

Policy Document

Service Access

Applicable Legislation and Standards

Human Services Quality Standards - Queensland Department of Communities Child Safety and Disability Services
Education and Care Services Act and Regulations 2013 - Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment
Education and Care Services Act and Regulations 2011 – Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority
National Quality Standard - Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 – www.legislation.qld.gov.au
Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 – www.legislation.sa.gov.au
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwth) - www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

POL1.1	Management	POL1.2	Financial Management
PRO2.01	AEIOU Alumni	F2.02C	Parent Handbook
F2.03A	Interest in Enrolment Application Form	F2.03AF	Lynn Wright Memorial Fund Application for Financial Assistance
F2.03S	Enrolment Application Form - Queensland	F2.0B F2.0B (NDIS)	Client Consent to Share Information Client Consent to Share Information (NDIS)
F2.04G	Enrolment Application Form - Adelaide	F2.03F	Change of Enrolment Details Form
F2.0A	Exit Summary	F2.0D	Initial Meeting Notes
F2.03G	Change of Enrolment Details Form Sippy Downs	F3.01A	Individual Plan
F2.03AK	Placement Prioritisation Scale	F2.04M	Adelaide Only - Sample Full-time recommendation prior to enrolment update
F2.04L	Adelaide Only - Full-time recommendation prior to enrolment update	PRO2.03	Enrolment Processing
PRO2.02	Guide, Hearing & Assistance Dogs	PRO2.05	Allocation of HCWA for therapy tools
PRO2.04	Enrolment Processing (NDIS)	F4.06A	Community Experience Consent Form
F1.16A	Permission to photograph your child. Permission to display photographs		

Other Related Documents

Privacy Act 1988	Disability Services Act 2006
Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011	Associations Incorporation Act 2009

Key Stakeholders

Review Group	Centre Managers	19-Aug-2014
Approval Group	Executive Management Team	04-Sep-2014

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Revision History

Issue #	Revision detail	Date of issue
1	Re-release of policies in new format incorporating old policy POL2.5	29-Apr-2014
2	Addition of section 'Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs'; addition of use of Change of Enrolment Details forms under heading 'Exit'; Addition of text relating to documents in plain English and translation added to 'Policy'	06-Jun-2014
3	Key Stakeholders section added; Section 'Access to Services' 5 th dot point amended; 'Intake Interview' amended and was titled 'Interview'; dot point added to 'Fee Responsibility and Process for Payment and Fee Recovery'; Section 'Orientation' detail replaced; Section 'Prior to Commencement at the Centre' first paragraph removed; Section 'Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs' – "any other" was "the secured"; Section 'The Transition Process for Children with Autism' details of transition period and related billing updated; Section 'Waiting List' – added Placement Prioritisation Scale.	04-Sep-2014
4	Guide, Hearing & Assistance dogs amended to include reference to South Australian legislation	01-Sept-2015
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of different requirements for South Australia Addition of Form 2.04L Adelaide Only – Full-time Recommendation prior to enrolment update Addition of Form 2.04M Adelaide Only – Sample Full-time Recommendation prior to enrolment update 	13-Oct-2015
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of immunisation requirements for 2016 Inclusion of reference to PRO2.05 Allocation of HCWA for therapy tools 	12-Nov-2015
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of waitlist fee Hyperlinks to related Policies, Procedures and Forms removed Updated hyperlink to Autism Queensland website 	16-Mar-2016
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice period may be waived in full or part subject to extenuating circumstances 	4-Nov-2016
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waitlist fee is non-refundable and predicting when a place may be available will not be provided 	9-Nov-2016
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of additional form – Client Consent to Share Information – NDIS (F2.0B NDIS) 	23-Jan-2017
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of South Australian Information Sharing Guidelines & Appendix 	21-Feb-2017

Required for Parent Folder? Yes

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Purpose

To ensure that each child’s enrolment with AEIOU Foundation (AEIOU) is completed as per legal requirements. AEIOU will aim to ensure that each child and family receives an enrolment and orientation process that meets their needs, allowing the family and child to feel safe and secure in the level of care provided.

Who is affected by this policy?

This policy applies to all AEIOU staff members and the children attending the service and their families.

Policy

AEIOU will ensure that all policies and procedures relating to its operations will be written in plain English. Documents that are related to accessing our service may be translated upon request.

AEIOU will accept enrolments for children that meet AEIOU’s eligibility requirements outlined below.

