YMCA BALLARAT KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 6

May 2018

PURPOSE
This policy will outline:

- the criteria for enrolment at YMCA Ballarat Children’s Services (YMCA)
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at kindergarten, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into kindergarten

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES
YMCA is committed to:

- equal access for all children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- complying with DET funding requirements relating to the enrolment of children in government-funded kindergarten places and applying these same requirements to enrolment of children in Pre-Kinder Program (Three Year Old Kindergarten)
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided on enrolment forms
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service

Legislation and standards
Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), as amended 2011
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2011
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2012
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 177, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011
- No Jab No Play – Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents 2015
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
  - Standard 6.1: Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained
    - Element 6.1.1: There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2015
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

2. DEFINITIONS
The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

Approved care: Care given by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Subsidy payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care,
before-and-after school care, vacation care, some occasional care and some in-home care childcare services are approved providers. Details are available at www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/

Children with additional needs: Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support, or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy)

Deferral: Refers to a child who does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place

Eligible child: A child who meets the criteria outlined in the Kindergarten Guide

Enrolment application form: A form to apply for a place at kindergarten

Enrolment application fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child’s enrolment application for a place in a program at the service

Enrolment form: Contains information on each child, as required under the National Regulations, including contact details, names of authorised nominees, names of persons authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication, names of persons authorised to take the child outside the service, details of any court orders, personal and health information including specific healthcare needs, medical management plans and dietary restrictions etc. (Regulations 160, 161, 162). This information is kept confidential by the service

Fees: A charge for a place within a program at the service

Immunisation History Statement: The statement must show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive; OR is eligible to enrol under the 16 week Grace Period while the service works with the family to obtain the necessary immunisations/documention; OR has a medical reason not to be vaccinated.

To request an Immunisation History Statement:

- See the Medicare section of the myGov website/App
- Go directly to the Medicare website or download the Express Plus Medicare Mobile App
- Contact the AIR by phone: 1800 653 809 or email acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au
- visit a Medicare or Centrelink office. The Medicare logo and Australian Government crest must be present and identifiable to be considered a valid Immunisation History Statement. For example, if the statement is page two of a letter from Medicare, both pages need to be presented to the service to confirm enrolment.

No Jab No Play: ’No Jab No Play’ is the name of legislation requiring all children to be fully vaccinated in order to be enrolled in childcare and/or kindergarten in Victoria. http://www.vic.gov.au/news/no-jab-no-play.html

Random Selection: A process which involves every child having an equal chance of being allocated a position at kindergarten, once the eligibility and priority of access criteria has been applied. Random selection will be managed by YMCA representatives

PROCEDURES

The YMCA promotes policies and procedures that are consistent throughout their kindergartens. In this Enrolment and Orientation Policy however there are some discrepancies due to some geographical areas providing central enrolments.

• Havilah Road Pre School, North Bendigo Pre School and Eaglehawk Pre School are under the LMPA Central Enrolment System [http://www.lmpa.org.au](http://www.lmpa.org.au)


• Mildura Kindergartens are under Mildura Rural City Council Enrolment System email: kindergarten@mildura.vic.gov.au to lodge your enrolment enquiry

• Lucas Kindergarten is under City of Ballarat Central Enrolment System [https://kinder.ballarat.vic.gov.au](https://kinder.ballarat.vic.gov.au)

This policy generally relates only to those kindergartens whose enrolments are managed entirely by YMCA Ballarat. There are some components of this policy that relate to ALL YMCA Ballarat Kindergartens. These are noted with an asterisk *.

**YMCA is responsible for:**

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs, based on funding requirements.
- developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and where possible able to access an early childhood program.
- *ensuring the YMCA Ballarat Kindergarten Website is updated regularly with current enrolment information and families are informed of how to access this at [www.earlyyears.ymca.org.au](http://www.earlyyears.ymca.org.au)*
- *considering and addressing any barriers to access that may exist*
- appointing a person/s to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy
- *providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program*
- *ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with DET funding criteria*

**The person/s responsible for the enrolment process is accountable for the following:**

- providing access to enrolment application forms and supporting families to enrol
- encouraging families to use the online enrolment form wherever possible being mindful that not all families will be able to do so
- collating enrolments
- maintaining a waiting list
- offering places in accordance with this policy and providing required paperwork to families
- *storing completed paper-based enrolment application forms in a lockable file as soon as is practicable*
- complying with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service
- ensuring parents/guardians enrolling are aware of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- In the case of kindergartens where enrolments are managed by organisations other than they YMCA, these organisations are responsible for providing updated class lists on a regular basis and consulting with YMCA on any issues that arise

* The Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person in day to day charge and other educators are responsible for:

- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children
or staff, or conflict with any duty of the YMCA, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157)

- ensuring that enrolment records are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183)
- responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring enquiries to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child’s readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child’s commencement at the service and all relevant documentation is placed in the enrolment file
- developing strategies to assist new families to:
  - feel welcomed into the service
  - become familiar with service policies and procedures
  - share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
  - share their understanding of their child’s strengths, interests, abilities and needs
  - discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child’s learning
- discussing the individual child’s needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
  - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
  - make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
- assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members
- sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child’s progress with regard to settling in to the service
- discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required
- complying with the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy in relation to the collection and management of a child’s enrolment information.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with this Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- completing enrolment forms prior to their child’s commencement at the kindergarten
- completing fee agreement forms by due date to confirm child’s enrolment
- ensuring that all required information is provided to the kindergarten
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur
- notifying the kindergarten and completing a withdrawal form (available on the website) if they wish to withdraw their child from kindergarten, and forwarding to ballarat.earlyyears@ymca.org.au

**Children cannot commence attending any kindergarten program until all required documentation has been fully completed and returned**

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: General enrolment procedures
AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the YMCA on 17/05/2018
ATTACHMENT 1

General enrolment procedures

The YMCA promotes policies and guidelines that are consistent throughout their kindergartens. In this Enrolment and Orientation Policy however there are some discrepancies due to some geographical areas providing central enrolments.

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- Lucas Kindergarten is under City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration [https://kinder.ballarat.vic.gov.au](https://kinder.ballarat.vic.gov.au)

These procedures generally relate only to those kindergartens whose enrolments are managed by YMCA Ballarat. There are some components of this policy that relate to ALL YMCA Ballarat Kindergartens. These are noted with an asterisk *.

1. Application for a place

- Enrolment forms are accepted from the advertised commencement date for enrolments each year
- Enrolment application forms are available online at [www.earlyyears.ymca.org.au](http://www.earlyyears.ymca.org.au) or from each kindergarten
- A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the service
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, enrolment applications should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child
- Parents/guardians of children applying for a second year of funded kindergarten or currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application form for the following year.
- Child’s Immunisation Status Certificate that shows their child: • is up to date with vaccinations for their age OR • is on a vaccine catch-up schedule OR • has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated must be submitted with all applications under ‘No Jab No Play’ legislation.
- Child’s Birth Certificate must be submitted with all applications
- Access to completed enrolment application forms will be restricted to the person/s responsible for the enrolment process, YMCA, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the YMCA
- Applications will be entered on the waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria
- Applications are to be submitted either online or by sending to YMCA Ballarat as indicated on the form

2. Closing dates for enrolment applications

The closing date for first round offers and timeline for current year’s enrolments are available on the YMCA Ballarat website or by contacting YMCA Ballarat

3. Procedure for a late application for enrolment

It is important to note that all applications received prior to the closing date for first round offers will be allocated first. Applications received after the closing date will be processed in order of receipt of
application. Where more than one application is received on the same date, the YMCA Eligibility and Priority of Access criteria will be applied as places become available.

