

# Early Childhood Education Update

Issue 2: July, 2007



## All you need to know about pre-compulsory enrolments in public schools

The first round of applications for pre-compulsory enrolments has now closed. This Update focuses on some of the frequently asked questions about the application process.

## What is the pre-compulsory education period?

Two pre-compulsory years of schooling, kindergarten and pre-primary, are available prior to the commencement of Year 1.

Children are eligible for **kindergarten** from the beginning of the school year in which they turn four years and six months. There is no early entry into the kindergarten program.

Children are eligible for **pre-primary** from the beginning of the school year in which they turn five years and six months.

## Are there any exceptions?

Identified Aboriginal kindergartens and remote community schools may enrol three year old Aboriginal children who turn four by the end of the year, if there are places available. At these sites, children will complete two years of kindergarten. Enrolments should not take place until at least week four of Term 1 in order to give kindergarten-aged children the opportunity to enrol at the start of the school year. If identified kindergartens and schools still have vacancies available at the start of Term 2, non-Aboriginal children who are three but turn four by the end of the year may be enrolled.

Exceptions also apply to children with birth dates in May or June in the year they are eligible to attend. When this occurs families have the option to delay enrolling their child until the next school year.

For most children this means kindergarten and pre-primary are not compulsory. If a family chooses to delay their child's entry to school (May/June birthday) the child's attendance will be compulsory in pre-primary as the child will be of compulsory school age which is when the child turns six years and six months.

## What is meant by guaranteed enrolment?

From 2001 all eligible children, including children with disabilities, are guaranteed a place in kindergarten or pre-primary as near as possible to their home. However, this may not necessarily be at their nearest school or their local school. Enrolment in a pre-compulsory program is subject to the availability of vacancies and facilities on the school site.

In the situation where a child cannot be enrolled at their local school, the principal is responsible for facilitating enrolment at an appropriate school or community kindergarten.

## Is your school experiencing enrolment pressure?

Schools experiencing enrolment pressure or anticipating enrolment pressure next year should contact their district education office for support to determine an appropriate strategy or to request additional buildings or facilities.

## What is a local-intake school?

There are two lists of public schools. One list identifies all schools that have local-intake areas and the other list identifies all schools with non local-intake areas. These lists are revised and published annually in the Government Gazette, available in the *Declaration of Local Intake Areas for Schools*, located on the Department's website under *Our Policies*.

A **local-intake school** takes its students from a defined area. A **non local-intake** school is one that has not been declared as a local-intake school.

Intake areas apply to both pre-compulsory and compulsory school aged children. When families enquire about, or apply to enrol their child, it is suggested that the principal inform them of the 'intake' status of the school, and the implications



involved particularly if a school is experiencing enrolment pressure.

## What are the policy requirements when prioritising pre-compulsory applications?

Priority of enrolment for pre-compulsory aged children differs slightly from those for compulsory aged children.

They also differ between local-intake and non local-intake schools. When the number of applications for enrolment exceeds the accommodation available at the school, priority should be assigned as follows:

### Local-Intake Schools

- Children living within the intake area who have a sibling enrolled at the school, and who live nearest the school.
- Children living within the intake area who will not have a sibling enrolled at the school, and who live nearest the school.
- Children living outside the intake area who will have a sibling enrolled at the school, and who live nearest the school.
- Children living outside the intake area who will not have a sibling enrolled at the school, and who live nearest the school.

### Non Local-Intake Schools

- Children living nearest the school.

**They may forget what you said but they will never forget how you made them feel.**  
**Anonymous**

## What tools are available to measure distances to the school?

The UBD Street Directory Perth CD Rom is a helpful tool to measure distances between the school and residential address. The CD works in conjunction with the website, [www.whereis.com](http://www.whereis.com). The website pinpoints street names, and in most cases street numbers and the CD Rom calculates the distance. The CD Rom can be ordered through Corporate Express.

## What should schools do with late applications?

Schools receiving applications after the closing date can enrol children if a vacancy exists.

If a school is unable to accommodate a late enrolment it is the responsibility of the principal to facilitate enrolment at another school.

Schools that receive applications for enrolment in kindergarten or pre-primary after the closing date should enrol those children if any vacancies exist. However schools may wish to hold places, in the event of late applications, for children living locally. The number of places should be in consultation with the district and consistent with 'late enrolment' trends in previous years.

## When should schools notify parents of the outcome of their application?

It is suggested schools advise parents of the outcome of their application, in writing, within three weeks of the application closing date, i.e before Friday 17 August 2007.

Coordinating a similar response time is necessary to reduce confusion for parents and to support principals to facilitate enrolments at other schools due to enrolment pressure.

For further information regarding enrolments please refer to the Enrolment Policy at: [policies.det.wa.edu.au/](http://policies.det.wa.edu.au/)

## What support is available for schools enrolling pre-compulsory aged children with a disability or English as their second language?

Schools Plus provides supplementary resources for schools enrolling children with disabilities.

For further Information, a copy of the Schools Plus handbook and a list of Schools Plus consultants who are available to offer support, visit: [www.schoolsplus.det.wa.edu.au](http://www.schoolsplus.det.wa.edu.au).

The ESL Visiting Teacher Team in each metropolitan district, or the ESL/ESD consultant at your district education office, is able to assist schools when enrolling Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) children. For more information or a copy of Information for *School Personnel Booklet 2006*, visit: [det.wa.edu.au/education/esl](http://det.wa.edu.au/education/esl)

## Important Dates

**Friday 23 July 2007:** *The Syllabus Working Version* is available on-line. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to provide feedback on these materials by 26 October 2007.

**Friday 27 July 2007:** Closing date for the first round of applications for enrolments.

**Friday 17 August 2007:** All parents notified, in writing, of the outcome of their pre-compulsory application for enrolment.

## Did You Know...?

- Due to the high number of requests, additional copies of *Learning Begins at Home* will be sent to schools for distribution to parents enrolling their child in kindergarten for 2008.
- Postcards, in five community languages, have been published to inform non-English speaking parents about kindergarten and pre-primary enrolment processes. To download electronic copies of the translated postcards, please visit: [det.wa.edu.au/education/ece/](http://det.wa.edu.au/education/ece/)
- The Kindergarten and Pre-primary Profile is going to Prague. Associate Professor Carmel Maloney and Dr Lennie Barblett of Edith Cowan University and Lynn Christie-Whiteside from the Department will showcase the Profile at the 2007 European Early Childhood Research Conference. Associate Professor Maloney and Dr Barblett were instrumental in the development of the Profile and have developed a linked teacher resource to support planning for children's social and emotional development. This resource will be available to schools in the near future.
- The second Early Childhood Education Directions seminar, 2007 will be held on 28 September. The seminar brings together representatives from all districts to discuss ECE issues and to consolidate the important links between policy, district operations and school practices. To find out who will attend from your district or seminar details contact Gail Clark, 9264 5366.
- The Early Years Education Spring Conference, 'Are we there Yet' is on the 7 to 8 September 2007. Conference details: [www.earlyyearsineducationsociety.com.au](http://www.earlyyearsineducationsociety.com.au)
- The Child Care WA Conference 'Making Connections' Bringing Children's Services Together is on 24 to 26 August 2007. Conference details [www.familydaycarewa.com.au/news.html](http://www.familydaycarewa.com.au/news.html)