

ARIAH PARK PRESCHOOL

Orientation to Preschool & Orientation to School policy

Aims

The **Ariah Park Preschool** acknowledges the importance of providing families and children with the guidance and support they need so as to make the transition firstly to preschool, and then to school, a positive experience. To that end the centre will:

1. Ensure all children and parents are supported in making a successful transition to the centre. This process will be flexible and therefore orientated to individual child/family needs as much as practicable
2. Provide, in the latter part of the year, family based 'orientation to primary school' strategies to support both children and parents regarding children's transition to formal schooling

Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services Australian National Regulations 2011

Who is affected by this policy?

Children
Families
Staff
Community
Visitors
Management

Relevant Early childhood professional standards

Early Childhood Code of Ethics:	I-1, I-2, I-5 to I.8, I-10, II-1 to II-10, IV-6
Early Years Learning Framework:	All EYLF Outcomes are relevant to children's orientation to preschool
Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations:	88, 157, 177, 168(2,k)
National Quality Framework:	All NQF Quality Areas are relevant to children's orientation to preschool, 6.3 6.4 (re transition to primary school)

Sources/References

Education and Care Services Australian National Regulations 2011

Early Childhood Australia: School Readiness & Related Links:

http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org/au/learning_about_children_3+9_years/preschoolers_school_readiness.html (Retrieved January 2012)

Melhuish, E. (2001). Preschool Matters. *Science*, 333. p299-300.

NSW Dept Education & Training: Welcome to Preschool: A Family Guide

<http://www.schoolsnsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/gotoschool/yr2010/familyguide.pdf>

(Retrieved January 2012)

Walker, K. (n.d.) Effective transition between preschool and school. Kidsafe Australia:

<http://www.kidsafe.com.au/Page.aspx?ID=1195> (Retrieved January 2012)

Procedures re:	1. Orientation to preschool	(p2)
	2. Orientation to primary school	(p3)

1. Orientation to preschool procedures

Once a child has been notified of acceptance at the Aria Park Preschool, the Director will ensure that:

1.1 A visit to the centre will be organized for the child and parent/s. If the centre does not have a group in attendance, it will nonetheless be set up so as to be appealing and inviting to the child visiting. Visiting families will be encouraged to ask questions and the Director will also relay some basic information about the centre. Parents will not however need to be overloaded with information during this visit, as the Director will provide a more specific information exchange at the initial interview. As well as this visit, the Director may or may not have an information session for all parents, i.e. a group session

1.2 All parents will attend a one to one initial interview with the Director. The Director will use this interview to inform the parent/s of how the centre functions, the session times their child will be attending, the nature of the educational program plus all other aspects of centre life that will affect themselves and their child, e.g. lunch and snack foods, rest/sleep components in an all day program, OH&S issues such as sun safety, medical/health matters including the administering of medication, immunisation, the need for children to be casually dressed for active play, etc. for more details see the centre's 'Initial Enrolment Interview Checklist'

1.3 The parent/s or guardian/s will be encouraged to use this interview as an opportunity to discuss any differing or special needs their child may have with the Director, and will be asked by the Director for any information on this matter. It is at this meeting that the Director and parent/s will agree to a medical emergency plan should the child concerned be at risk of anaphylaxis reactions, asthma attacks etc. As soon after this interview as is practicable the Director will have this emergency plan drawn up for signing and dating by both parties. The medication permission form will also be signed by the parents

1.4 In cases where parents are separated but still share custody of their child, the Director will inform them of the centre's procedures regarding shared access in relation to the dropping off and collecting of children at the end of each session (see 'Arrival & Departure Policy'). Any other matters that are sensitive in nature, such as the child's medical needs or Court Orders, will also be discussed privately with the Director at this time

1.5 All the required family and child documentation must be completed, signed if necessary and held by the Director before a new child can commence at this preschool. This ensures that information pertaining to the best possible conditions for the health and safety of each child (including any special needs) is in place before the child commences

1.6 The Director's 'transition to preschool' program may well vary from year to year depending on the profile of the families and children commencing at the centre. Hence it is not considered appropriate that this policy dictate specific practices. The transition to preschool program will however be flexible enough to acknowledge the individual needs of children, involve their parents, involve the child visiting the preschool before he/she commences and if necessary, occur over time so as to ease each child's transition

2. Orientation to school procedures

In the latter part of the year, the Director will use both formal and informal means to provide parents with (1) information in relation to the local primary schools, (2) various kinds of support and information for parents and children in relation to school transition, and (3) confidential support for parents in relation to the likely needs of their own child as they initially adapt to formal schooling. As with Procedure 1 above 'Orientation to Preschool', the ways in which this will occur are expected to vary from year to year, depending on the particular needs of families. Therefore the centre's transition to school strategies could include all or several of the following:

2.1 An initial visit/s to a local school

2.2 Invitations to local kindergarten teachers, principal, assistant principals and counsellors to visit the preschool and meet their prospective students on the child's 'home ground'

2.3 The holding of an information session for preschool parents which may/may not include kindergarten teachers from the local school/s

2.4 The educational program will be used to orientate children to the school setting e.g. props in the dramatic play area, books and songs that are school themed, pre-writing skills will be actively fostered etc

2.5 Routine times at the centre will be used to foster greater physical independence and some routines may become more 'school-like' e.g. the use of lunch boxes and drinks will be more etc

The Director will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.

Review

The rationale and procedures for reviewing this policy are twofold. They are as follows:

(1) This policy will be formally reviewed after three years. All formal reviews will be conducted by the Committee of Management, the Director, parents, and interested community members if the Director feels it is necessary. For example the Director might decide that a health and hygiene policy should be considered by a local doctor or nurse as part of the formal review process. All formal reviews will be recorded as per the 'Centre Review Sheet – Formal Three Yearly Review Form' attached to each policy. Given the large number of policies that early childhood centres are now required to develop, it is considered that a formal review does not need to be taken more frequently because (1) each policy needs time for staff to adapt to and time to run so as to enable a well informed evaluation/review during the third year and (2) the formal, three year review process will be a demanding one for the preschool Committee of Management which is composed of voluntary members. Therefore it is considered that a formal review should occur regularly but not excessively so.

(2) Within this three year period however the policy will still be monitored, evaluated and minor adjustments can be made in line with daily occurrences or needs at the centre. This will occur as part of a process of review undertaken by the centre Director and staff during each calendar year. These reviews will be recorded and dated as per the 'Director's Annual Review Form' and these will also be attached to each policy, along with the formal, three yearly reviews.

The Director's annual review will occur on an ongoing basis and will thus ensure this policy is continually updated. For example if updates are received from a government department that warrant immediate change of some policy procedures, or if implementing a policy has resulted in agreement by staff that minor modifications are necessary before the policy is enacted upon again, these improvements can be made immediately through the Director's annual review process and then be presented to the Committee of Management for ratification at the next formal, three yearly review.

Reviewed 21st March 2014.

Next Review 21st March 2017.