

HACKHAM WEST CHILDREN'S CENTRE

A 4. PRIORITY OF ACCESS

AIM:

- *The Children's Centre aim is to operate to its full capacity for every session, five days per week it operates with equivalent 60 places.*

PROCEDURE:

When the preschool is in operation and the number of preschool children in attendance is less than 30, the number of child care children attending can be increased proportionally as long as the total number of children in the centre does not exceed 60 children.

Preschool:

- Please refer to DECD Preschool Enrolment Policy 2014

Childcare:

One of the main reasons the Australian Government funds child care is to meet the child care needs of Australian families. However, the demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply in some locations. When this happens, it is important for services to allocate places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.

The Australian Government has Priority Access Guidelines for allocating places in these circumstances. These guidelines apply to centre-based long day care, in home care, family day care and outside school hours care services. They set out the following three levels of priority, which child care services must follow when filling vacant places:

Priority 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

Priority 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test under section 14 of the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999.

Priority 3 – any other child.

Within these main categories priority should also be given to the following children:

- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families
- Children in families which include a disabled person
- Children in families on low incomes
- Children in families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children in socially isolated families
- Children of single parents

There are some circumstances in which a child who is already in a child care service may be required to leave the service.

Where a service has no vacant places and is providing child care for a child which is a Priority 3 under the Priority of Access Guidelines, the service may require that child to leave the child care service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child, but only if:

- (a) the person who is liable to pay child care fees in respect of the child was notified when the child first occupied the child care place that the service followed this policy, and
- (b) The service gives that person at least 14 days notice of the requirement for the child to leave the child care service

EVALUATION:

This policy is to be viewed working effectively when appropriate guidelines are followed and fair and equitable access is provided to all families.

SOURCES:

- Department of Education and Training – Priority of Access Guidelines for Child Care Services
- Children Services Act, 1985
- Children’s Services (Child Care) Regulations, 1998
- Commonwealth Guidelines Child Care Benefits
- Child Care Service Handbook, 2010-2011
- DECD Preschool Enrolment Policy , 2014