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## Mandatory - Quality Area 6

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# Enrolment and Orientation Policy

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## Purpose

This policy outlines:

- the criteria for enrolment at Tecoma Preschool
- the process to be followed when enrolling a child at Tecoma Preschool, and the basis on which places within the programs will be allocated
- procedures for the orientation of new families and children into Tecoma Preschool.
- processes to ensure compliance with legislative and DET funding requirements in relation to the enrolment of children in early childhood education and care services.

## Policy statement

### Values

Tecoma Preschool is committed to:

- equal access for all eligible children
- meeting the needs of the local community
- supporting families to meet the requirements for enrolment through the provision of information
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- ensuring all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

### Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, early childhood teachers, Persons in Day to Day charge, educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled their child at Tecoma Preschool.

## Background and legislation

### Background

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (Regulation 168(2)(k)).

It is intended that all eligible children (refer to *Definitions*) will have access to one year of kindergarten before commencing school. However, a shortage of places in some areas can limit choices for parents/guardians. Where demand is higher than availability, Approved Provider's must adhere to their eligibility and priority of access criteria (refer to *Definitions* and *Attachment 1*) policy in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*), the service's philosophy, values and

beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2012*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Services participating in central enrolment schemes are required to comply with the enrolment procedures of that scheme.

Childcare services providing approved child care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for families childcare package) Act 2017* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

*Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 have legislative responsibilities under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with acceptable immunisation documentation (refer to Definitions).*

### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards, include but are not limited to:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
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- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 177, 183*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Regulations 2015 (Vic)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

## Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

**Acceptable immunisation documentation:** documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* as acceptable evidence that a child is fully vaccinated for their age, or is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind their vaccinations; or has a medical reason not to be vaccinated; or has been assessed as being eligible for a 16 week grace period.

**Approved child care:** Approved child care services are services that have Australian Government approved to receive Child Care Subsidy (refer to *Definitions*) on behalf of eligible parents. Approved child care includes centre based day care, including long day care and occasional care, family day care, outside school hours care and in home care.

**Authorised nominee:** (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

The National Law and National Regulations do not specify a minimum age limit for an authorised nominee. Each service will need to consider a risk assessment on an individual basis to determine if a person under the age of 18 is able to be an authorised nominee and, if so, what constitutes the minimum acceptable age at that service.

**Child Care Subsidy (CCS):** A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible families with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers. Further information can be found at: <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-0>

**Children with additional needs:** Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, cultural or economic circumstances (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

**Deferral:** When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place, or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the April data collection. DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for DET funding in the following year.

**Eligible child:** A child attending an early childhood education and care service as described in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* or a child in a kindergarten program who meets the requirements of both *The Kindergarten Guide* and the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services*.

**Enrolment application fee:** A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in a program at the service.

**Enrolment application form:** A form to apply for a place at the service (see *Attachment 3: Sample Enrolment Application Form*)

**Enrolment form:** A form that collects contact details, and personal and medical information from parents/guardians about their child. The information on this form is placed on the child's enrolment record (see below) and is kept confidential by the service.

**Enrolment record:** The collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (Regulations 160, 161, 162) including the enrolment form; details of any court orders; and immunisation documentation as specified in the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services*. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

**Fee:** A charge for a place within a program at the service.

**Priority of access:** in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate spaces using the criteria outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*), or if in receipt of the CCS, comply with the Commonwealth Government's policy for allocating places.

## Sources and related policies

### Sources

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register:  
[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/australian-childhood-immunisation-register)
- The Family Assistance Law as the basis for Commonwealth child care fee assistance including the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS):  
<https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-legislation>

- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: [www.acecqa.gov.au/](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/)
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: [www.acecqa.gov.au/](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/)
- *The Kindergarten Guide (Department of Education and Training)*: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)
- Department of Health and Human Services, *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service*: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>
- Victorian Department of Health: [www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation)

