

CHILD CARE REGISTRATION SYSTEM PROCEDURE

January 2018

The Darebin Child Care Registration System takes registrations on behalf of 10 participating community child care centres within the municipality.

Council provides the Darebin Child Care Registration System to:

- Simplify the process of registration for child care for the Darebin community;
- Support community child care providers;
- Apply equity and fairness processes for families seeking child care places; and
- Collect data to inform centre and infrastructure planning.

This procedures document provides the framework for the Darebin Child Care Registration System which applies Victorian and Federal Government allocation and funding criteria that:

- Prioritises access for vulnerable children, increasing opportunities for children facing the greatest barriers to early learning;
- Promotes local community connection;
- Offers child care places equitably; and
- Provides continuity of education and care, by keeping families connected in one centre where possible.

1. VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Darebin City Council supports Federal and State Government policy directions that articulate children with additional needs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, children known to Child Protection and those eligible for the fee subsidy of Special Child Care Benefit, gain most from being involved in early childhood programs. Families that demonstrate they have a child in one of these categories will be allocated to a child care vacancy as a priority.

2. AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PRIORITY OF ACCESS GUIDELINES

It is a condition of Child Care Centre approval and continued approval for Child Care Benefit (CCB) purposes that centres must comply with Family Assistance Law. The Priority of Access Guidelines are set out in the Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Centres for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000. The Guidelines apply to Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and In-Home Care centres. Failure to meet these Guidelines is a breach of the conditions of continued approval and may result in a centre being sanctioned under the Act.

The Darebin Child Care Registration System supports the participating community child care centres in Darebin to comply with Family Assistance Law by applying the Priority of Access Guidelines. It is for this reason that documents verifying particular criteria may be requested at time of registration and updated throughout the process. Centres have access to the Darebin Child Care Registration System data to comply with the Family Assistance Law.

The Priority of Access Guidelines state, when filling vacant places, a centre must fill them according to the following priorities:

- Priority 1 a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;
- Priority 2 a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test; then
- Priority 3 any other child.

Within these main categories priority is also given to the following children:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families;
- children in families which include a disabled person;
- families who are Darebin residents;
- the child or sibling who are currently accessing the long day care program
- any other child, including non-Darebin residents.

When it is the case that children on the Darebin Child Care Registration System have the same priority weighting, registrations will be ordered according to the date of complete registration. Families who have registered on the same day and receive the same points for priority weightings, allocation will be ordered according to random selection. The time of day of registration will not be considered when ordering registrations on the database. Random selection will be made by computer generated sorting of registrations.

3. CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Darebin is committed to ensuring that Early Childhood Centres are accessible to all children. We recognise that every child has individual needs, abilities and interests. Children with additional needs are:

- children who require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the child care program;
- children who require a combination of centres which are individually planned; and
- children who have an identified specific disability or developmental delay.

Families of children with additional needs follow the standard Darebin Child Care Registration System process. Families complete a registration form and indicate that their child has an additional need. Families are strongly encouraged to provide as much information about their child's additional need to assist in the placement of their child. Children with additional needs are allocated as per the Darebin Child Care Registration System procedure.

4. PROCESS FOR THE DAREBIN CHILD CARE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

An online portal is available for families registering with the Darebin Child Care Registration System.

To register a child online visit the [Darebin Kindergarten and Child Care Registration website](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/childcare) via, www.darebin.vic.gov.au/childcare

If families are unable to register via the portal, paper forms are available from:

- Child Care Centres in the City of Darebin;
- Maternal and Child Health Centres in the City of Darebin;
- City of Darebin Customer Centre Centres;
- www.darebin.vic.gov.au

- 4.1** Registration with the Darebin Child Care Registration System can be made any time after the child is born (not before). Families who register with the Registration System are listed in order according to the date the complete registration is received. Date of registration is one of several priority listing criteria.
- 4.2** Children are eligible to attend subsidised child care programs when they reach the age prescribed by the preferred centre. Families are required to check age requirements with preferred centres prior to registration. Generally a vacancy may not arise at the time desired by families and flexibility will be necessary to secure an ongoing child care place, at your preferred centre.
- 4.3** Families are required to nominate centres in order of preference. It is essential to only nominate centres you are willing for your child to attend. It is advisable for you to have already visited the centres you have listed as your preferences, to ensure you will efficiently accept an offer if received.
- 4.4** If families choose to nominate one centre only and the nominated centre (age appropriate room) doesn't have a vacancy, the child's name will remain on the Registration System, and won't be offered a place at an alternative centre, even if there are vacancies.
- 4.5** Registrations will only be accepted in the Registration System if fully complete. Incomplete registration forms will be returned, with a request to provide the outstanding information. The receipt date will be allocated upon receipt of completed registration. Council staff (multilingual aides) are available to support families to complete registrations.
- 4.6** Registrations received by the Registration System will be sent a letter of confirmation within three weeks of receipt of complete registration, depending on the method of registration.

