



Enrolment & Orientation

This Factsheet provides basic information for OOSH services regarding the requirements for enrolling children into the service and providing an orientation process.

Enrolment and orientation into an OOSH service is an exciting and emotional time for children and families. They may be new to the school, the community and perhaps even the country. They may even be new to the OOSH experience.

Families are all different, but for most, their primary concern is that their child will be safe and happy at the OOSH service. The family will need reassurance and support, as well as information about how OOSH care is different to other types of child care such as Long Day Care and Family Day Care, if they have not attended OOSH before.

The enrolment and orientation procedure provides an opportunity to build the foundations for an ongoing partnership between the family and the service.

INFORMATION SHARING

An important component of information sharing is that staff impress upon families the importance of their contribution to two-way communication, and to ensure that this is evidenced by the existence of family friendly systems for communication exchange.

Providing families with practical, comprehensive information about the service and its operations during enrolment and orientation assists information sharing from the beginning of the family/centre relationship and can help to prevent future misunderstandings or grievances.

ORIENTATION

In some cases it is not always possible to have a drawn out orientation period due to the family's circumstances. However, families should be encouraged to visit the centre with their child prior to enrolment. This visit will provide the opportunity to discuss:

- ★ The child's individual needs (including their likes and dislikes)
- ★ Strategies to help the child settle into the centre
- ★ Any allergies and emergency plans for the child



- ★ The centre's expectations regarding the child's behaviour while at the centre
- ★ The families role and responsibilities in regard to membership of the service
- ★ The routines of the centre
- ★ The necessity for the family to provide the service with important background information on their child/children initially and as an ongoing requirement of enrolment

To ensure that orientation programs are tailored to meet individual family needs, services need to consider that it may be necessary to provide a number of options for new families and children, without compromising the service's current program, children, families or staff. Some suggestions include:

- ★ Holding an orientation breakfast, lunch, morning or afternoon tea at the service for children and families
- ★ Holding an orientation evening to introduce new families and staff
- ★ Holding an orientation BBQ or similar social event which includes new and current families and children, as well as staff

■ ENROLMENT

It is necessary for services to obtain a range of information about children upon enrolment – this information is not only essential to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing while in the service, but it is also related to state or federal legal requirements and is necessary in order for the service to fulfil duty of care obligations and facilitate the administrative requirements of the families' use of the service.

The best way to gather this information is for the service to have a comprehensive enrolment form for parents to complete – please refer to Factsheet # 3b for an example Enrolment Form.

On enrolment, families should be provided with written information detailing how the centre functions, including:

- ★ Philosophy and goals
- ★ Management structure (e.g. parent management committee, P&C sub-committee, etc.)
- ★ Priority of access and waiting list
- ★ Opening and closing times
- ★ Program
- ★ Staff:child ratios
- ★ Child Care Benefit (how to apply)
- ★ Quality Assurance
- ★ Mandatory reporting
- ★ All policies and procedures that relate to families and children

The best way to present this information is in a handbook that families can take away with them. Refer to OOSH Development Factsheet #12 Family Handbooks for guidance on developing a handbook.

Information in languages other than English should be made available to families if possible. If the service is unable to provide this, families can access a translator service by contacting the following related telephone hotlines:

- ★ Child Care Access Hotline - 1800 670 305
- ★ Family Assistance Office – 13 61 50
- ★ Centrelink Multilingual Call – 13 12 02

■ CONFIDENTIALITY

Enrolment forms contain personal details of each family and must be kept locked in a secure place and only made available to authorised management committee/staff members who need them. Families need to be assured that their privacy will not be compromised as a result of providing information on the enrolment form.

■ ESSENTIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM NETWORK:

- ★ *Policies in Practice*
- ★ *Trouble Free Transitions*
- ★ *Under 8s in OOSH*

■ OTHER RELEVANT OOSH DEVELOPMENT FACTSHEETS:

- ★ *Enrolment Forms*
- ★ *Enrolments – Additional Data Sheet*
- ★ *Family Handbooks*

THIS FACTSHEET LINKS TO

QA 3 'PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY LINKS'

QA 4 'PROGRAMMING AND EVALUATION'

QA 6 'HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WELL-BEING'

QA 8 'MANAGING TO SUPPORT QUALITY'



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