### Service policies

- *Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

## Procedures

### *The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:*

- determining the criteria for priority of access to programs at Tecoma Preschool, based on funding requirements and the service's philosophy (refer also to Attachment 1 - Eligibility and priority of access criteria)
- considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access, an early childhood program
  - complying with the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy (refer also to Attachment 2 - General enrolment procedures and Attachment 3 - Sample enrolment application form)
  - providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators) for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program
  - providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
  - ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the child's immunisation documentation is assessed as being acceptable
  - assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the *Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit for early childhood education and care services* **prior to enrolment** to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16 week grace period
  - ensuring that only children who have acceptable immunisation documentation have a confirmed place in the program
  - advising parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services (see Attachment 4 - Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation)

- taking reasonable steps to obtain acceptable immunisation documentation from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within the 16 weeks from when the child begins attending (Note: the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).
- ensuring that the enrolment form (refer to *Definitions*) complies with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162 and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service
- ensuring that enrolment records (refer to *Definitions*) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 183)
  - ensuring that the orientation program and plans meet the individual needs of children and families, and comply with the DET funding criteria
  - reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met
  - ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157).

***The Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge and early childhood teachers are responsible for:***

- reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions* and the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- responding to parent/guardian enquiries regarding their child's readiness for the program that they are considering enrolling their child in
- discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the program
- encouraging parents/guardians to:
  - stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period
  - make contact with educators and carers at the service, when required
    - assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child
    - sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service
    - discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required.
    - All educators are responsible for:
      - responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required
      - providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation required for enrolment
      - developing strategies to assist new families to:
        - feel welcomed into the service
        - become familiar with service policies and procedures
        - share information about their family beliefs, values and culture
        - share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs
        - discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning
        - providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members

- complying with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.

*Parents/guardians are responsible for:*

- reading and complying with this *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*
- completing the enrolment application form and the enrolment form prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing acceptable immunisation documentation of their child's immunisation status
- where a child is on an immunisation catch-up schedule, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing acceptable immunisation documentation to the service.
- ensuring that all other required information is provided to the service
- updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur.

*Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures*

## Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

## Attachments

- Attachment 1: Eligibility and priority of access criteria
- Attachment 2: General enrolment procedures
- Attachment 3: Sample Enrolment Application Form - 4 year old program & 3 year old program
- Attachment 4: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation

## Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Tecoma Preschool in July 2015.

**Date of next review**      **March 2021**

## ATTACHMENT 1

### Eligibility and priority of access criteria

#### 1. Eligibility and priority of access criteria for the funded kindergarten program

The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded kindergarten program:

- children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of kindergarten in accordance with *The Kindergarten Guide* available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year, but:
  - deferred
  - withdrew from the service prior to the April data collection
- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten
- children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET (refer to *The Kindergarten Guide*, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/default.aspx>)
- children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs
- three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx).

When demand exceeds availability, the Approved Provider will refer to the service's values, philosophy and *Inclusion and Equity Policy* to determine the priority of access. This will include:

- children who have received funding for a second year of kindergarten
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred or withdrew from the service prior to the April data collection.
- priority of access criteria as outlined in *The Kindergarten Guide* available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)

Other considerations may include date of application, siblings already enrolled at the service, attendance in the three-year-old program and local community zoning.

If participating in a central enrolment scheme, the priority of access for that scheme will be implemented. Childcare services providing approved child care (refer to *Definitions*) must abide by the *Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Rebate) Act 2011* (refer to *Legislation and standards*) and the Commonwealth Government's *Priority for allocating places in child care services* (refer to *Sources*).

#### 2. Eligibility and access criteria for the three-year-old kindergarten program

##### [delete if not application]

Children are eligible for attendance in the three-year-old kindergarten program provided they have turned three prior to commencement.

Children will only be able to attend a second year of three-year-old kindergarten in exceptional circumstances (after consideration by the Approved Provider) or when all eligible children on the waiting list have been offered a place.

The Approved Provider must determine eligibility and access criteria applicable to the service. Considerations may include:

- children recommended by an educator for an additional year in the three-year-old program
- date of application - for example, families can enrol for the program when their child has turned two, or applications for the three-year-old program can open at the start of Term 1 in the year prior to commencement
- siblings attending the service
- places allocated by the service for transient families e.g. RAAF, seasonal workers and tourism workers

### **3. Allocation within groups**

Where the service provides more than one funded kindergarten program or three-year-old program, places within the programs will be allocated to groups by the service in line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria.

Considerations may include:

- Needs of individual children
- Needs of the group
- Parental wishes.

## ATTACHMENT 2

### General enrolment procedures

#### 1. Application for a place

- Enrolment applications will be accepted any time from January 1<sup>st</sup> three years prior to a child's entry into the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten program, or two years prior the child's entry into the 3 Year Old Program. An enrolment application form places the child on an enrolment waiting list and does not immediately secure a position.
- Enrolment application forms are available from the service and the service web site and are provided to the parents/guardians together with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services, obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation and a copy of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*.
- Tecoma Preschool will determine the date(s) by which applications must be received for offer of places in the three-year-old and the funded kindergarten program.
- A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the service.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all children into the program, the enrolment application form should clearly identify any additional or specific needs of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).
- Parents/guardians of children applying for a second year of funded kindergarten Program or currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application form for the following year.
- A copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of address must be submitted with all applications.
- The online completed enrolment application forms will automatically be collated in google docs.
- Access to completed enrolment application data will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.
- Applications will be entered on the waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria.
- Applications received after the below dates set by Tecoma Preschool will be considered if there are available places, and after all other applicants have been offered a place, in line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of Tecoma Preschool.

#### 2. Closing dates for enrolment applications

The closing dates for enrolment applications are, for example:

- 30/6/21 for children to attend the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program in 2022.
- 30/6/21 for children to attend the 3 Year Old Program in 2022.

#### 3. Procedure for a late application for enrolment

Enrolment applications received after the closing date will be considered after all other applicants have been offered a place, in line with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of Tecoma Preschool.

#### 4. Allocation within groups

Where the service provides more than one group within the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program or 3 Year Old Program, places within the programs will be allocated by the service as outlined in the eligibility and priority of access criteria and enrolment process.

## 5. Offer of places

- Tentative places will be offered in writing to applicants in accordance with the eligibility and priority of access criteria of the service making clear that confirmation of places is not final until immunisation documentation has been received, assessed and found acceptable.
- Tecoma Preschool requires parents/guardians who have been offered a tentative place to provide acceptable immunisation documentation for assessment two months prior to the child first attending the service in order that a confirmed place can be offered
- The documentation is assessed as outlined in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* by the person responsible for the enrolment process on behalf of the Approved Provider. The Key Dates work form in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* is used to determine the date at which immunisations must be up to date. The toolkit also provides guidance on assessing immunisation documentation to determine if a child is up to date or qualifies for an exemption. The following documents and resources can be accessed from <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au>:
    - The *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* (search ‘Immunisation enrolment toolkit’)
    - The Key Dates work form (search ‘Key Dates work form’)
    - Hard copies of the immunisation resources ([search ‘immunisation resources order form’](#))
  - The acceptable outcomes of the assessment for offering a confirmed place are:
    - That the next due vaccine for the child on the ACIR Immunisation History Statement or the Immunisation Status certificate is within the acceptable timeframe for an enrolment, or;
    - That the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule if they have fallen behind with their vaccinations, or;
    - That the child has a medical reason not to be vaccinated, or,
    - That the child has been assessed by Tecoma Preschool as being eligible for a 16 week grace period
  - The person responsible for the enrolment process advises the parent/guardian in writing whether a confirmed place is offered and the enrolment can proceed.
  - Parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation cannot be offered a place and are referred to Australian Childhood Immunisation Register or to an immunisation provider (refer to Appendix 4 - Letter for parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation).
  - Offer of places in the three-year-old program/s and the funded kindergarten program will be made at the same time.
  - Applicants who are successful will be notified in writing of a confirmed place.
  - Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a tentative or confirmed place, or intend to withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify the Approved Provider, or the person responsible for managing the enrolment process at the service, in writing as soon as possible.
  - Refund of a deposit may be made in cases where unforeseen circumstances have caused the withdrawal of an enrolment. Refund of a deposit will be given for a child who does not begin the preschool year. With regard to program fees, withdrawal of enrolment during the preschool year is subject to the Fees policy.

- If a child commences partway through the year but before the 30<sup>th</sup> June, then a deposit is payable. If a child commences after 30<sup>th</sup> June, and their place has not been held previously via a holding fee, no deposit is payable.
- An enrolment form and other relevant information will be provided after the place is accepted and the deposit has been paid.

Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any outstanding fees owed to the service by the family is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the service (refer to *Fees Policy*).

## 6. Eligibility and priority of access criteria for the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program

The number of registered positions available at Tecoma Preschool will be influenced from year to year by community need and financial viability of the preschool.

Group numbers may vary from year to year according to these influences. Within the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program, Tecoma Preschool may offer one or two groups with up to 22 places in each, or a rotational system consisting of 5 groups with 7-8 enrolments per group (totalling 36 enrolments).

All positions in the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program at Tecoma Preschool will be offered subject to availability of Department of Education and Training funding.

The following children are eligible for attendance in the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program:

- children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten in accordance with the *Victorian kindergarten guide, part B: section four* (available at [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx) ). Children requiring a second year of 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten will be assessed according to Department of Education and Training guidelines. No child is guaranteed consecutive years of 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten and is only granted under exceptional circumstances.
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year but deferred
- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten
- children turning six years of age at 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of Department of Education and Training (refer to *Victorian kindergarten guide 2015, part A: section 1*, (available at [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx) )
- children who are younger than the eligible age, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of Department of Education and Training, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by Department of Education and Training. If the child attends 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by Department of Education and Training for having recognised developmental needs
- three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earlystart.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earlystart.aspx)

When demand exceeds availability, the following criterion for place allocation will apply:

- Children who are experiencing a disadvantage
- Children who attended the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program at Tecoma Preschool the previous year and have received funding for a second year at preschool, as assessed by the Department of Education and Training. Any such offers are conditional on the availability of government funding for the second year. NB: Tecoma Preschool has 36 four year old places available.
- Children who were offered a place to attend in the previous year, but deferred.
- Children who attended the 3 Year Old Program at Tecoma Preschool.
- Children who have had a sibling attend the preschool in the last four years.
- Date of return of Enrolment Offer

## 7. Enrolment procedure for 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program

- On receipt of an enrolment application form, eligible children will be entered into the enrolment list using the criteria for allocation of places, as listed in this policy.
- In accordance with the enrolment places available for the following year and the priority access criteria, initial placement offers will be sent out by email to those on the enrolment list during Term 3 preceding the relevant preschool year. Offers and cut off dates will be during regular school terms.
- To secure a place, applicants must respond by the cut-off date (usually within 10 business days). If all positions are not filled by the round 1 offer, a round 2 offer will be sent 10 days after the initial cut-off date. This process will continue until all places are filled or the waiting list is cleared.
- Enrolment offers will request families to provide a “Preference 1, 2 & 3” in relation to which rotational group they wish their child to be allocated to. Therefore, assisting the committee if there is a situation where 1<sup>st</sup> preferences cannot be met.
- A request for a deposit of \$100 will be made at the time of the placement offer to confirm acceptance of the position. In the case of multiple birth siblings, one deposit will be required per sibling. At this time applicants will also be asked to supply Health Care card details if applicable.
- Positions will be confirmed upon receipt of the deposit and Immunisation History Document. The deposit will be transferred to the annual Maintenance Levy on commencement.
- Final numbers for the following year should be determined as much as possible by the end of Term 3, to enable the preschool to supply Department of Education and Training with as accurate information as possible at this time so that Department of Education and Training can determine funding for the upcoming year.
- Group lists and information packs for the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program will be available for parents at the Annual General Meeting held in the October preceding the relevant school year.
- Allocation of places within groups is determined jointly by the educators and the enrolment officers, with input from the committee of management if required. Although every endeavour is made to cater to requests, this is not possible in all circumstances. In situations where difficulties arise, the enrolment officers must refer back to Eligibility & Priority of Access Criteria to ensure that allocation of places is done in line with policies and procedures.

The following criterion for group allocation will apply:

- Children who are experiencing a disadvantage
- Children who attended the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program at Tecoma Preschool the previous year and have received funding for a second year at preschool, as assessed by the Department of Education and Training. Any such offers are conditional on the availability of

government funding for the second year. NB: Tecoma Preschool has 36 four year old places available.

