

Centrelink: The agency that delivers payments and services to individuals and parents/guardians on behalf of the Australian Government.

Child Care software: software developed and provided by commercial providers to interact with the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy System (information technology system) and to support other administrative and management activities for childcare providers.

Child Care Safety Net: provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged, or located in a regional or remote community. Supporting children to access quality early childhood education and care services.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of childcare. Payments are paid directly to approved childcare providers. Further information can be found at: www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/child-care-subsidy

Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, , substance abuse, or mental health; known to Child Protection; in statutory Out of Home Care; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*) (refer to *Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition*).

Complying Written Arrangement: a written arrangement between a childcare provider and an individual to provide child care in return for fees. The arrangement includes certain required information.

Enrolment: An enrolment occurs when the provider has an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide care to a child and the provider submits an enrolment notice in the Child Care Subsidy System. It is a requirement under Family Assistance Law for all children who attend childcare (or have an arrangement for care) to have an enrolment notice regardless of their Child Care Subsidy eligibility status

Enrolment notice: The notice given by a provider through the Child Care Subsidy System that they have an arrangement with an individual or organisation to provide care to a child.

Enrolment record: the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (*Regulations 160, 161, 162*) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

Grace period: allows specific categories of children of parents/guardians experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement or when the statement is assessed as not being up to date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with parents/guardians during enrolment and keep a copy with the child’s enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child’s attendance at the service. During the grace period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement and to encourage parents/guardians to access immunisation services.

Inclusion Support Program: A program that assists childcare services to include children with additional needs by providing tailored inclusion advice and support from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the table below, the Approved Provider, persons with management and control, nominated supervisor and/persons in day-to-day charge are responsible for meeting requirements set out in [Attachment 1: Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor Responsibilities](#). Actions which are legislated requirements of the ECEC sector are indicated with **LR**.

	Approved provider and/or persons with management and control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
Providing parents/guardians easy-to-read information about how the service operates and what the service will provide (including information about inclusion and learning)	✓	✓	✓		
Ensuring parents/guardians has access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent handbook • Statement of philosophy • <i>Child Safe Environment Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</i> • <i>Fees Policy</i> • Privacy Statement • Code of Conduct Policy 	LR	✓	✓		
Developing strategies on how to communicate with parents/guardians with varying literacy skills, or where English is not a first language	✓	✓	✓		
Complying with the Inclusion and Equity Policy	LR	LR	✓	✓	✓
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	✓	✓	✓		

	Approved provider and/or persons with management and control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
Complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	LR	LR	LR	✓	✓
Providing opportunities for interested parents/guardians to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the National Law: Section 167	LR	✓	✓		
Seeking information from parents about any specific health care need, allergy or medical condition, including whether a medical practitioner has been consulted in relation to a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition	LR	✓	✓	✓	
Ensuring that a medical management plan has been provided and that the risk minimisation plan has been developed and both documents are kept in the child's enrolment records	LR	✓	✓	✓	
Gathering information from parents/guardians to support continuity of care between home and the service	✓	✓	✓		
Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement and accessing immunisation services	LR	✓	✓		
Ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period	LR	✓	✓		
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit (refer to Source) for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week grace period	LR	✓	✓		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statement have been assessed as being acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period have confirmed place in the program	LR	✓	✓		
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement and who are not eligible for the grace period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services	LR	✓	✓		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)	LR	✓	✓		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement of their child's immunisation status				✓	
Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks grace period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement to the service				✓	