How We Determine Eligibility

In Queensland, AEIOU accepts enrolments of children aged between 2.5 years to school age (inclusion centres accept enrolments from 6 weeks to school age). In autism specific centres, a child must be formally diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

In South Australia, AEIOU accepts enrolments of children aged between 2 years to school age, who have been approved for NDIS funding. A diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is preferred, but not essential.

Access to Services

- All children who meet the eligibility requirements will have equal access to the service irrespective of gender, race, culture, religion and family composition.

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- Publicly available information is available via the AEIOU website and printed brochures.
- Services may be accessed via the phone, an Interest in Enrolment Application Form (**F2.03A**) via the AEIOU web page, or in person.
- Parents / guardians have the right to have an independent advocate / interpreter / support person attend all meetings including entry and exit, and in raising complaints, suggestions or comments.
- In the event that AEIOU is unable to supply a service, information may be provided on a range of professional service options, other Agency supports and relevant Government Departments.

Entry

- Referrals can be self-initiated (by parent/guardians) or second party referrals through Hospitals, Specialists, Private practitioners or Government agencies.
- In Queensland, families must contact the Autism Advisor in their area to register for the Helping Children with Autism funding and register with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services prior to enrolment.
- Autism Advisors can be located via <https://autismqld.com.au/page/hcwa-autism-advisor-program>
- In South Australia, families must contact the NDIA for funding arrangements.
- Families must also contact the Family Assistance Office (Centrelink) to have their eligibility for Child Care Benefit assessed.

Note:

- AEIOU will attempt to accommodate families so that children from the same family can attend the same service.

Immunisation

- We encourage all families to immunise their children.
- From 1 January 2016 there will be changes to immunisation requirements which will affect payments for Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebates.
- Conscientious objection will be removed as a reason for a vaccination exemption; however, families will continue to receive an exemption for approved medical reasons.
- If your child is not immunised for reasons other than those medically approved, your AEIOU fees will increase significantly as you will no longer be eligible for Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebates
- Parents and carers are encouraged to be fully versed on the financial consequences if your child is not immunised.
- To find out more about immunisation requirements in 2016, visit the Department of Human Services website at www.humanservices.gov.au

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Waiting List

- To be eligible for the waitlist, families must pay a waitlist administration fee. This fee is only applicable for centres which have a waiting list. The fee is a once-off, non-refundable payment.
- Priority – as places become available at the centre, all applications will be reviewed for suitability in relation to the current group of children. See also Placement Prioritisation Scale **(F2.03AK)**.
- Parents of children on the waiting list are placed on a mailing list and informed of service education/information sessions and workshops.
- Parents are responsible for keeping AEIOU informed of changes to contact details, Child Care Benefit details and other relevant data.

Intake Interview

- An Intake Interview is conducted at the centre by relevant centre staff.
- The interview will create a framework for discussion about the AEIOU service, our program, and the child's strengths, needs and mutual expectations, the rights and responsibilities of both service users and providers and parental concerns and questions. The Initial Meeting Notes **(F2.0D)** template may be used as a record of the discussion.
- A tour of the premises may be provided at this time.

Enrolment

Enrolments will be accepted providing:

- Eligibility is confirmed,
- The maximum daily attendance does not exceed the approved number of places of the service,
- Child-educator ratios are maintained across each room of the service,
- A vacancy is available. (See Waiting List above.)

Authorisations

An enrolment record will be maintained containing parent/carer authorisations, including (but not limited to);

- Permission to photograph your child. Permission to display photographs' **(F1.16A)**
- Community Experience Consent Form **(F4.06A)**
- Client Consent to Share Information **(F2.0B)** or Client Consent to Share Information **(NDIS F2.0B NDIS)** (only for clients residing in an NDIS roll out site or for clients who have an NDIS plan). Also see Information Sharing Guidelines section below (South Australia only)

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Refusals

Where a parent/carer has refused to sign an authorisation, this will be recorded in the enrolment record and appropriate plans put in place to accommodate the wishes of the parent/carer.

