ORIENTATION AND TRANSITION POLICY

Rationale
We aim to ensure that each child and family receives an enrolment and orientation process that meets their needs, allowing the family and child to feel safe and secure in the level of care that we provide. Our orientation procedure aims to assist the child and family to transition to their child being in care, or making the transition to a new room within the service.

Policy Guidelines

Orientation
We believe orientation is an important process where educators are able to get important information about the new child's needs and those of the family. This process helps to make the transition from home to care as smooth as possible with the aim to maintain continuity between home and the service, which helps the child adjust to the new setting.

The Nominated Supervisor will arrange for the new child to attend the service (together with parent/s) to visit and meet the staff, and familiarise with the environment. The initial Orientation session is free of charge, and for the duration of up to 3 hours. The children may participate in the activities if they so desire. A number of young children prefer to just watch, rather than do. Positive interactions at this time (between parents, educators and the child) are important for the children to build positive attitudes to the service environment. Educators are aware that some children respond to new experiences faster than others and will adapt to the situation.

During orientation, the following will take place:

- A tour of our service. During this tour, the conducting educator will give the family information about the service including, but not limited to: the program, meals, incursions, excursions, inclusion, fees, policies, procedures, Sun Smart guidelines, regulations for our state and the licensing and assessment process, signing in and out procedure, the National Quality Framework, room routines, educator qualifications, introduction of educator in the room the child will be starting in and educator and parent communication. Families are also invited to ask any questions they may have.
- Parent/s will also be encouraged to send any special comfort items (teddy etc) to help the child in the initial settling in period. Parents will also be invited to ring and check on their child at any time if there are any concerns.
- Families are given a copy of the Parent Handbook to read and are invited to ask questions.
- Discussions are held between office staff and families regarding availability of days, a start date and tailoring an orientation process to suit the needs of the family and child. If necessary, families are informed of the Priority of Access Policy, and have their position assessed as to how they place within this system. Any matters that are sensitive of nature, such as discussing a child’s medical needs, Court Orders, parenting plans or parenting orders, will be discussed privately with the Nominated Supervisor at this time. We request that parents begin to fill out enrolment forms at that time, and discuss their child with us so we can accommodate their needs in the service from the first day they start with us. Should a child use English as a second language, or speak another language at home, we request that families provide us with some key words in the language the child speaks at this time so that educators can learn the words.
- Families also need to contact the Family Assistance Office (Centrelink) to have their eligibility for Child Care Benefit assessed. If these details are available, we will complete the child’s formal enrolment.
Should a family still need to access this information, we will complete an informal enrolment until these details are finalised.

- Before the child begins their first day with us, the service must have all required documentation for the child. The child will not be accepted into the service without this being completed.

**On the child’s first day:**
- The child and their family are welcomed into their room for the first day.
- The Nominated Supervisor and parents will ensure all details are finalised and complete and sign the Orientation Checklist.
- Educators will also discuss how best to tailor the child’s settling in period – with some parents choosing to gradually build up to a full day so the child is reassured that the parents will return to collect them. Educators will encourage parents to say goodbye when dropping off – and reassured that if the child remains distressed over a period of time, that educators will contact them. Parents are able to stay as long as needed to reassure their child, but sometimes it’s easier for the educator to settle the child if the parents come earlier on collection to spend time with their child – rather than do this at drop off time.
- Parents will be kept informed about how their child is settling in on collection and are welcome to discuss any aspects with the Nominated Supervisor at a convenient time.

**Other information about our service’s enrolment includes:**
- We will try and accommodate families so that children from the same family can attend our service. This will be carried out in line with our obligations under the Priority of Access Policy.
- We encourage all families to consider immunising their children. Please see our Immunisation Policy for further information.

**Transition**
The service aims to arrange for room transitions when a vacancy occurs or at the beginning of the new year. As each room has different challenges and expectations, children will only be transitioned when they are ready in all aspects of their development. The opportunity to transition between groups / rooms at the service is based on many factors other than just age. When the child becomes of the age to attend school, the service will work with the parents and the school to prepare the child for school entry.

**Transition from one room to another**
Change is harder for some children than others, however, by making this transition as smooth as possible for children and families, we are helping build the child’s confidence and success.

In order to minimise any distress that the transfer may cause, we will consider and implement the following:
- Think about the transition ahead of time. New educators will have opportunities to get to know the child, and will share information and insights from the child’s current educators.
- Talk to families about how their child handles change and the strategies they use to help their child cope with change
- Plan to have the child and family visit the new group more than once if possible.
- Talk about change, starting from 2 weeks before the transition.
- Don’t talk about the transition in terms of concern or sorrow.
- Talk about their new teacher/room everyday in general conversation.
- Where possible, transition children with a peer.
- If necessary, start the transition with small periods of time, gradually increasing until the child is comfortable in their new surroundings.

**Transition to school**
When a child first attends school, there is a great change for that child and for their family. We believe that the child’s family are the most important link in this transition.

- The better the transition between home and school, the better the education: that’s the message of recent research.
- The Service will always talk about starting school in a positive manner that will reinforce a healthy attitude toward the transition.
- Information on local schools will be made available to parents.
- An excursion is arranged to visit the local school (Dorset Primary) so as to familiarise the children with the school environment.
- Parents with children who are of eligible age to commence school in the following year will be given a Transition Statement in October/November.
- Information regarding school readiness is issued in the second half of the year.
- Children will be encouraged to bring a snack box to help prepare for school.

**Links**
**National Law & National Regulations 2011**: Regs: 168 (2) (k),
**NQS**: QA6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families & Community (6.1.1, 6.3.2). QA7 - Leadership & Service Management (7.3.2)
**EYLF & VEYLF**: Practice – Continuity of Learning & Transitions

**Sources**
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Framework
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care) Act 2010

**Review**
The policy will be reviewed annually. The review will be conducted by Management, Employees, Families and other Interested Parties.

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<th>Version</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation &amp; Transition Policy v2</td>
<td>Fully revised with lots of changes</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Next review due</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2014</td>
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