POLICY STATEMENT

Centacare Child Care Services (CCCS) is a professional, not-for-profit organisation that forms part of a community services network, whose mission is to support people and communities in the spirit of the Gospel.

As an Approved Provider, CCCS manages a number of Long Day Centres, Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care and Kindergarten Services in the Archdiocese of Brisbane for and on behalf of the Corporation of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Before attendance at any Service type can commence, all enrolment information must be completed. This includes details of emergency contact numbers, persons authorised to collect children, health details, needs of the child and any cultural considerations, customer reference number details for Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) if applicable, as well as copies of any court orders. All forms are to be renewed annually, prior to the commencement of each year, thus ensuring the safe and appropriate care of children and compliance with legislative requirements.

Centacare Child Care Services acknowledges the importance of an effective orientation procedure. New families are provided with comprehensive information about the Service's operation and management details. Services respect the varying needs and perspectives of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Families are able to spend time with their children in the Service and are encouraged to ask questions and share their concerns.

Specific enrolment processes for families seeking a Long Day Centre or Family Day Care environment are outlined under Items Four and Five of this policy document.

LEGISLATION & REFERENCES

The laws and other provisions affecting this policy include:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011- Regulations 168 (2) (k) and 158-160.
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority: National Quality Framework 2011- NQS Areas and Standards 6.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.3; 6.2, 6.2.1, 6.2.2; 6.3.2, 6.3.3; 7.3
- Centacare Child Care Services Vision, Mission and Values Statement

Policies & Forms

- Centacare Child Care Services Enrolment Package
PRINCIPLES & PROCEDURES

1. Enrolment

- In order to enrol, parents must complete all necessary forms for each individual child ahead of approval for a child’s attendance at a Service.
- For Outside School Hours Care, children may be enrolled into any or all components: Before School Care, After School Care and/or Vacation Care. Prep children may attend Vacation Care from January 1st of the year they commence school.
- When families have initially enrolled their child into the program it is a requirement that an annual enrolment update is to be completed prior to the commencement of each year.
- An enrolment fee may be charged upon receipt of the family enrolment each year.
- If no care vacancies are available, family details are placed on a waiting list and contact will be made with the relevant family updating availability information.
- Priority of Access Guidelines apply. (see below).
- Bookings are essential.

2. Priority of Access

The Australian Government has determined Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating places in child care services. These guidelines set out the following three levels of priority:

- **Priority 1** - a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;
- **Priority 2** - a child of a single Parent/Guardian who satisfies, or of Parents/Guardians who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act;
- **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 person with a disability;
- Children in families which include an individual whose taxable income does not include the lower income threshold or is on income support;
- Children in families with a non-English speaking background;
- Children in socially isolated families;
- Children of a single Parent/Guardian.

Services also give priority to providing enrolment confirmation to the following:

- Existing families at the Service;
- Siblings of existing children enrolled at the Service;
- In the case of Long Day Centres, reenrolment for an ensuing year will be initially based on bookings for days in the current year;
- Members of the local Catholic parish;
- Families enrolled in Catholic education schools.

3. Orientation

Centacare Child Care Services views the orientation process as an essential stage in introducing children into its education and care services and is an important first step in building partnerships with families. The following procedures are implemented, in orientating children and their families to the Service.

- New families are provided with all the relevant enrolment information.
- Time is provided for families to discuss any needs with the Service Coordinator/Director.
- Government information is available in different languages and access to interpreter services can be provided for non-English speaking families, or to cater for hearing or vision impaired individuals.
- Staff members are introduced to new families (excluding FDC).
- Parents and children are shown around the Service.
- Families are welcome to spend time with their children during Service hours.
- New children are introduced and welcomed to the group and closely supported by educators and other children.
- Families are shown the procedures for signing in/out.
- Families are shown where they can access/view relevant information regarding service procedures.

