

Title	Priority of Access Policy
Description	The Priority of Access is developed to ensure that there is a clear and transparent process for offers in children's services.
Category	
Type	
Approval authority	Council
Responsible officer	Manager, Family Youth and Children's Services
Approval date	
Review cycle	
Review date	
Document Reference (Trim)	
Human Rights compatibility	This policy has been assessed and is compatible with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights of Responsibilities

1. Purpose

Council manages the central registration of children in kindergarten, outside school hours care, occasional care and childcare that are operated by the City of Yarra or those services who hold an agreement to participate in the Yarra City Council Central Enrolment Scheme.

The Priority of Access Policy is to ensure that there is a fair and equitable process for the management of central registration, and for the allocation of places in Yarra City Council operated children's services and in services that operate in a Yarra City Council Building.

Commonwealth Government recommended guidelines are reflected in the Priority of Access Policy for outside school hours care, occasional care and child care.

Funded Kindergarten places are prioritised in accordance with the State Government funding guidelines that Council must meet. Programs funded through the Commonwealth government

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Council managed centre-based children's services.
- Service operating from a City of Yarra building
- Services whom hold an agreement with the City of Yarra to participate in the Central Registration Scheme

2.1 Childcare, Outside School Hours Care and Occasional Care Priority of Access

Places for Childcare, Outside School Hours Care and Occasional care will be allocated to children on the registration list using in order of the following priorities:

1. A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect including those in receipt of additional childcare benefit.
2. A child in need of priority care due to sudden change of circumstances (e.g. death of an immediate family member, loss of accommodation due to fire/natural disaster)
3. A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of both parents who satisfy, the Child Care Subsidy activity test through work, training, volunteer and/or study.
4. Any other child.

Within each category, priority will be given to:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
- Children with additional needs, defined as children who: require additional assistance in order to fully participate in kindergarten; require a combination of services which are individually planned; have an identified specific disability or developmental delay
- Families that include a person with a disability diagnosis.
- Families that include a person who has a diagnosis of a chronic or serious health issue.
- Children of single parents
- Families on low incomes as defined by the Child Care Subsidy highest subsidy threshold
- Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Children whose family resides in Yarra
- Siblings of children currently enrolled in the same Children's Service.

All education and care programs may require a child classed as Priority 4 to vacate a place or change their chosen days to make room for a child in a higher priority group. They can only do so if the parents are:

- notified when their child first entered care that the service follows this policy
- given at least 14 days' notice of the need for their child to vacate.

2.2 Priority of Access for funded kindergarten places

Placement in a funded year of kindergarten (in a program that is not eligible for Childcare Subsidy) must be allocated in line with the State Government Priority of Access Procedure. Places for kindergarten will be allocated to children on the registration list using in order of the following priorities:

Priority One:

- Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in out of home care
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
- Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- Children with additional needs, defined as children who: require additional assistance in order to fully participate in kindergarten; require a combination of services which are individually planned; have an identified specific disability or developmental delay

Priority Two:

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

- Siblings of children enrolled in the same Yarra Children's Service
- Children whose family resides in Yarra.

2. Related Documents

- Child Care Provider Handbook- Commonwealth Government
- Victorian Department Education and Training Kindergarten funding guidelines.
- Yarra Council 0 to 25 Plan 2018-2022

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