



Priority of Access

(Family and Children's Services)

POLICY

Purpose

To ensure Council managed and Council subsidised childcare and preschool services are accessible to Yarra residents¹ and maintain compliance with Commonwealth Priority of Access guidelines and State Government Service funding requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Council managed centre-based long day care, family day care, occasional child care, preschool and outside school hours care services;
- Community managed child care, preschool and occasional child care services which are provided in Council owned or leased buildings.

Council Policy

The Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP) 2005-2007 identified frustrations for Yarra residents endeavouring to secure child care places for their children.

A key strategy within the MEYP committed Council to the development and implementation of a Priority of Access Policy for Council sponsored services. This action was also reflected in the Council Plan 2006- 2009.

Priority of Access

It is a funding requirement that Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines be applied to the allocation of places within centre-based long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services.

In accordance with the Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines, places will be allocated utilising the following criteria:

Priority 1 – Resident child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;

Priority 2 – Non resident child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;

Priority 3 – Resident child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act; and

Priority 4 – Non resident child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act.

¹A resident is a person whose primary place of residence is within the boundaries of the municipality of Yarra. Under special circumstances the definition may be extended to include persons current close family links with the municipality

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Having satisfied the requirements of Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines, remaining places will be allocated utilising the following Yarra City Council Priority of Access guidelines:

- Priority 1 - Siblings of children already enrolled in a subsidised Yarra children's service and who reside in Yarra;
- Priority 2 – Non-resident siblings of children already enrolled in subsidised Yarra children's service
- Priority 3 - Other children whose family or carer resides in Yarra;
- Priority 4 – Non-resident children whose family or carer works or studies in Yarra;
- Priority 5 – All other non-resident children allocated in the order of closest residential proximity to the centre.

It should be noted that within all categories priority will be given to the following children:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families;
- children with a disability or in families which include a disabled person;
- children in families on lower incomes;
- children in families with a non-English speaking background;
- children in socially isolated families;
- children of single parents.

As Occasional Child Care and Pre school services are not funded by the Commonwealth Government, they are not subject to compliance with Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines. Priority will be given in accordance with Yarra City Council Priority of Access Guidelines, whilst meeting State Government service funding requirements.

Consultation

This policy reflects the Council and community consultation undertaken in the development of the City of Yarra Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2007. It was considered by the City of Yarra Early Years Reference Group in April 2006.

The draft Priority of Access Policy was endorsed by Council for the purposes of community consultation on April 18 2006. The consultation drew more than 200 responses.

Related documents

City of Yarra Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2007

Yarra City Council Plan 2006 – 2009

Department of Family and Community Services - Priority of Access Guidelines

DHS Kindergarten Funding Guidelines

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