Information Sharing Guidelines and Appendix (South Australia only)

In South Australia, the Information Sharing Guidelines (ISG) address the need for guidance on sharing personal information. With issues such as child protection, homelessness, mental illness, family violence, drug and alcohol abuse or gambling often co-existing, information sharing can ensure that an informed interagency and multi-disciplinary response is provided. The ISG provide a consistent state-wide approach to appropriate information sharing practice wherever there are threats to safety and wellbeing. They aim to:

- Reduce the risk of different service providers adopting conflicting information sharing practices
- Increase the likelihood that the actions taken are based on a complete understanding of clients' circumstances and needs
- Respect the privacy of individuals to the extent possible when furthering the aims above.

In this way, agencies and organisations limit the possibility of working at cross-purposes to each other or missing vital details that could expose clients to harm.

Refer to **PRO2.06 Information Sharing Guidelines and Appendix** for more information.

Fees, Services, and Financial Hardship

Waitlist Administration Fee

A fee is applicable to families who wish to be considered for a place at a centre where all available places are filled. The waitlist fee will be waived for families whose positions on the waitlist is beyond half the number of total centre places. Families will be requested to pay the waitlist fee as they advance to within half the number of centre places on the waiting list.

The waitlist administration fee is a non-refundable fee. AEIOU is unable to provide an estimated time that a suitable place will be available.

Fee Agreement

As part of each child's enrolment at AEIOU, all parents or carers sign an agreement to pay fees. For further information, refer to the Enrolment Application Form (**F2.03S (QLD)**, **F2.04G (Adelaide)**), section *Payment Agreement*.

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Fee Responsibility and Process for Payment and Fee Recovery

The payment of fees is the sole responsibility of the parent or carer. At all times the parent or carer needs to take the responsibility of these payments.

- All payments are to be received within three days of receipt of invoice.
- If no payment is received within one week of receipt of invoice a reminder will be sent.
- If payment is not received within one week of the issue of the reminder, a further reminder is sent.
- If payment is not forthcoming, phone calls are made and emails sent to try and arrange payment.
- If no payment is made following this, the Finance & Administration Manager will attempt to contact the parent/carer by phone or email, and if there is still no response, the parent/carer shall be sent a letter of demand for payment to be made by a stipulated date.
- Should no payment be received by this date then the account will automatically be handed over to our debt collection agency for collection.
- Once a debt is handed over to a debt collection agency, if payment is not received within one week of hand over then the attendance of the child at the centre will be suspended until payment is made and our accounts department is satisfied that future payments will not be a problem.
- All questions regarding fees should be directed to the Finance and Administration Department and not centre staff.

AEIOU will at all times endeavour to work with the parent or carer to arrange a payment plan and help the family with assistance in relation to fee payments.

At any time the family ceases correspondence or does not contact AEIOU in relation to fee recovery, the matter will be handed over to a debt collection agency.

Financial Assistance Services

Families accessing the AEIOU program are able to access the Child Care Benefit (CCB), as well as using money from the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) Funding (Qld) or NDIS funding to contribute to fees.

Circumstances of Financial Hardship

In times of genuine hardship, parents or carers can make contact with the AEIOU Parent Liaison and Fee Coordinator or Finance & Administration Manager to arrange a payment plan taking into account the parent or carers individual circumstances.

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Parents or carers can also apply to the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund Committee for financial assistance with fees. Applications require families to complete a Lynn Wright Memorial Fund Application Form (F2.03AF) that is available from the AEIOU Parent Liaison and Fees Coordinator.

Prior to Commencement at the Centre

Before the child begins their first day, the service must have all required documentation for the child. The child will not be accepted into the service without this being completed. The family must also have had contact with AEIOU Finance and Administration department and be given an approximate start date for further discussion with the Centre Manager and Enrolment Coordinator.

Information and Authorisations to be kept in the Enrolment Record

The section Information Management and Confidentiality in **POL1.1 Management** outlines the information and authorisations that we will include in all child enrolment records.

Allocating Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) funding for therapy tools

AEIOU Foundation encourages families to engage in therapy and education strategies in the home environment to complement the early intervention service provided in the centres.

AEIOU structures its fees to minimize out of pocket expenses for parents accessing the program, and most parents use their HCWA funding towards their fortnightly fees. To do this, parents sign a service delivery record (SDR) when collecting their child/ren each day.

Some parents choose to access their HCWA in a different manner, by allocating funds towards the purchase of therapy or education tools that will support the child's development. Please refer to **PRO2.05 Allocation of HCWA for therapy tools** for more information on the procedure to follow.

Orientation

Centre ratios and requirements will be explained as part of the orientation process.

