Enrolment and orientation

Department: Community Relations and Leisure
Responsible Officer: Manager | Children, Families and Ageing

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and community

Introduction

Bega Valley Shire Council education and care services acknowledge that enrolment and orientation are important opportunities that support children to make a transition from the family context into education and care services. Enrolment and orientation also offers families access to important sources of information about using education and care services.

Strategies

Before enrolling

Families are welcome to arrange to visit the education and care service at a time that suits the family and service. Families will:

- Ring the Administrative Officer to make a time, or call in to the education and care service office. All visitors will be asked to sign in and out in the Visitor’s book kept at the office.

The Nominated Supervisor, Administrative Officer or Educational Leaders will:

- support a family through the enrolment and orientation process
- will arrange phone interpreter services, or where possible, an onsite visit from an interpreter service.

Visiting

A visit to the service offers important opportunities to families. Families will:

- Collect and complete an “Application to Enrol” form which will place you on the Waiting List. Vacancies are offered following our Priority of Access guidelines.
- Take home a parent information booklet which summarises important information about using the service, fees, how to contact the Family Assistance Office, National Quality Framework, National Quality Standards, Approved Curriculum, important websites and our education and care service policies
- Meet some of the educators and staff who will work with your children
- Look around the education and care service

Alternatively families can download forms and information from the Bega Valley Shire Council website www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au
Starting in the education and care service

There are several steps that families will follow when they start in the education and care service.

1. An offer of care is made and accepted.

   The Administrative Officer at each education and care service will:
   
   a. review new vacancies and the waiting list on Friday of each week. (Please refer to the Allocation of Vacancies policy).
   
   b. Make an offer of care to a family. When accepted the family will contact the Family Assistance Office about Child Care Benefit (CCB) entitlements. These apply to long day care and out of school hours care programs. Families should quote the customer reference number for each service. Preschool users may also receive some tax support. A place will only be held for one week.

2. Arrange an orientation visit

   **Families will:**
   
   a. Ring the Administrative Officer and make a time to visit the service with their children. Plan to spend about an hour. This will be an opportunity to share information and spend time with the educators and children in the group prior to leaving your children for the first time.
   
   b. Complete an “Enrolment form” and bring it to their orientation.
   
   c. Complete the “Individual Child Information Sheet” with your child’s educator at your first orientation visit. This will contain important information about their child’s learning, relationships, medical history and well-being. A Medical Management and Action Plan will be required for children with ongoing medical conditions.
   
   d. Bring a copy of their children’s birth certificates, immunisation records, their health care card and their letter from the Family Assistance Office which identifies the amount of care and Child Care Benefit that they are entitled to. If they are using a funded Preschool program they may also be required to supply evidence of their income level.
   
   e. Make a time to visit again. When they come again they may feel ready to leave their children for a short time. Families must make sure that all information forms, authorisations and emergency contact numbers have been completed prior to leaving their child in the education and care service.

3. Settling in

   **Families should:**
   
   a. Talk with their children at home about the people that they have met and what they might do the next time that they visit.
   
   b. Each time they visit with their children, increase the time that they leave their children to play. Some children will settle quickly and may be ready to say goodbye after one or two visit. Other children may take more time to feel comfortable. During the settling in stage it is best to visit between 9.30 and 4.00. This is when all educators are in the rooms with the children.
   
   c. Talk with each child’s special educator about how they want to say goodbye. Keeping to the same pattern or routine when leaving can be helpful for some children.
   
   d. Let each child’s special educator know when they expect to be back each time they leave their children. This enables educators to reassure children about when the family will return.

   **Educators will:**
   
   a. Contact the family by phone if there are any concerns about children during their settling in phase, or if they are unsure about any aspect of the child’s education and care.
At any time families should:

a. Feel free to ring and check on how their children are going, ask a question or provide additional information that will support their children’s care and education.
b. Ask questions about how their children’s day has been, what they have done, what they have eaten, who they have played with or anything else that they would like to know
c. Visit the service, take part in fundraising events, ask for information about a concern
d. Let their children’s special educators know if they have any concerns, or if there is something that they would like them to know about their child in particular
e. Talk with the cook at the service about their child’s food likes, dislikes or other special dietary requirements.
f. Provide the educators and staff with feedback about how we could provide additional support in the orientation and enrolment process.

Evaluation

Successful orientation and enrolment procedures enable children and families to feel supported into the education and care service.

References

- Community Child Care Co-operative, Sample Policy, Enrolment and Orientation policy