***Bexley Jack and Jill Preschool Inc.***

QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

**ENROLMENT POLICY:**

**ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION**

**POLICY:** To allocate positions at the centre in an equitable and reasoned manner and to commence building a positive and ongoing relationship with children and their families.

**BACKGROUND:** Bexley Jack and Jill Preschool is a government funded, community based, non-profit child care centre, open to all members of the community aged between 3 and 5 years. However resources and positions for children are finite. The enrolment process must ensure that positions are allocated in an equitable manner. Enrolment and Orientation procedures are an important aspect of building solid foundations for an ongoing relationship with children and their families. It is an important opportunity for sharing of information between the centre, the child and their family. Good procedures include consistent information around service operation and authorizations promoting compliance and a safe and secure environment for children and families.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION:**

* Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
* Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 177

**LINKS TO NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD:**

* 4.2 Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are respectful and ethical.
* 6.1.1 There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families.
* 7.3.5 Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

**KEY RESOURCES:**

* Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
* Policy adapted from Enrolment and Orientation Sample Policy developed by Community Child Care Co-operative

**GOALS:**

* Children are provided with support and comfort to settle into the service and establish new friendships and relationships.
* A thoughtful process is planned in consultation with families, to orient a child and family to the education and care service.
* Educators are provided with clearly explained enrolment process; time to get to know families before children start; strategies to support families in introducing children to our service, time to develop close professional relationships with families; support from referral agencies; and information about custodial issues.
* Due consideration is given to culture and language in undertaking processes.
* Documentation, including authorisations, are completed during the enrolment and orientation process.

**PRACTICES:**

***Pre-enrolment orientation (Registration)***

Our preschool welcomes visits from prospective families and children. The Nominated Supervisor or Educator may provide the visiting family with a tour of the service environment and information that may include:

* Brochures with information on;
  + Bexley Jack and Jill Preschool
  + Preschools NSW Education for Life - the value of early childhood education
  + Details of all other Community-based preschools in the St George Area
  + Our Additional Needs Program (if applicable)
  + Details of local Playgroups (if applicable)
  + The Role and Value of a Play-based Program (if applicable)
* Discussion and tour of;
  + service philosophy and curriculum;
  + approaches to documentation, curriculum and planning;
  + introduction to educators and staff;
  + the physical environment;
  + administrative matters, cost, and fee payment methods;
  + how to provide feedback.

***Registration***

Following a pre-enrolment orientation a family may wish to place their child’s name on the waiting list. *See Waiting List/Registration Policy.*

***Offers of Enrolment***

Enrolment will be accepted according to the governments “Priority of Access” – See Equity and Priority of Access Policy.

In May / June current families who have children returning in the following year are asked to select their attendance day/s.

Positions are held for families of children where they have not decided whether or not to return to preschool the following year or send their child to primary school. Parents are encouraged to make these decisions by the end of Term 3 if possible.

After consideration of access guidelines and availability of a position by the Nominated Supervisor, the child/ren may be offered a position at the centre.

In July/ August new families are contacted by phone and offered positions for following year.

The family will be asked to accept the offer of the position.

***Enrolment***

The Nominated Supervisor will conduct an enrolment process following the acceptance of an offer. An enrolment package will be given to the family and will include:

* A letter of Offer
* An enrolment form-that includes authorisations;
* A Parent Handbook with information on the preschool, which includes;
  + Current fee structure and payment details;
  + Information on National Quality Framework, National Quality Standards, and the EYLF;
  + ECA Code of Ethics;
  + List of all preschool policies(available for reading in the Foyer)
  + Direction to preschool website (www.bexleyjackandjillpreschool.com) for access to Policies including, but not limited to, those required under Regulation 168;

The information in the enrolment package is retained by the family for future reference.

Prior to conducting the enrolment interview the Nominated Supervisor should consider the language and cultural needs of the family. The preschool has educators who speak Mandarin, Arabic and Spanish and they may assist with translations.

During the enrolment interview a process of orientation will be planned in collaboration with families to provide the best possible start for the child at the service.

Families will provide the following, prior to the agreed start date for the child:

* A completed enrolment form including authorisations;
* An ‘Advance’ payment as outlined in service fee policy;
* Current Immunisation records (Immunisation History Statement);
* Birth Certificate, Passport or other identification;
* Current contact information for parents and emergency contacts;
* Information on children’s additional needs (including medical conditions, health and developmental concerns).

This information will be kept at the service premises in accordance with service policies and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

***Enrolment Form***

The enrolment form must be completed by each enrolling family. At enrolment parents are encouraged to provide any further information about their child that will support continuity of care between home and the service.