4. **Long Day Centres**

- Parents/Carers need to first complete a Request for Booking form.
- When care is able to be booked and a position is offered, an interview is arranged with the parents/care givers to meet with the Coordinator/Director to discuss the child’s needs, Service policies and procedures, fees and conditions and parent requirements.
- An enrolment pack is given to the parents/carers at this time and will need to be completed in full and returned with required support documentation ahead of the commencement of care. At this time a non-refundable bond will be required to be paid.
- Families are encouraged to bring their child in for a visit/orientation prior to commencing care.
- In instances where it is deemed that additional support is required for a child with additional and/or special needs, Inclusion Support Subsidies (ISS) may be applied for through the Inclusion Support Agency (ISA). In such cases, applications are made via the Service in conjunction with the local ISA.
- If there is a need for the child that cannot be met by the Service, the Coordinator/Director will discuss the concern with educators. The Coordinator/Director and/or educator sensitively discusses the concern with the parents/carers and, when applicable, inform them of appropriate agencies that may be able to offer assistance.

5. **Family Day Care**

*Initial Contact*

- Family information is collected (including name and age of child, hours/days of care required, special needs, contact details, geographical area) and added to the waiting list.
- Information provided to parents includes, but are not limited to: availability, CCB eligibility, average fees across the Scheme and Service levies.
- Scheme staff endeavour to respond to care enquiries within three business days.
- Parents/Carers are asked to contact the prospective educator within three business days, once the referral is given.
- If no care vacancies are available, family details will be placed on a waiting list and regular contact will be made with the relevant family, updating availability information.

*Enrolment*

- An interview is arranged at the Scheme Office to complete enrolment and agreement forms for each child. If circumstances make this difficult, coordinators may be able to visit the respective parents at home.
- A coordinator will work with the family to identify their care requirements, including the needs of the child, cultural and religious needs, transport and geographical area.
- Extra information such as advice from specialists (including any medical treatment plans), additional needs of the child and court orders are to be recorded and photocopied for the educator and the Scheme.
- Parents/Carers are advised of the Scheme levy and that educators’ set their own fees and conditions. This is discussed with them during the parent/educator interview.
Parents/Carers are advised of their responsibilities such as: attendance records (signing in and out at actual time of arrival and departure; signing for public holidays and absences), medication forms, transport forms, food and clothing requirements for care, sun safety requirements, and the importance of informing the educator of when care is not required.

- During the enrolment process, the Coordinator advises the parent of the placement process and their right to decline the position offered. Parents/Carers are asked to contact the educator within three business days to accept or decline the offer of a place.

- Parents/Carers are given an Information Booklet outlining what FDC is, Scheme details, Scheme philosophy, a synopsis of some of the Scheme policies and procedures, parents’ responsibilities, grievance and concerns procedures, contact details for Centacare Child Care Services and the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care.

- The Coordinator will, where possible, refer the parents/carers to two educators, enabling the parents/carers to make a choice. The coordinator will try to match the care, considering the educator’s location, skills, values, home, routine, commitments and the other children in care.

- A non-refundable enrolment fee is required to be paid to the Scheme by families at the time of enrolment.

**Placement of Care**

- The educator may decline the care before or after the parents/carers/educator interview.

- Parents/Carers can be referred to other educators, if available, or remain on the waiting list until appropriate care becomes available.

- When care is placed, the Coordinator maintains ongoing evaluation of the care placement, by way of regular contact with the educator, i.e. home visit, play sessions, social outings and phone calls.

- Parents/Carers will be contacted by phone within four weeks of care commencing to gain feedback on the placement of care. Then, on a regular six monthly basis throughout the year.

- In instances where it is deemed that additional support is required in individual care settings, Inclusion Support Subsidies (ISS) may be applied for through the Inclusion Support Agency (ISA). In such cases, applications will be made via the Scheme, in conjunction with the local ISA.

- If there is a need for the child that cannot be met by the Scheme, the Coordinator will discuss the concern with the educator. The coordinator and/or educator will then sensitively raise the concern with the parent and, when applicable, inform them of appropriate agencies that may be able to help.