	Approved provider and/or persons with management and control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement from all parents/guardians after enrolment, twice per calendar year, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E)	LR	✓	✓		
Ensuring all authorised nominees have been completed on the enrolment record (Regulations 160 and 161)	LR	✓		✓	
Ensuring that the enrolment record both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	✓	✓	✓		
Ensuring that enrolment record is kept up to date if family circumstances change	LR	✓	✓	✓	
Ensuring that enrolment records are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183 (1a) (2d))	LR	✓	✓		
Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.	LR	✓	✓		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to Definitions and the Inclusion and Equity Policy)	LR	✓	✓		
Ensuring the orientation program meets the individual needs of children and parents/guardians	LR	✓	✓		
Communicating with parents/guardians when their child will be eligible for a funded year of kindergarten	LR	✓	✓		
Reviewing the orientation processes for new parents/guardians and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	LR	✓	✓	✓	
Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for (Regulation 157), except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the National Law: Section 167	LR	LR	✓	✓	✓
Encouraging parents/guardians during orientation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period make contact with educators at the service, when required 	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling into the service	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	Approved provider and/or persons with management and control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
Developing strategies to assist new parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel welcomed into the service become familiar with service policies and procedures share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>	LR	LR	LR	LR	✓
Notifying LEVNT EC Services in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment				✓	

SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- Offer parents/guardians the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session. This allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service
- Provide reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation and once the child commences
- Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- Reassure the family:
 - they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time
 - they may call and speak to their child's educator(s) at an agreed time
 - the educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in
 - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Further considerations may include but are not limited to:
 - send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (*refer to the Information and Communication Technology Policy*). **Note:** For children in out-of-home care, the educator may need to seek permission from Child Protection before taking and distributing photos of the child
 - asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of a policy review cycle, or as required
- notify all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk

AUTHORISATION & REVIEW

This policy was adopted by Lutheran Education VIC, NSW, TAS and ACT Ltd on behalf of the Approved Provider for this service on 1 September 2022

REVIEW DATE May 2023 or earlier as required.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1: Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the table above, the approved provider and/or persons with management and control, and the Nominated Supervisor and/or persons in day-to-day charge have a number of additional responsibilities relevant to their position.

- Ensuring not to exceed the maximum number of children whom the service is licensed to provide care for.
- Ensuring all enrolled children are six years of age and under. Children aged six years old will require to complete an exemption from school form from the Department of Educations and Training.
- Communicating to parents/guardians the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays) service philosophy and governance.
- Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy.
- Providing parents/guardians with consistent and transparent communication on waitlist management processes.
- Once payment has been made to secure the placement, providing parents/guardians an email stating the starting date, days and hours.
- Once an enrolment record has been completed for a child, review the enrolment record to ensure that no section/question has been left blank.

ATTACHMENT 2: Priority of Access

There are no requirements for filling vacancies. The approved provider can set their own rules for deciding who receives a place.

LEVNT EC Services prioritise children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

This meets the Australian Government's aims of helping parents/guardians who are most in need and supporting the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.

LEVNT EC Services also consider the following factors when offering LDC places:

