Introduction

This policy will ensure that there are fair and equitable processes for how families are offered places within Bega Valley Shire Council education and care services and that these processes meet the requirements of Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines.

Education and care services are required to use the following criteria in allocating vacant places:

- Priority 1: Child at risk
- Priority 2: Child of single parent, or of parents who BOTH satisfy the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act
- Priority 3: Any other child.

Within each category priority will be given to:

a. Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
b. Children in families who include a person with a disability
c. Child in families on low incomes/ health care card
d. Children in families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
e. Children in socially isolated families
f. Children of single parents
g. Children in the year prior to school (Preschool care only)

Strategies

Waiting list form

Families will:

- Complete an Application to Enrol form prior to the offer of a place. This form provides information that enables the service to correctly identify a family’s priority category and enables a family to move to a waiting list where applicable.
- Provide an anticipated start date for care on the Application to Enrol form. This form is available from the Bega Valley Shire Council website: www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au
- Appear on the waiting list in order of the time and date of submission of their form. Any offer of care may only be held for one week.

Allocation of a place

The Administrative Officer will:

- Review vacancies and offers of care with the Nominated Supervisor regularly
• Identify vacancies that arise each week and offer places to families following the priority of access guidelines. Within each category offers will be made first to families with a child currently using the service and has appeared on the Waiting List before an offer is made to a family with a child who is new to the service.

• Only offer a place to a family within the 4 weeks prior to the nominated start date.

• Hold the place for one week from the family’s acceptance date or prior to the family’s start date. If a child is unable to start on that date due to illness the Family Assistance Office requires that they be charged full fees.

• Place a family who refuses an offer of care back onto the waiting list based on the date of their refusal.

Re-enrolment

All families must:

• Pay their accounts in full or have an active payment plan in place to be considered for a confirmed re-enrolment in the following year.

• Complete an Application to Enrol form if they are requesting additional care for the new enrolment year. Their application for increased days in the following year will be subject to the following criteria:
  o the Priority of Access guidelines,
  o the number of hours of care the Family Assistance Office has approved for the family
  o the date on which the family formally put in a request for additional hours (ie the date on which you appeared on the Waiting list).

Evaluation

A transparent, fair and equitable process is applied to the allocation of all vacancies.

Statutory legislation and considerations

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Child Care Management System (2011)

References

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