5. REGISTRATION ON THE DAREBIN CHILD CARE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

The following information is required to complete a Darebin Child Care Registration System registration:

- Complete Registration Form. For paper copies, please ensure the form has the current year of registration printed in the header or footer;
- Information about the applicant family and child. Current family contact details, it is advisable to list several options including telephone, email and home address. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure contact details are current;
- Evidence to support the Priority of Access Guidelines, as stated on the form;
- Reports from family support services confirming vulnerability and/or disability (if applicable);
- Documentation that parent/guardian meets the work/study test as prescribed by the Federal Government such as letter from employer, current payslips;

- Proof of study such as a letter from the relevant Registered Training Organisation or other training institute, or official student card and;
- Receipt number of non-refundable registration fee. This fee is to support the administration of the Darebin Child Care Registration System and does not contribute to child care fees.

Holders of the following concession cards can make registration free of charge:

- Commonwealth Health Care Card (not private Health Care Card)
- Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
- Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 785 and 786
- Department of Veterans Affairs Gold or White Card
- Refugees and Special Humanitarian Entrants Visas 200, 201, 202, 203 and 204
- Bridges Visas A – E
- Immicard

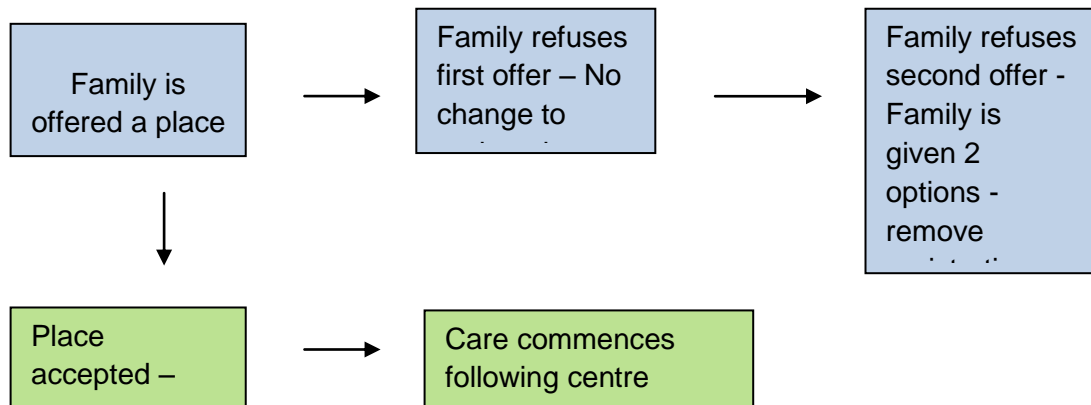
6. LODGING A DAREBIN CHILD CARE REGISTRATION SYSTEM REGISTRATION

Paper registrations must be lodged with the Darebin City Council, either by post or in person to Darebin Customer Service Centres, listed on the Darebin website. It is the responsibility of the family to keep evidence of lodgement date (letter of acknowledgement and receipts of payments will be issued).

Registration fees can be paid at one of the above Darebin City Council Customer Centre Centres or online. Cheques/money orders payable to Darebin City Council.

7. CHILD CARE ALLOCATION PROCESS

- 7.1** When the Darebin Child Care Registration System is notified of a vacancy by a child care centre, allocation priority is made according to the Priority of Access Guidelines.
- 7.2** Child Care Centres can make allocation outside of the Registration System only for existing children and children of staff employed at their centre (as per individual centre policy). A registration is still required to be filled and registered on the database.
- 7.3** Families will be contacted by telephone landline, mobile phone and/or email. If direct contact is not made, messages will be left describing the nature of the call. Families will be given 24 hours from point of initial notification to return contact and notify the program of their choice to accept or decline the offer. If contact is not made during this time, the Registration System will move to the next applicant child.
- 7.4** Once offered a place, the parent/guardian has two choices:
1. Accept the offer, provide evidence to support the Priority of Access Guidelines, as stated on the form. The families details will then be sent to the centre.
 2. Decline the offer. The child can remain at the same place on the Registration System after the first offer refusal only. Following more than one refusal, the family has the option of either removing the child from the system or amending the date of registration to reflect the date of refusal.



7.5 The Registration System staff will provide details of families who have accepted an offer to centres on the same business working day.

7.6 The Child Care Centre will then contact the family and distribute their Welcome Package. From this point all arrangements will be made directly between the family and the centre. Should a family choose not to accept the placement, the Child Care Centre or family is required to notify the Registration System. The registration will then be amended and a new registration date will apply from date of refusal.