Service Suspension

A placement may be suspended in the following circumstances:

- Outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease for a non-immunised child
- Contracted infectious disease(s) (duration to be determined in accordance with *Staying Healthy in Childcare (5th edition)* ¹)
- Behavioural issues outside the constraints of the service

¹ National Health and Medical Research Council – Australian Government

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- Inability to fulfill financial obligations (fee payment) to the service.

Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs

With reference to the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* (QLD) and the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (SA), any person with a disability that can provide an identity card as an approved handler of a certified guide, hearing or assistance dog (Qld) or can provide evidence of the dog's registration as a guide, hearing or disability dog (SA) has the right to enter any publically accessible place with that dog.

This includes the entry or reception area to each of our centres, however under the definitions of the Acts (see below), it does not include entry to any other areas of our centres as these are not open to the public. Entry beyond the entry or reception area is limited to staff members, enrolled children, family members or invited guests – not the general public.

The approved handler of the Guide, Hearing, Assistance or Disability Dog will be held solely responsible for providing drinking water for the dog and the cleaning and disposal of any urine or faecal matter.

Public Place

- *Means a place that the public is entitled to use, is open to the public or is used by the public, whether or not on payment of money (Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 (Qld))*
- *Means a place to which the public has access (whether an admission fee is charged or not) (Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (SA))*

See also Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs procedure **(PRO2.02)**.

The Transition Process for Children with Autism

When considering the transition of a child from an AEIOU centre to another school or educational setting staff and parents will discuss the child's progress and options for a transition taking into account the following;

- Parents will identify and provide possible schools / educational setting options.
- Following completion and receipt of a Client Consent to Share Information form **(F2.0B)** from parents, correspondence between AEIOU and the transition setting will take place and meetings / visits may be scheduled.
- Parents will select the transition setting and necessary arrangements will be made by the parent. This may include applying for funding, organising personnel and creating teaching / learning resources.

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- Combinations of attendance schedules will be catered to meet the individual needs of the child in conjunction with the new setting. For example, this may involve a transition beginning 1 day per week to be increased to 2 days per week.
- The transition period will be taken over one term, will be offered for full time placements only and will incorporate two, 2-3 hour off site visits by AEIOU staff. During the ten-week transition period to another educational setting, parents will not be billed where appropriate advanced notice is given for transition days, and this is confirmed when counter-signed by the Centre Manager
- AEIOU offers two, 2-3 hour off site visits to help support the transition period and parents are able to access this during the transition process or within one term of exiting the service.

Exit

At least 4 weeks prior to the expected final transition date;

- Parents and staff will negotiate a final exit date.
- Parents are required to give four weeks written notice prior to finishing at the centre. In extenuating circumstances, this requirement may be waived in part or full, at the discretion of the Finance & Administration Manager.
- Relevant information from the child's file may be forwarded to the new setting if required (parent / guardian consent must be obtained with the Client Consent to Share Information form **(F2.0B)** prior to the transfer of any personal information). This may include an Exit Summary **(F2.0A)**, most recent Individual Plan **(F3.01A)** and any relevant assessment results.
- The child's individual file and confidential information will be archived as per the Policy **POL1.1 Management**, in the section titled Information Management and Confidentiality.
- One of the following forms may be used to give written notification of a child exiting the program, depending on which centre they attend;
 - Change of Enrolment Details form **(F2.03F)**
 - Change of Enrolment Details Sippy Downs **(F2.03G)**

Alumni

AEIOU Foundation's first centre opened in 2005. Since that time, the Foundation has expanded to support around 200 children with autism. Each year families and AEIOU can benefit by remaining connected for a number of reasons.

For many, AEIOU is the provider of unprecedented support, and the friendships created with other parents and staff are invaluable. While enrolled, families benefit from the unique community AEIOU provides, complete with opportunities for support from staff and peers and access to expert advice and resources.

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The Alumni provides families with an ongoing sense of community support and to create enduring relationships that exist beyond the transition of children to subsequent learning environments. AEIOU would like to learn from past students and parents about the services they received at AEIOU, and their school experiences. Within that framework, AEIOU seeks to understand how these experiences can be improved, and what services are required beyond the early years of learning.

As part of the Alumni, families will receive up to date information from the Foundation about a number of initiatives that may interest them, along with opportunities to attend annual seminars hosted by AEIOU educators, therapists or psychologists. For further information, refer to **PRO2.01 AEIOU Alumni**.

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