4. Allocation within groups
When completing the Enrolment Application Form families have the opportunity to prioritise their preferred groups from all of the available kindergarten groups across all kindergartens in their geographical area. First Round Offers will be allocated in line with the YMCA Eligibility and Priority of Access Criteria. Applications received after closing date for first round offers will be processed in order of receipt of application.

Baw Baw Shire Council Kindergarten Applications will be allocated to groups in line with their Central Enrolment Policy

City of Greater Bendigo Kindergarten Enrolment Applications will be contacted by YMCA Ballarat to provide group preferences after they have been offered a kindergarten place. Where there are more preferences for a particular group than there are places available, places will be allocated using a process of random selection. (see definition)

South Gippsland Shire Council Applications will be allocated to groups in line with their Central Enrolment Policy.

5. Offer of places
• Places will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria
• Offer of places in the three-year-old program/s and the funded kindergarten program will not necessarily be made at the same time. This will be indicated on the website
• Applicants will be notified in writing if they have been offered a place or placed on a waiting list
• Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a place must return the form indicating they will not be accepting the offer of a place for their child

Note: Places will not be allocated to children whose families owe any substantial debt owed to the YMCA until payment has been received in full or a payment plan is agreed to. (refer to Fees Policy)

6. Eligibility and priority of access criteria for the funded kindergarten program
The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded kindergarten program. This list is in no particular order.
• children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with the Kindergarten Guide [link]
• children who were eligible to attend in the previous year, but deferred.
• children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET. Please refer to the Kindergarten Guide [link]
• children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs
• three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at [link]
• children who are not enrolled and attending a funded kindergarten program at another service

Y Early Years Management
7 Lyons Street Nth, Ballarat Vic 3350
PO Box 321, Ballarat Vic 3353
Phone: 5329 2800 Fax: 5331 8275

Enrolment and Orientation Policy
This policy was adopted by the YMCA on 17/05/2018
YMCA Eligibility and Priority of Access Criteria

When demand exceeds availability as at the closing date for first round offers, YMCA will allocate places using The Kindergarten Guide Priority of Access Criteria to determine the priority of access in the following order:

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<th>High priority children</th>
<th>Process that could be used to verify need(s)</th>
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| **Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care** | The child is:  
- attending a three year old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning, or is  
- referred by:  
  - Child Protection  
  - Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker)  
  - Maternal and Child Health nurse, or  
  - Out-of-Home Care provider. |
| **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children** | As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families ‘is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?’ and record this information in KIM. |
| **Asylum seeker and refugee children** | An appropriate visa identifies the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker. |
| **Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy** | • A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran’s Affairs Card, or  
  - multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets). |
| **Children with additional needs, defined as children who:** | The child:  
- is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten  
- holds a Child Disability Health Care Card  
- has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by:  
  - the National Disability Insurance Scheme  
  - Early Childhood Intervention Service  
  - Preschool Field Officer, or  
  - Maternal and Child Health nurse. |

In addition to the above priority of access criteria, it is also YMCA Ballarat policy to allocate places using the following priorities in no particular order:
• children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred.
• children currently enrolled at a kindergarten who are eligible for a second year of funded kinder at the same kindergarten
• children who have completed a three year old program at the service in the previous year, and have applied for the four year old program at the same kinder
• children who had a sibling complete a three or four year old program at the same kindergarten in the previous three years.

Once all of the above criteria has been applied, the remaining positions will be allocated by a process of random selection (see definition)

*It is important to note that all applications received prior to the closing date for first round offers will be allocated first. Applications received after the closing date will be processed in order of receipt of application. Where more than one application is received on the same date, the above priority of access criteria will be applied as places become available.*

If participating in a central enrolment scheme, the priority of access for that scheme will be implemented

**Eligibility and access criteria for three-year-old children**

Children are eligible for attendance in the three-year-old program provided they have turned three prior to commencement. YMCA Eligibility and Access Criteria will also apply to three year old groups.

It is important to note that whilst an application will be placed on a waiting list, we cannot allocate any places in the pre-kinder groups until children have turned three. Once the child has turned three, a place will be allocated if available.