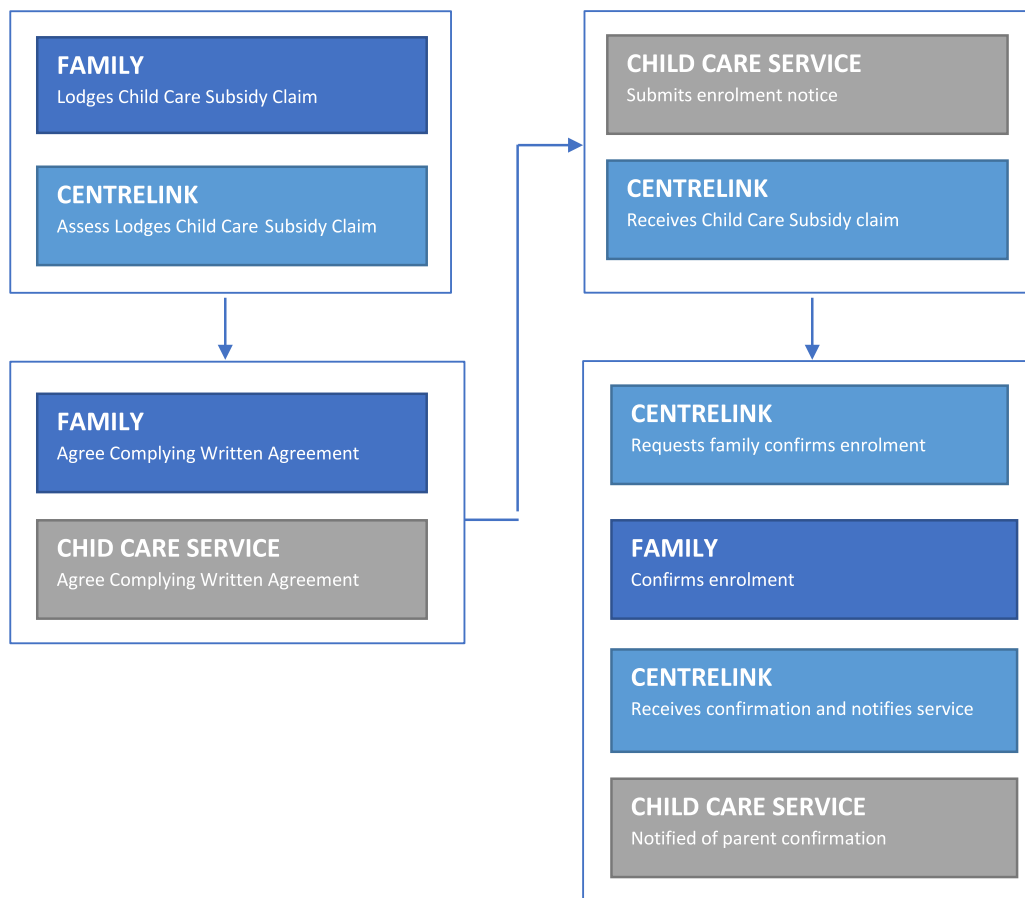
- Siblings attending the service
- Parent(s) employed at the service
- Length of time on the waitlist
- Proximity to the service
- Family works or studies close to the service

ATTACHMENT 3: Childcare Subsidy Enrolment Process

Enrolling children is a requirement under Family Assistance Law for all children who attend childcare (or have an arrangement for care) regardless of their parent's or guardian's eligibility for Child Care Subsidy.

- The person responsible for the enrolment must lodge an enrolment notice (via Xplor) in the Child Care Subsidy System to show they have made an arrangement with the parent/guardian and the child is enrolled.
- Once a person responsible for the enrolment has lodged an enrolment notice, they must report attendance for that child.
- After the person responsible for the enrolment submits an enrolment notice for a child, the parent/guardian will be notified and asked to check the main enrolment notice details. This will occur through their Centrelink online account. Where a parent/guardian cannot access myGov, they can confirm their enrolment over the phone with Centrelink or by visiting a Centrelink office.

Diagram 1:



LEVNT EC Services offering LDC: Waitlist

- If there are no suitable vacancies, the child / children's details will be placed on a waitlist.
- Families on the waitlist are not guaranteed a place at the LEVNT EC Service they are on the waitlist for.
- Applications will be entered on the wait list using the priority of access criteria.
- Recognition is given to siblings of current children who attend the same LEVNT EC Service.
- It is the responsibility of families to update personal information, as required.
- LEVNT EC Services will update the wait list annually by written correspondence.
- To remain on the wait list families will need to provide written response within 10 working days from the date of the correspondence.
- Families who do not respond to the annual waiting list update request will be removed from the waitlist.
- Families who have been offered a place at LEVNT EC Services have 14 days to accept or decline the offer. If no response is received after two attempts at contacting the family, the offer will be deemed to have been declined, but the applicant will remain on the waitlist.

REFERENCES

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

SOURCES

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.health.gov.au
- Department of Health and Human Services, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: www2.health.vic.gov.au
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Priority of Access Guidelines for childcare service: www.dese.gov.au
- The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): www.dese.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

- 1.03V Inclusion and Equity
- 2.07V Dealing with Infectious Disease
- 2.11V Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- 6.02V Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- 7.02V Privacy and Confidentiality
- 7.03AV Fees – Long Day Care
- 7.03BV Fees - Kindergarten
- 7.04V Complaints and Grievances

