

EDUCATION AND CARE GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Waiting List

Purpose

To develop strong partnerships between the service and families, clear processes are in place that reflect the Priority of Access - prioritising vacancies through a professional waiting list process when filling vacant child care places.

Administration team must check that parent/s are not on the blacklist prior to placing children on the waiting list. Centre Directors must check that parent/s are not on the blacklist prior to offering them a position.

All families (parents, guardians, care givers) need to register on the centralised waiting list which can be completed via the internet on the Cumberland Council website cumberland.nsw.gov.au/join-waiting-list.

When completing waiting list details, it is important that families are aware of the details below:

- If families complete a waiting list application form for an unborn child, they need to update the waiting list details once the child is born and supply a copy of the birth certificate.
- If a child is diagnosed with an additional need or disability, families must also update the waiting list information.
- It is a family's responsibility to ensure that they update the details on the waiting list. This includes children's additional needs, disabilities or even the name and gender of the children after they are born.

Priority of access – prioritising vacancies

There are no mandatory requirements for filling vacancies, and providers can set their own policies for prioritising who receives a place.

However, as vacancies in a service arise, providers are asked to consider prioritising 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 aim of helping families who are most in need and supporting the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.

Positions become available throughout the year, however, the majority of our positions are offered any time from September to January for commencement in the new calendar year. While every effort will be made to contact families during this time, positions cannot be held indefinitely. Cumberland Council's Education and Care services take no responsibility if families are unavailable on the contact numbers they have provided.

When a family is offered a position in one of Council's Education and Care centres, an enrolment fee is payable in addition to a security deposit which is equivalent of 2 weeks' full fees based on the child's booked days and will be changed if the booked days change. After giving 2 weeks' written notice and all outstanding debts have been finalised, the security deposit is refunded back into the statement to be used for remaining fees. Security deposits are not refundable or transferable if the position is not taken up by the family.

A child currently in care cannot exit care to create a vacancy for their sibling.

Once a vacancy occurs in a centre, an assessment is made across all rooms with regard to the remaining children to decide whether a transition to a new age grouping will be beneficial. For example, if a child is leaving our service and is currently placed in the 3-5 age room, the nominated supervisor will check to see if there may be a child currently in the birth-3 age room who would benefit from transitioning to the 3-5 age room (effectively taking the position vacated by the child leaving).

What this means is that even though a child has left our service from the 3-5 year age bracket, the vacancy that arises could be found to be in a younger age group. A vacancy is determined by the ages of current children in attendance. Please also note that children do not automatically transition to the next room when they turn of age during the school year/ throughout the year.

We will make every effort to place a child at one of the centres selected, however no guarantee of a position can be given.

The Commonwealth Government regards children at risk of abuse or neglect as a priority group for access to quality childcare. Families in crisis should also have support and assistance from childcare services to the maximum extent possible.

The Commonwealth Government resources child care with a major purpose of meeting the child care needs of families with recognised work or work-related commitments.

Where demand for care exceeds supply, it is important for services to allocate available places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.

In the case of employer-sponsored childcare where the service is also available to the community, employers may give priority to their own employees before considering other applicants.

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), [Education and Care Services National Regulations: Part 4.6](#)
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), [National Quality Standards](#): Quality Areas 6.1 & 7.1

Further reading

- Australian Government Department of Education - [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) (modified 1 August 2019)

Implementation date: **October 2019**

Next review date: **October 2020**