

WODEN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE

SETTLING IN POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT: *The Centre aims to be a place where all children want to come and where parents can leave them knowing their children will have a positive experience. Staff are aware of the importance of settling in not only children but their families as well. Staff invest considerable time into children during the settling in period, as we believe a good start is the building block to a positive child care experience.*

This policy supports inclusive practices at Woden Early Childhood Centre. Please refer to the Inclusion Policy.

RATIONALE: The orientation and settling process can be an important basis for establishing the effective partnerships between families and child care professionals that are vital in promoting positive outcomes for children. Continuous, honest open, two way communication during orientation is essential. (Barnes 2008)

SCOPE: This policy applies to all families with children attending the Centre and all Staff including students and volunteers.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION: *Act Centre Based Children's Services Conditions August 2000 1.17, 1.18*

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM: *Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Quality Practices Guide 2005 2.3, 7.1*

LOCATION OF INFORMATION: This information is made available to all families and staff during the orientation process. It is included in the CD Policy given to each family and staff member on orientation as well as being mentioned in the family handbook and staff handbook. Printed copies can be made available on request for those families without computer access.

Key Resources:

Child Care information Service, Settling your children into Child Care your questions answered, retrieved from www.families.qld.gov.au on December 8 2008

Heather Barnes **Communication with new families putting children first**, the magazine of the national childcare accreditation Council (NCAC) Issue 28 December 2008 (pages 14 – 17)

LINKING POLICIES

Inclusion Policy

Enrollment

Priority of Accessible
Policy development and Review Policy

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is reviewed on a biannual basis both by the centres staff and then by families. Once the Policy has been reviewed and changes are made it goes to the management committee for ratification. Please refer to the Policy development and review policy

Date endorsed by Committee: 24.3.09

Date to be reviewed: 24.3.10

Children starting at the centre

Parents can assist by presenting the Centre to their children not as a place to be minded while parents are busy, but as somewhere where the children can be with their friends and with adults who care about them. While parents work or study, children can do their own job of learning and exploring in a stimulating and secure environment.

Parents and families will be introduced to child care staff in their child's room who will discuss with them their child's individual needs and how to help the child make a smooth transition into the Centre. Staff in other rooms will introduce themselves to new parents and children.

The Centre encourages parents who have been offered a place to bring their child along for visits at anytime. Fees are not charged for children who have not yet taken up a place, but parents must remain on the premises due to licensing requirements. Children may feel more comfortable visiting the Centre at quieter times of day such as mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Please check with the staff in the particular room for the best time to visit.

When a child takes up a place at the Centre, we are happy for parents or other family members to stay with the child at the Centre until the child feels comfortable. Some families are able to start the child at the Centre gradually, so that the child starts with a short visit and stays for longer times each day, however each child is individual and their needs will be considered during the transition from home to Centre.

Different children will respond in different ways to starting at the Centre. Our staff are trained and experienced in child development and understand that most children feel some anxiety about being in a new environment and with new people. They are trained to help children overcome this anxiety and to help them settle in. They are aware that while some children settle in easily, others may take some time to feel comfortable about their new environment.

It is normal for young children to experience "separation anxiety" and these children may need extra help settling until they become used to the child care routines and environment. Parents are encouraged to make contact with staff regarding their children as often as they need to in these early days.

Sometimes a child becomes unsettled due to a disruption in routine, an illness or change at home. We ask parents to inform staff of events which may unsettle their child. It is vital that this information is passed to staff to ensure child's needs are fully met.

Our Centre is run by a parent/staff management committee, who understand that sometimes it is difficult for parents to leave their children. Parents are welcome to discuss with staff the best way to ease the transition to child care, and are encouraged to trust their judgment about their readiness to leave their child in the Centre's care. They are welcome to visit at any time, to bring family members to visit and to participate in Centre activities such as excursions. Mothers who wish to continue breastfeeding whilst their child is attending the centre are always welcome.

When children are reluctant for a parent to leave

If a child seems reluctant for a parent to leave, staff are happy to discuss with the parent the best way of handling the situation. We recognise the value of parents' judgment about their children's feelings and needs.

Parents are sometimes able to arrange to stay for a while at the beginning of the session to allow their child to become absorbed in play. When a parent needs to leave, staff are available to stay with the child when the parent says goodbye. We do not encourage parents to leave without saying goodbye.

Most parents find that, once they have said good-bye, it is best to leave quickly and firmly. It can be reassuring to stand outside the door or watch through the window to see the child settle down; please ensure your child can not see you, as it can add to their distress.

Parents are welcome to ring during the day. Staff will always ring parents if a child is distressed and not coping.

Children moving to a new room

Younger children are given the opportunity to visit prior to changing rooms to become familiar with its routines and child care staff in the room. Children from different rooms will also be together in the playground and in the early mornings and evenings when numbers are low. This helps the children to feel comfortable with staff and children in the other rooms and smoothes the transition between rooms, it also gives siblings an opportunity to be together.

Where possible, children will be moved up together in groups of two or so, so that they can share the experience with their friends.