

## Equal Opportunity

### **Legislation:**

The Equal Opportunity Act 1984: [www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au](http://www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au)

Education and Care Services National Law (WA) 2012

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012: 155, 156, 157

National Quality Standard elements: 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.1.5; 1.2.2; 4.2.1; 4.2.3; 6.1.2; 6.2.1

Australian Government Department of Education:

<http://www.education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>

### **Policy Statement:**

*Unicare is committed to the principles of Equal Opportunity in relation to community access to the Service and the appointment of staff. Individuals will be treated with respect regardless of their gender, race, religion, age, impairment, marital status, political conviction, pregnancy, family responsibility or family status.*

*Unicare will actively promote the positive aspects of diversity and encourage acceptance and appreciation of individual differences. Education and care will be made available to the community in accordance with the Australian Government 'Priority of Access' guidelines.*

### **Strategies for implementation:**

- Unicare will have up to date information regarding Equal Opportunities Legislation.
- Families and Educators will be given clear instruction with regard to Australian Government 'Priority of Access Guidelines'. The guidelines only apply to Child Care Benefit approved child care. They are used when there is a waiting list for a child care service or when a number of parents are applying for a limited number of vacant places. Every Child Care Benefit approved child care service has to abide by the guidelines and tell you about them when you enrol your child into care.
- Equal Opportunity principles will be an integral part of the Services daily curriculums and routines. Children will be given positive experiences which encourage equal opportunity. Curriculums will actively include opportunities for the children to experience diversity of culture, gender roles etc.
- Educators will treat individual children and their families with respect. They will take into account individual differences in language, attitudes, abilities and expectations.

- Children with additional needs will not be discriminated against and will be afforded access to the service where; a place exists, they meet the required priority of access guidelines and the resources are available to adequately care for the child.
- All Educators will be selected and employed according to equal opportunity guidelines. Gender, race, religion, age, impairment, marital status, political conviction, pregnancy, family responsibility or family status will not influence employability.
- Where the community in which the Service is located comprises of a particular ethnic group, the approved provider / nominated supervisor / director will make every effort to include employees from that group providing they meet the selection criteria and are the best person for the position.
- Clear guidelines on Grievance Procedures will be developed in accordance with the state and Federal Equal Opportunity Legislation and made available to all employees.
- The approved provider / nominated supervisor / director will:
  - Promote equality in the service and identify discriminatory conduct.
  - Publicise the equal opportunity policy and grievance procedure.
  - Train and guide educators as to reporting complaints
  - Investigate and document complaints.
- No child, parent, staff member or potential staff member will be excluded from the Service due to living with HIV/AIDS.
  - Information about a child, parent or staff member living with HIV/AIDS will be kept strictly confidential at all times.
  - Educators / staff will follow universal hygiene procedures to eliminate any risk of HIV/AIDS transmission in the Service.

## Priority of Access Guidelines

### First Priority:

A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

### Second Priority:

A child of a single parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the 'A New Tax System ( Family Assistance) Act 1999

### Third Priority:

Any other child.

### Within each category the following children are to be given priority:

- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Children in families, which include a disabled person.
- Children of families which include an individual whose adjustable income does not exceed the lower income threshold of \$41,902 (2013-2014) or whose partner is on income support.
- Children in families with a non-English speaking background.
- Children in socially isolated families.
- Children of single parents.

According to the legislation services are to follow the guidelines when they are filling vacancies (unless they are a work based service in which case children of employees can be given top priority) and, when there are no vacancies, they may require a child who is third priority to leave the child care service, or alter their days, in order to provide a place for a higher priority child.

### This provision however only applies if:

- The person liable to pay child care fees for that child was notified on enrolment that the service followed this policy; and
- The service gives that person at least 14 days notice of the requirement for the child to leave the child care service.

For further information refer to the Department of Education  
<http://www.education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places>

Child Care Services Handbook  
<http://www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook>