



Orientation Procedure

Policy

In order to allocate places to families with the greatest need for child care support, Hawthorn Early Years will follow Priority of Access guidelines in determining enrolments at the Service. Enrolment and orientation procedures aim to ensure that children and families transition positively and informatively into the Service and that legislative requirements are adhered to. Management and employees are committed to developing a respectful two-way partnership between the family and Service. However, management recognises that there may be some circumstances where the appropriate course of action is the cancellation of a child's enrolment.

Application of Procedure

This procedure applies to all employees, students, volunteers, families, children and others attending the programs and activities of Hawthorn Early Years.

Hawthorn Early Years is committed to:

Providing a comprehensive orientation program for families and children to assist with the transition into the Service.

Hawthorn Early Years will:

Ensure that the orientation program meets the individual needs of children and families, and complies with all funding criteria.

Review the orientation processes for new and existing families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy and procedure are met.

Ensure 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 employees.

Provide an overview of the orientation procedure within the parent handbook and during the enrolment process.

Notify families of dates for orientation programs and encourage participation by all families.

Support home visits for children who may need additional assistance with settling into the Service.



Orientation Program (Existing Children)

Facilitate an orientation program that runs for one week in the month of December each year. Each day existing children will move to their designated classroom for the following year at designated times (usually each morning between 10 and 11am). Once children have transitioned with their current teaching team, these movements will be supported by the following years teaching team, in order to establish relationships.

Continue to support children who are not returning to HEY the following year and who will stay in their current classroom. Children in the four year old kindergarten classrooms who are not returning to HEY the following year, which will be the majority of children will move to an outdoor area or alternate space during the orientation times.

During this orientation time children will be provided with the opportunity to explore their new classroom and get to know the teaching team and other children.

Ensure orientation programs run smoothly by;

- Scheduling children's meal times and educators breaks outside of the orientation program times.
- Transitioning older classrooms first in a systematic manner to avoid overcrowding in rooms or prolonged waiting.
- Providing classroom list for the following year so that teaching teams can take children to their designated classroom.
- Ensuring adequate staffing ratios are maintained throughout the orientation program.

Extend on this orientation program by encouraging small groups of children to participate in additional orientation visits during the month of December. This is particularly relevant for children moving from the junior's to the senior's as this transition can sometimes be difficult. Prior to these additional visits taking place the relevant Team Leaders will discuss appropriate times (usually when the indoor/outdoor program is in operation).

Orientation Program (New Children)

Host a New Families information Evening in November of each year for all new families who are attending HEY the following year.

Ensure families understand the importance of attending the information evening in order to:

- Become familiar with the HEY environment and members of the teaching teams.
- Clarify routines, rituals and the individual needs of children – this ensures as much continuity between the home and the service as possible.
- Discuss the ongoing orientation program, which will be tailored to meet the child's needs. This may include a home visit, especially for younger children.



In November of each year the educational leaders will contact all families who have a new child starting in January to explain the orientation process and schedule in times for attending orientation sessions in December. New children will be encouraged to attend two days of the above orientation sessions held in December for Orientation Week. To avoid overcrowding in the classrooms we request that only one parent/guardian attend with the child.

Organise for a member of the child's teaching team to meet individually with the parent/guardian and child to complete and discuss the following forms:

- Information About Your Child
- Food Allergy/Intolerance/Preference Questionnaire (where relevant)
- Family Orientation Checklist

Note: These meetings will take approximately one hour and must be completed prior to the child being left so that we have a clear understanding of the child's individual needs.

Encourage parents to begin leaving the child for short periods which increase in lengths of time until the Team Leader feels the child is settled enough to progress to half, then full day sessions. It is critical during this time that children are able to bond with at least one educator who is readily available to them as per the Pikler/RIE approach. In our youngest classrooms children will also be assigned a key teacher.

Mid-Year Orientation Program

Children who enrol in our programs mid-year or change classrooms mid-year will need to take part in an orientation program in the week prior to the start date. The front office co-ordinator will schedule a meeting with the team leader/kindergarten teacher prior to the child starting in the classroom to begin the orientation process. Where these occur prior to the start date there will be no charge for attending these sessions however a parent/guardian must remain with the child throughout these sessions.

Administration Officer – Enrolment Lead will:

- Ensure the classroom is aware of the orientation and basic child and family information
- Prepare enrolment pack for the new family
- Organise an Xplor pin for the family to be able to sign in and out their child
- Sign up the family to Educa
- Finalise CCS enrolment
- If relevant gather medical condition documentation



All employees, volunteers and students will:

Information and communication

- Be familiar with the orientation program/schedule relevant to their children and guide families through the process demonstrating care and understanding at all times.
- Ensure 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.
- Greet children and families upon arrival and provide comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating from family members.
- Share information with parents regarding their child's progress and phone families if their child remains distressed following the parent leaving.
- Suggest a home visit for children who may need additional support during the orientation program to assist in building a trusting relationship with the child and parents.
- Discuss support services available for children with parents/guardians, where required.
- Comply with the service's Privacy Procedure in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information.
- Support the internal orientation process by discussing the individual learning needs of children with their new teaching team prior to the child transitioning.
- Ensure correct ratios and adequate supervision strategies are maintained during orientation sessions and discuss expectations with children where relevant prior to these occurring.
- Be prepared to move with children into new classrooms at the beginning of each year to provide consistency for children and families.

Supporting parents and children

Educators will encourage parents/guardians to:

- Stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period.
- Make contact with educators at the Service, when required.
- Develop and maintain a ritual routine for saying goodbye to their child.
- Feel welcomed into the Service.
- Become familiar with service policies and procedures including signing in and out and provision of appropriate clothing and shoes.
- 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.

Parents/guardians will:

Read and comply with the Enrolment and Orientation Policy and the Orientation Procedure.

Ensure that all requested information is provided to the Service prior to or during the orientation program to ensure we have a comprehensive understanding of the child's individual needs.

Participate in an orientation program with the child prior to leaving the child at the Service.

Remain in close contact with educators during the orientation program and be prepared to return to the Service if the child becomes overly distressed.

Work in partnership with educators to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for children.

See also:

1. Enrolment and Orientation Policy
2. Enrolment Procedure