7.7 Most centres:

- Require a payment of a deposit/ bond for accepting the offer of a place;
- Charge a week or fortnight in advance of fees; and
- Charge a non-refundable fee/bond/deposit to hold a place over the end of year/New Year break.
- Children are eligible to attend subsidised child care programs when they reach the age prescribed by the preferred centre.
- Families are required to check age requirements with preferred centres prior to registration. Generally a vacancy may not arise at the time desired by families and flexibility will be necessary to secure an ongoing child care place, at your preferred centre.

7.8 In the event the Registration System has been exhausted of families actively requesting care, the relevant centre will be advised in writing.

In order to support the filling of vacancies the centre may:

- offer the vacancy to a family enquiring about child care;
- access the MyChild website;
- advertise vacancies within their centre, website, local networks and;

7.9 Only in the event of (7.8) does the following process apply:

Prior to offering the family a place the centre must:

- Confirm with the Registration System there is no family currently waiting for this place. If there is no immediate response from the Registration System staff, following a 24 hour period of time, the centre may confirm with the family that the place is available.
- Provide the family with a Registration form to complete and submit. The centre may submit this and supporting documentation via electronic means on behalf of the family.
- Advise the family that care cannot commence until a Darebin Registration Form has been completed and received by Darebin Registration Team. It is the families responsibility to ensure the required documentation is provided.

Once the Registration System confirms the families' registration, the centre may commence the enrolment process.

If there is more than one enquiry for the vacancy, the priority of access guidelines will apply.

8 END OF YEAR ALLOCATION PROCESS

- 8.1** Child Care Centres commence their end of year re-enrolment process from August to September each year. In accordance with government priorities and individual centre policies, places are prioritised and allocated to current centre families and registered siblings.
- 8.2** In the first week of September, Child Care Centres will provide the Darebin Child Care Registration System with written confirmation of all remaining vacancies for the following year. It is expected that places will be filled by end of October; however information on accepted places will be provided to centres as the family accept; in order to stagger the welcoming of families. Should there be any difficulty by the Registration System to complete this task within the agreed timelines, early communication is to be made between the Registration System and centres to address difficulties.
- 8.3** From the end of October, the Registration System will provide a list of accepted registrations to each Centre. Centres will then contact families and finalise placement.

9 CONFIRMATION AND CHANGES TO REGISTRATION

All changes to details concerning a Darebin Child Care Registration System registration such as address, telephone number, child care centre preference etc. are to be notified in writing to the Registration System via letter or email:

Registration.KindergartenChildCare@darebin.vic.gov.au

The original date of complete registration lodgement will remain.

Each year the Registration System staff will send a reminder to families to update their registration information. The reminder letter will include the following prompts:

- contact details - phone numbers, email address (that is checked daily);

- centre preferences. List only the centres that you would accept a place, as repeated offer refusals will result in removal from the Registration System and;
- supporting documentation. Updated evidence of study/work, address, Darebin resident,

10 REMOVAL OF CHILDREN FROM THE DAREBIN CHILD CARE RESERVATION SYSTEM

10.1 Families can ask that children be removed from the Darebin Child Care Registration System at any time. Registration fees are not reimbursed. It is asked that families advise the Registration System if they have found suitable care arrangements elsewhere or do not intend to accept offers of placement. It is in the interests of our community to deliver a service that is efficient and provides accurate community planning information.

10.2 Long periods (4 weeks) of families not being contactable will result in the child being removed from the Registration System. If families do not respond to annual information update requirements, one attempt of reminder contact will be made. If information is not confirmed or updated in writing (letter or email) within 4 weeks, the child will be removed from the Registration System.

10.3 All children will be removed from the Registration System when they reach the age of 6 years of age.

For further information about this and other frequently asked questions go to www.darebin.vic.gov.au

11. FEEDBACK

Darebin City Council welcomes your feedback whether it's a compliment, suggestion or a complaint. You can contact us in a number of ways;

Call: 8470 8888
 Fax: 8470 8877
 Mail: PO Box 91, Preston, Victoria 3072
 Email: mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au

Darebin Child Care Registration System
 Call: 8470 8825
 Mail: PO Box 91, Preston, 3072.

Speak and Listen TTY: dial 133 677
 Speak and Listen: call 1300 555 727
 Visit one of our [Customer Service Centres](#):

Preston Customer Service Centre
 Address: 274 Gower Street, Preston
 Opening Hours: 8.30am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday

Northcote Customer Service Centre
 Address: 32-38 Separation Street, Northcote
 Opening Hours: 8.30am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday

Reservoir Community and Learning Centre
Address: 23 Edwardes Street, Reservoir
Opening Hours: 10am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday

You can also complete an online form which will be forwarded to an appropriate Council officer for action: <http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Global/ContactUs>