

Enrolment and orientation of new children and their families in preschool - guidelines

This document should be read with the [Enrolment policy and guidelines](#) documents, including [student enrolment form and supplementary preschool enrolment form](#), and [Early childhood transitioning to school policy](#).

1. Introduction

The [Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act](#) (the Act) and [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) (the Regulations) require preschools to implement an effective enrolment and orientation process suited to the needs of children and their families.

The purpose of this requirement is to deliver a continuity of learning and transition by providing opportunities for children and their families to become familiar with the preschool environment and its educators, clarify responsibilities and share relevant information.

2. Definitions

Orientation may include a series of meetings or events at which:

- introductory information is provided to parents about the service
- introductory information is provided by parents about their child to support their adjustment to new surroundings
- responsibilities and expectations are clarified
- awareness of service policies and procedures is developed.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The principal is responsible for:

- ensuring the preschool is compliant with the regulatory requirements under the Act and Regulations
- implementing procedures for managing the enrolment and orientation of new children and their families in preschool.

The principal is encouraged to actively participate in the development and implementation of the preschool's enrolment and orientation processes.

Preschool teacher and educators are responsible for developing and implementing an enrolment and orientation process suited to the needs of children and their families. This process must include completion of the department's enrolment documentation.

4. Guidelines

Flexibility and sensitivity are key factors for ensuring children and families have a positive enrolment and orientation experience. This process is more than simply gathering factual information about children. It is important that families are provided with genuine opportunities to share information about their child and family that they feel will assist their child's participation in, and orientation to, the preschool.

A process that is responsive to the needs, interests and perspectives of individual children and their families will assist with forging positive and collaborative partnerships with families at the outset and help build the child's success. Change is harder for some children than others however, making this transition as smooth as possible for children and their families will help.

Families should be provided with practical and comprehensive information about the service and its operations, including the services policies and procedures.

Preschools enrolment and orientation processes should incorporate, but are not limited to, the following elements:

- completing the department's enrolment documentation
- sharing relevant information, such as the preschool's fee policy, times and procedures for the delivery and collection of children, contact details for the preschool, what happens when children are sick or absent, how grievances and complaints are handled, routines, programming, policies and procedures
- discussing any additional needs of the child and family, such as allergies, food intolerances, health care plans, cultural or religious requirements, custody orders or other relevant information
- inviting new parents to visit the preschool prior to their child commencing at the service to meet educators and become familiar with the preschool environment
- facilitating, where appropriate, opportunities for parents to settle their child into the service gradually
- communicating individual children's needs with educators, pre-service teachers, volunteers and, where appropriate, other families
- seeking feedback from parents about how their child is adjusting to preschool
- evaluating the preschool's enrolment and orientation process at least annually
- considering other relevant information unique to the preschool.

Preschools with existing processes for enrolment and orientation of new children and their families should review their processes in line with these guidelines to ensure they are effective and comply with the requirements under the Act and Regulations.

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3.1	30 January 2020	Operational Policy Coordination Unit	Minor updates to terminology and NTG template
3.2	22 April 2020	Operational Policy Coordination Unit	Minor review of formatting, readability and accessibility
4	September 2022	Quality Standards and Regulation - Operational Policy	Administrative amendments to align roles and responsibilities to the structural alignment in effect from 1 July 2022, including NTG template and minor formatting

Acronyms	Full form
NTG	Northern Territory Government
TRM	Territory Records Management