

### Priority of Access: Childcare

#### 1. Purpose

The Priority of Access Policy is designed to ensure fair and equitable allocation of childcare places in accordance with the Priority of Access Guidelines set out in the Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000. This policy aims to manage demand effectively by prioritising access for children most in need, ensuring compliance with Family Assistance Law, and maintaining service approval. [Priority of Access Guidelines for Child Care Services](#) issued by the Commonwealth Government.

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all approved childcare services under ECMS management, including Long Day Care, and Outside School Hours Care services. It is a condition of approval for Child Care Benefit (CCB) purposes that services comply with these guidelines.

#### 3. Policy Statement

Childcare services must adhere to the Priority of Access Guidelines to allocate available places fairly when more families require care than places available. The policy ensures that children who are most in need receive priority access, and services operate in accordance with Family Assistance Law.

#### 4. Priority Criteria

##### **4.1. Priority 1:**

- **Children at Risk:** Children identified as being at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

##### **4.2. Priority 2:**

- **Children of Working or Studying Parents:** Children of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the work, training, or study test.

##### **4.3. Priority 3:**

- **Any Other Child:** All other children.

##### **4.4. Within Priority Categories:**

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families:** Priority should be given to children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- **Families with a Disabled Person:** Children from families that include a disabled person.
- **Low Income Families:** Children from families with an adjusted taxable income not exceeding the lower income threshold of \$43,727 (for 2015-2016) or whose partner is on income support.
- **Non-English Speaking Background:** Children from families who speak a language other than English.
- **Socially Isolated Families:** Children from socially isolated families.
- **Single Parent Families:** Children from single-parent families.

#### **4.5. Employer-Sponsored Places:**

- Services funded by an employer to provide childcare primarily for the children of the employer's employees may give priority to those children.

### **5. Procedure for Filling Vacant Places**

#### **5.1. Application and Assessment:**

- Families must complete an application form detailing their circumstances. The application will be assessed according to the priority criteria outlined above.

#### **5.2. Allocation of Places:**

- Available places will be allocated based on the priority categories. When a place becomes available, it will be filled following the priority criteria to ensure that children in higher priority categories receive access first.

### **6. Requiring a Child to Vacate a Place**

#### **6.1. Notification:**

- A child in Priority 3 may be required to vacate their place to accommodate a higher-priority child only if:
  - The person liable for the payment of childcare fees was informed at the time of the child's initial enrolment that the service follows this policy.
  - The service provides at least 14 days' notice to the person responsible for the fees before the child is required to vacate the place.

#### **6.2. Outside School Hours Care:**

- If an Outside School Hours Care service is caring for a child who has not yet started school and has no vacant places, the service may require that child to leave to provide a place for a school-aged child.

#### **6.3. Employer-Sponsored Places:**

- Services with employer-sponsored places may require those places to be vacated for the employer's children if necessary.

This Priority of Access Policy ensures a transparent and equitable approach to managing childcare enrolments, prioritising access for children most in need and maintaining compliance with relevant legislation.