

▲ PRIORITY OF ACCESS POLICY

Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre: FROEBEL Parkville

▲ PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to detail the Priority of Access Guidelines as recommended by the Australian Government and agreed between the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (Institute) and FROEBEL.

FROEBEL acknowledges that it is the Institute's strategic priority to provide their *Eligible Institute Employees under Priority 2A* with access to an Early Education and Care Service, with the purpose of attracting and retaining exceptional people. Key benefits for the Institute and its families include:

- increased and earlier return to work post maternity leave
- reduced turnover and improved employee morale
- reduced absenteeism
- enhanced reputation and access to a broader talent pool.

The Institute has also committed to providing *Eligible Melbourne Health Employees under Priority 2B* with priority of access to any excess capacity in recognition of Melbourne Health's contribution to the Early Education and Care Service project through the provision of airspace above the existing Melbourne Health carpark that abuts the Institute's forecourt. FROEBEL recognises that commitment.

▲ POLICY

It is the policy of the service to consider the Australian Government's intention to help families who are most in need and support the safety and wellbeing of children at risk in accordance with the Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020.

Definitions

Eligible Institute Employee under Priority 2A is a parent (or guardian) who, at the time of enrolment,

- is a paid employee of the Institute or FROEBEL Australia Limited (Parkville); or
- is a student at the Institute; or
- is a visiting overseas scientist at the Institute who is a postdoc on their own fellowship and not employed elsewhere; or
- is an affiliate, with a significant collaborative relationship with the Institute (where a significant research collaborative relationship is defined as a collaboration that is planned to last at least 12 months and for an average of 2.5 days per week) and where the collaboration takes place on Institute premises;

and

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- produces a respective current written employer confirmation issued by the Institute's People & Culture department.
- The person can be in the Institute's full-time or part-time permanent employment. Casual staff of the Institute are not eligible.

Exceptions for Institute staff who do not meet the above criteria may be requested through the Institute's People & Culture department.

Eligible Melbourne Health Employee under Priority 2B is a parent (or guardian) who, at the time of enrolment,

- is a paid employee of Melbourne Health; and
- produces a respective current written employer confirmation issued by Melbourne Health's People & Culture department.

The person can be in Melbourne Health's full-time or part-time permanent employment. Casual staff of Melbourne Health are not eligible.

PROCEDURES

If demand for enrolments exceed the number of available, approved places at the education and care service, a parent/guardian can apply for their child to be registered on the service's waiting list; the following **Priority of Access Guidelines** will apply when allocating placements.

Priorities:

- **Priority 1:** a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- **Priority 2:** any other child.

Within **Priority 2**, priority is given to

- a child of an *Eligible Institute Employee under Priority 2A*,
- a child of an *Eligible Melbourne Health Employee under Priority 2B*,
- any other child (**Priority 2C**).

Within Priority 2C, priority will be considered

- for children of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment,
- for sibling children of Priority 2C families who are already enrolled at the service.

Under the Priority of Access Guidelines, the service may require a Priority 2, 2A, 2B and 2C child to vacate a place to make room for a higher priority child. The service can only do so if:

- the person liable for the payment of the child care fees was notified when the child first entered care that the service follows this policy, and
- the service gives the person at least 14 days' notice of the requirement for the child to vacate the place.

Waiting List

To apply for their child to be registered on the service's waiting list, a parent/guardian will submit their expression of interest through the service's online waiting list platform, indicating their priority status (if applicable) as prompted. The priority status and time stamp on their submission will determine the child's ranking on the waiting list.

Acceptance of Enrolment Offer

Families who are offered enrolment under this policy are encouraged to accept or reject the enrolment offer without delay and no later than 72 hours from when the offer was made. FROEBEL is entitled to make an offer to the next family on the waiting list if the enrolment offer has not been accepted within that timeframe.

Cessation of Eligibility

Families who have been offered placement at the service as an Eligible Employee of either the Institute or Melbourne Health must notify FROEBEL of any change of circumstances regarding their eligibility without delay.

If an Eligible Employee's employment with the Institute, Melbourne Health or FROEBEL ceases after 1 January of the calendar year, the family's enrolment can continue until the end of that calendar year (or for a minimum of 3 months where employment ceases after 30 September).

The enrolment can be ongoing beyond that period, unless the child's place is required for another child with priority under this policy. If the place is required for a priority placement, the enrolment shall be terminated at the end of the year (or after 3 months in the case of employment ceasing after 30 September) with 4 (four) weeks' notice.

Termination of Priority 2C Enrolment

If a place is required for a child of an Eligible Employee, a family who was offered placement at the service under Priority 2C may have to vacate their place if the family was notified of this policy on enrolment of their child.

If the place is required after 1 January of the calendar year, the Priority 2C family's enrolment can continue until the end of that calendar year (or for a minimum of 3 months where the place is required after 30 September). FROEBEL must give the Priority 2C family a minimum of 3 months written notice.

▲ SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- Child Care Service Handbook 2017-18:
<https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/childcareservicehandbook>

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[201718 0.pdf](#)

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/child_protection_framework.pdf

▲ **ASSOCIATED POLICIES**

- Enrolment and Orientation

▲ **POLICY REVIEW**

- The Service (together with educators) will review this policy every 12 months.
- The Approved Provider and Centre Director will ensure that this policy and its procedures are maintained and implemented at all times.
- Families are encouraged to collaborate with the Service to review the policy and procedures.

- **Last review:** 30/07/2018
- **Next review:** 30/07/2019