- Children who were offered a place to attend in the previous year, but deferred.
  - Children who attended the 3 Year Old Program at Tecoma Preschool.
  - Children who have had a sibling attend the preschool in the last four years.
  - Date of return of Enrolment Offer
- In the circumstance of a child currently attending the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program and there is uncertainty from parents and educators if the child will be ready to attend school the following year, the educators will liaise with enrolment officers to ensure a place is held for this child in the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program up until the end of Term 3. By the end of Term 3, enrolments must be confirmed or the place will be offered to the next eligible child on the waiting list. The number of places to be held in this circumstance will vary from year to year depending on the requirements of individual children and at the discretion of the educators. In this case, late placement offers may be made to families on the waiting list should a place become available.

### **8. Eligibility and priority of access criteria for the 3 Year Old Program**

The number of registered positions available at Tecoma Preschool will be influenced from year to year by community need and financial viability of the preschool.

Group numbers may vary from year to year according to these influences. Within the 3 Year Old Program, Tecoma Preschool may offer up to two groups of three year olds, with 22 positions available per group.

Children are eligible for attendance in the 3 Year Old Program if they turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend 3 Year Old Program. Children must be three years of age to commence in the program independently. In the case that a child is not three years of age at the start of Term 1 then a place can be held until a child turns 3 years of age as long as it is before 30 April. In this case, a deposit of \$100 must be paid and a holding fee of \$5.00 per session is to be paid until the child commences the program. On commencement, fees will be adjusted on a pro rata basis, holding fees will not be refunded and the deposit will be transferred to the annual Maintenance Levy. These children may attend kindergarten 2 weeks prior to their 3rd birthday and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. This will be treated as an Orientation Period before officially beginning 3 year old kinder.

If there are vacancies in the 3 Year Old Program and there are no eligible children on the waiting list, then in some cases, and at the discretion of staff and enrolment offers, a child who turns three years of age after 30 April in their commencement year, may be offered a place in the 3 Year Old Program. However places will not be held by deposit or holding fees for children who are not three prior to 30 April.

Children will only be able to attend a second year of the 3 Year Old Program in exceptional circumstances (after consideration by the Approved Provider) or when all other eligible children on the waiting list have been offered a place.

The Approved Provider must determine eligibility and access criteria applicable to the service. The criterion for place allocation to be used for the three year old program, should there be more applications than places available, is listed below:

- Children who the teacher has recommended an additional year in the 3 Year Old Program.
- Children who were offered a place in the previous year, but who deferred.
- Children who have had a sibling attend the preschool in the last 4 years.
- Date of receipt of application.
- Date of birth will also be considered, for those under 3 at the commencement of the year.

The allocation of one session or two sessions will also be carried out according to the above criterion.

## 9. Enrolment procedure for 3 Year Old Program

- On receipt of an enrolment application form, eligible children will be entered into the enrolment list using the criteria for allocation of places, as listed in this policy.
- In accordance with the enrolment places available for the following year and the priority access criteria, initial placement offers will be sent out by email to those on the enrolment list during Term 3 preceding the relevant preschool year. Offers and cut off dates will be during regular school terms.
- To secure a place, applicants must respond by the cut-off date (usually within 10 business days). If all positions are not filled by the round 1 offer, a round 2 offer will be sent 10 days after the initial cut-off date. This process will continue until all places are filled or the waiting list is cleared.
- A request for a deposit of \$100 will be made at the time of the placement offer to confirm acceptance of the position. In the case of multiple birth siblings, one deposit will be required per sibling.
- Positions will be confirmed upon receipt of the deposit. The deposit will be transferred to the annual Maintenance Levy on commencement.
- Final numbers for the following year should be determined as much as possible by the end of Term 3..
- Group lists and information packs for the 3 Year Old Program will be available for parents at the Annual General Meeting held in the November preceding the relevant school year. Allocation of places within groups is determined jointly by the staff and the enrolment officers, with input from the committee of management if required. Although every endeavour is made to cater to requests, this is not possible in all circumstances.
- In the circumstance of a child currently attending the 3 Year Old Program and there is uncertainty from parents and educators if the child will be ready to attend the 4 Year Old Funded Kindergarten Program the following year, the educators will liaise with enrolment officers to ensure a place is held for this child in the both programs up until the end of Term 3. The number of places to be held in this circumstance will vary from year to year depending on the requirements of individual children and at the discretion of the educators. In this case, late placement offers may be made to families on the waiting list should a place become available in either program.