The enrolment record will include the following information for each child:

* Full name, date of birth and address of the child.
* Name, address and contact details of each parent of the child; any emergency contacts; any person nominated by the parent to collect the child from the service; any person authorised to consent to medical treatment or to authorise administration of medication to the child; any person authorised to give approval for an educator to take the child out of the service.
* Details of court orders, parenting orders or plans.
* Details of court orders relating to the child’s residence or contact with a parent or other person.
* Gender of the child.
* Language used in the child’s home.
* Cultural background of the child and child’s parents.
* Any special considerations for the child (e.g. cultural, religious or dietary requirements or additional need).
* Authorisations for our service to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service, and transportation of the child by an ambulance service.
* Name, address and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner or medical service.
* Child’s Medicare number (if available).
* Details of any specific healthcare needs of the child including any medical condition.
* Details of any allergies or anaphylaxis diagnosis.
* Any medical management plan, anaphylaxis/asthma/diabetic management or risk minimisation plan.
* Details of dietary restrictions for the child.
* Immunisation status of the child.
* Noted sighting of health record for the child by approved provider or educator/staff.
* A Privacy Statement attached to the enrolment form which details:
  + the name and contact details of the service;
  + the fact that enrolling parents/guardians are able to gain access to their information;
  + why the information is collected;
  + the organisations to which the information may be disclosed;
  + any law that requires the particular information to be collected;
  + the main consequences for not providing the required information.

Enrolment Forms will be updated annually or when a family’s circumstances change, to ensure information is current and correct.

***Custody Arrangements***

* The Education and Care Services National Law requires our service to have details of all custodial and access arrangements.
* Enrolling family members are responsible for informing the Director of custody and access arrangements on enrolment, and must advise the Director immediately of any subsequent alterations to these arrangements.
* All relevant legal documentation is to be shown to the Director and a copy will be maintained in the child’s enrolment record.

***Prior to formally commencing at the service:***

Parents are invited to an **information evening** in September/October where enrolments are finalized. Educators present a Power Point Presentation with information and photos of the program. An opportunity for discussion and questions about the preschool is provided.

Children and families are invited to an **Open Afternoon** in early November. The preschool is closed to regular students for this period. This provides an opportunity for children and families to participate in a variety of preschool experiences and engage with educators and peers. Educators will also be available to the family to answer any questions they may have.

Families who are unable to attend or who require further orientation visits are encouraged to make arrangements for visits at mutually convenient times over the following few weeks.

A family member will remain in the premises during these orientation visits. The family must sign the visitors book/register or arrival and when they leave. The child cannot be left at the service until they have formally commenced at the service and are therefore not included in the ratios.

A Ready for Preschool Pack is sent to the children shortly before they begin preschool. This includes;

* A book about the preschool with photos and social story of preschool events
* A children’s songbook
* Information for parents on the value of play and suitable food for children attending preschool.
* A request to the family to send in a family photo and further information about the child’s interests, strengths, needs etc. that will be displayed for the child on their first day

Prior to the child’s first day educators and staff will familiarise themselves with information about the child from the enrolment information provided. They will ensure they are aware of any medical conditions and how to manage them if required.

***Upon commencement***

On the child’s first day of attendance educators and staff will welcome the family and the child, ensuring that there is a space ready for the child’s belongings. Educators will reassure the family and assist with separation if required. Families are encouraged to contact the preschool to enquire about how their child is settling in.

The Nominated Supervisor will undertake a final check of enrolment details, authorisations and information updates prior to the family departing the service.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Approved Provider:**

* Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.
* Providing opportunities (in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and staff) 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.
* Ensuring that enrolment forms (refer to Definitions) comply with the requirements of Regulations 160, 161, 162.
* 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 parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that 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 staff under the Law (Regulation 157).

**The Nominated Supervisor:**

* Providing enrolment application forms.
* Maintaining a waiting list.
* Collecting, receipting and banking enrolment fees.
* Offering places in line with this policy and criteria for priority access, and providing relevant paperwork to families in accordance with this policy.
* Providing a report at each Management Committee meeting regarding the status of enrolments.
* Storing completed enrolment application forms in a lockable file (refer to privacy and confidentiality policy) as soon as is practicable.

**The Early Childhood Educators/ Certified Supervisors:**

* Acting in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
* Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process, as required.
* Ensuring that enrolment forms are completed prior to the child’s commencement at the service.
* Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that 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 staff under the Law (Regulation 157).
* Developing strategies to assist new families to:
  + feel welcomed into the service;
  + become familiar with service policies and procedures;
  + to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child.
* Providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members.
* Sharing information with parents/guardians regarding their child’s progress with regard to settling into the service.

**The Families:**

* Reading and complying with this policy.

**EVALUATION**

Successful orientation and enrolment procedures promote smooth transitions between home and service. Information sharing and the signing of authorisations ensure a safe and secure environment for the child.

**RELATED POLICIES**

* Equity and priority of access
* Waiting List/Registration
* Termination of enrolment
* Acceptance and refusal of authorisations

**Policy reviewed October 2015**