Inclusive Preschool program and The Briars Special Early Learning Centre placement procedure

This is a mandated procedure under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this page must follow the process outlined on the creating, updating and deleting policy documents page.

Overview

This procedure describes the process for request, investigation, recommendation and enrolment for children with disability in Inclusive Preschool programs (IPPs) and The Briars Special Early Learning Centre (The Briars).

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees in preschools (including IPPs and The Briars), Student Support Services directorate (SSS) and Disability Policy and Programs directorate.

IPPs and The Briars support children with disability and complex needs by optimising their learning outcomes within a preschool setting. The programs provide families with a preschool education option for their child where the staff have specialised education, knowledge and expertise.
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Preschool enrolment criteria

Children are entitled to access 4 terms of preschool in the year before they start school. There is one intake at the beginning of each year for children who turn 4 years old before 1 May.

Aboriginal children and children in care (guardianship) may start preschool after their third birthday. These children may attend up to an average of 12 hours per week initially, increasing to up to 15 hours per week at the beginning of the year in which the child turns 4 years old before 1 May.

Aboriginal children and children in care may have an extended period in preschool up to 6 years old. All children are required to be enrolled in and attending school by the age of 6 as per the Education Act 1972.

Special needs criteria

Children with disability in preschools who need extensive adjustments (previously known as high-support needs) are described as:

- having global developmental delay and who, as a result, require extensive adjustments. This may be evidenced through assessments and reports provided by educators, health and allied health professionals
- requiring essential and specific measures at all times to address the individual nature and acute impact of the child’s disability to access and participate in the preschool program
- requiring highly individualised, extensive and ongoing adjustments
- requiring learning experiences, pedagogical practices, teaching resources, environmental modifications and assessment for learning that take into account the intended educational outcomes, capabilities and dispositions of the preschool child.

Children will meet most of the following criteria:

- have severe communication impairment and may require augmentative communication systems
- require significant support for social interaction with others
- have physical disabilities
- require significant support for self-help and personal care
- have significant and complex health care needs
- exhibit severe to extreme challenging behaviour
- have significant difficulty processing sensory information.

Placement considerations

Children can attend an IPP or The Briars for their eligible preschool entitlement. In determining whether a child will be offered a place in an IPP or The Briars, the intake panel will consider:

- information provided about the child’s individual functional needs
• the extensive adjustments required to support the child to access the curriculum within the preschool setting.

Each preschool special option supports groups of up to 6 children.

Relocation support for enrolled children

Where a child is enrolled in an IPP or The Briars, and the program ceases to operate at that site, the child and their family will be provided with an alternative program. The Student Support Services directorate (SSS) will work with the preschool director to support the family to consider options.

Transfer between IPPs and The Briars

A family who is relocating and is already enrolled in a specialised program, e.g. another IPP or The Briars, can be considered by the SSS intake panel if a vacancy exists.

Referral and intake processes

Step 1

The family enrols at a local preschool.

The preschool director and the family identify the child as likely to require significant support in preschool.

The preschool director refers the child to the Student Support Services directorate (SSS).

Information is gathered about the child’s disability and functional needs. Their family is informed of preschool programs such as the IPP, The Briars and the Inclusive Education Support Program.

Step 2

If an IPP or The Briars is considered an appropriate placement for a child, a visit to a local IPP or The Briars can be arranged for the family.

If the family wishes to explore enrolment in an IPP or The Briars, the request to investigate enrolment in a special education option is completed using the referral to Inclusive Preschool programs and The Briars Special Early Learning Centre form. This is sent to the SSS senior educator with a copy of relevant reports.

Applications are due in week 3 of term 4.

Step 3

Referral information is assessed by the SSS senior educator and any additional information required is collected.

Step 4
IPP or The Briars referrals are assessed by the intake panel using the Inclusive Preschool programs and The Briars Special Early Learning Centre intake assessment form and the Inclusive Preschool programs and The Briars Special Early Learning Centre intake summary form.

The intake panel is led by the senior educator and comprises of the IPP or The Briars preschool director, SSS psychologist or team manager’s delegate.

Step 5

The outcome of the intake process is communicated by the SSS to families of all referred children and the referring preschool director, and a letter of offer is sent within a week of the panel decision.

Step 6

The senior educator contacts families who are not offered a place and alternative strategies are recommended to support the child, e.g. Inclusive Education Support program.

Step 7

A copy of the Inclusive Preschool programs and The Briars Special Early Learning Centre intake summary form will be sent to the senior advisor, Disability, Child Development and Learning (B-8 years) by the chairperson of the panel within 4 weeks of the panel decision.

SSS staff enter the child’s details on the Student Support Data System within 2 weeks of the panel decision.

Children transitioning from an IPP or The Briars during their preschool year

Transition from an IPP or The Briars occurs when one of the following applies:

- the child no longer requires a specialised program to make significant gains
- the child has developmental and learning needs which may be better met in another educational setting
- the child’s family wishes to make alternative education arrangements.

The preschool director will meet with the family to discuss support and transition options. SSS staff may be involved in this process.

Roles and responsibilities

Executive director, Early Years and Child Development

Procedure owner.

Director, Disability Policy and Programs
Monitors, evaluates and reviews procedure outcomes.

**Senior advisor, Disability, Child Development and Learning (B-8 years)**

Manages Inclusive Preschool programs.

**Student Support Services - senior educators, special educators, psychologists**

Identifies children with support needs and implements referrals and intake panel, and carries out placement recommendations.

**Preschool directors and school principals**

Identifies children with support needs and refers them to Student Support Services (SSS) for further investigation and programming support.

Develops, implements, monitors and reviews personalised learning plans or One Plan for children and students with a disability.

**Special educator and psychologists**

Makes recommendations about preschool placement.

Discusses with parents and carers, and preschool directors recommended education options.

Supports directors and principals to support parents and carers through the placement process.

**Definitions**

**preschool** – an approved early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year before they start school. Preschools may also be referred to as a kindergarten, school-based preschool, children’s services centre or early learning centre.

**Inclusive Preschool programs (IPP)** – programs that provide families with a preschool education option for their child where the staff have specialised education, knowledge and expertise.

**The Briars Special Early Learning Centre (The Briars)** – a stand-alone preschool for children with disability, developmental delay or both. The program provides families with a preschool education option for their child where the staff have specialised education, knowledge and expertise.

**Student Support Services (SSS)** – brings together a range of services that support learning and wellbeing, child safety and protection, and health.
Supporting information

Inclusive preschool programs in South Australia

Related legislation

Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Disability Standards for Education 2005

Related policy documents

Children and students with disability policy

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