

PRIORITY OF ACCESS POLICY

NQS 6.2.2 February 2018

The Children's Centre's aim is to operate to its full capacity for every session, five days per week. It operates with a full time equivalent of 186 places.

PRESCHOOL

Access to the sessional preschool program is based on the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) guidelines. DECD is responsible for providing preschool programs in a range of government funded centres. Where the demand for preschool places exceeds the capacity (number of places available) then the Priority of Access Guidelines will apply to guide equity in allocating preschool places. – Preschool enrolments will be assessed using the following criteria:

Priority 1 – Children living in the immediate local area (Roxby Downs), known as the priority catchment area.

Priority 1b – if there are insufficient places to accommodate all children then the following criteria will be applied to finalise the selection process of children who will be offered a place at the service:

- A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Child under the Guardianship of the Minister
- A child or parent with a disability
- Children in socially isolated families
- Families without access to transport
- Children in families with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Priority 2

- Children who are attending child care in the catchment area
- Children who are enrolled to attend a co-located school
- Children who have siblings currently attending this co-located school, or where siblings have previously attended the preschool program.

If there are insufficient places to accommodate all children that fall in the priority 2 category then the criteria outlines in 1b should be applied to finalise the selection process of children who will be offered a place at the service.

Eligible Enrolments

In government funded preschool programs:

- Children are entitled to attend a preschool program for the equivalent of up to 15 hours per week for up to 4 terms
- Children who are under the Guardianship of the Minister or who are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background are entitled to attend up to 15 hours per week from 3 years of age, and may continue to attend up to 15 hours per week until they are 6 years old.
- The preschool start day will be the first school day of Term One

- If the child turns four before May 1st they are eligible to start preschool on the first school day of Term One for that year
- If the child turns four on or after May 1st they are eligible to start preschool on the first day of Term One the following year.
- The minimum age for starting preschool will be 3 years and 8 months (unless the child is under the guardianship of the Minister or identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander).
- Children with additional needs, including those with diagnosed disability, developmental delay, gifted development or who are at risk because of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or family circumstance may be considered if the Director believes there are additional spaces and resources to support the needs of the child
- Parents/Guardians will be required to provide evidence of the child's date of birth. This should be a passport, birth certificate or Centrelink documentation. Documentation detailing immunisation status is also required.
- Children transferring from an interstate or overseas preschool, and whose 4th birthday is on or before 31st July, will be deemed eligible enrolment subject to the following documentation being provided to the preschool: a letter from the educational leader of the interstate/overseas preschool acknowledging that the child met the eligibility criteria for that state/country and was enrolled in and regularly attended preschool for a minimum of one full term prior to transferring to South Australia.

LONG DAY CARE

The Director will develop a waiting list for Long Day Care and this will include essential information, e.g. family name, child/ren's date of birth, the date of contact, the date care is required and reason for needing care. Families will be advised that they are required to contact the Children's Centre at least every 3 months to confirm their ongoing interest or risk the deletion of their application. In consultation with the Governing Council, the waiting list may be temporarily closed until existing families can be accommodated at the Centre and then re-opened at a later time. Children from a Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal background or children who are under the Guardianship of the Minister will continue to have first priority even when the waiting list is closed.

For Long Day Care, as stated in the Commonwealth Guidelines, the Children's Centre supports first priority of access to parents whose children are at greatest risk, who are in the workforce/returning to or seeking employment and the studying parent. All bookings must be confirmed with the Director / Assistant Director before commencement of program.

CREATED: January 2018

REVIEWED:

TO BE REVIEWED: November 2019

SOURCED: Children's Services Act 1985
 Children's Services (Child Care) Regulations 1998
 Dept. of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
 Commonwealth Guidelines Child Care Benefit
 CCMS Childcare Services Handbook 2007/2008
 DECD Preschool Enrolment Policy
 DECD Same First Day Fact Sheet 2012
 Preschool Priority of Access Guidelines
 DECD Enrolment Policy 2014
 Early Childhood Australia – Belonging: At the heart of relating to others, 2015

