

Attachment A- Childrens Services Key Policy Objectives and Parameters

The Port Phillip community and Early Years' service providers worked closely with Council to develop key policy objectives to underpin the Children's Services Policy. On 5 September 2018, Council endorsed the policy objectives for the Children's Services Policy. The policy objectives articulate and prioritise the goals for children's services in the City. Those policy objectives are:

Objective 1

Council will work with partners to ensure that every child, regardless of their abilities or background, will have access to affordable, safe, accessible, quality Early Years services to support development to their full potential.

Identified parameters for decision:

- City of Port Phillip (CoPP) should use available levers to ensure all services meet or exceed the National Quality Standards (NQS) across the municipality.
- CoPP subsidies will be available on a transparent basis to all eligible families.
- Recognising that CoPP has limited financial resources, CoPP ratepayer funded support for Early Years services should be targeted at overcoming any market failures that exist, specifically:
 - Barriers due to affordability
 - Barriers due to lack of information or transparency
 - Barriers due to capacity to access the system.

Objective 2

Council will understand current and future needs of families in the city and influence the provision of Early Years services to meet the those needs.

Identified parameters for decision:

- CoPP should ensure that Council policy and planning settings continue to enable the Early Years market to deliver capacity and to adapt to changes in demand.
- CoPP should ensure that a provision of specialist services / responses working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), indigenous and families with complex needs continues to be available and that access to these services is facilitated.
- CoPP should ensure that information is provided to parents and the market regarding demand and future capacity issues across the city.

Objective 3

Early Years services will be financially sustainable and consistently aligned with relevant policies and legislation at the local, state and federal level.

Identified parameters for decision:

- The policy will ensure that CoPP complies with National Competition Policy (NCP).
- The policy will ensure that CoPP operated services can operate at a "break even" service with full cost recovery, including cost of upgrading and maintaining buildings.
- Any CoPP subsidies will be available on an equitable and transparent basis for families and services.

Objective 4

Council will encourage collaboration across all Early Years' services.

Identified parameters for decision:

- The policy will ensure that providers across the City collaborate, particularly with relevant family and children services.
- The policy will ensure that council uses available levers to encourage the development of further integrated hubs across the City.

Objective 5

Families will have access to the services and information they need, at the times they need it, to make choices appropriate for their needs.

Identified parameters for decision:

- The policy will ensure transparent and accessible information about children's services is available. This should include available places and fee levels charged.
- The policy will ensure assistance for those who are not able to access this information.

Objective 6

Early Years services will be supported by safe, accessible, contemporary, fit-for-purpose, sustainable facilities and environments.

Identified parameters for decision:

- All Council-owned and operated facilities must comply with all relevant legislation.
- A facilities strategy be included in the Children's Services Policy to address identified issues. This should include strategies to ensure that any council owned premises are carbon neutral.

Objective 7

Children will have access to natural environments which allow them to learn about and experience play in nature. This includes natural environments within early years services.

Identified parameters for decision:

- The policy will ensure access to natural environments for all children accessing Early Years services.
- The policy will ensure CoPP uses its levers to improve access to natural environments in the municipality, especially for parents with prams.