

	Parkdale Preschool Association Policy Document
Policy No. : AO1-10-00	Title: Qualified Staff
	Function: Administration and Operation
	Review Cycle: 3 years

Document/Revision History

Policy Revision #	Issue Date	Description of Changes	Superseded Document #
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Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for the employment of qualified staff, which meet the requirements of the Children's Services Regulations 2009 and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*.

Policy statement

Values

Parkdale Preschool is committed to:

- The employment of qualified staff with a range of relevant qualifications and experience to provide an educational program, which meets the needs of all children and families using the centre
- The employment of staff, according to the requirements of the Children's Services Regulations 2009; and for funded kindergarten programs, the DEECD *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*.

Scope

This policy applies to staff and the committee at **Parkdale Preschool**.

Background and legislation

Research has demonstrated that employment of appropriately qualified staff in early childhood centres is a key contributor to quality programs and better outcomes for children. Government has acknowledged this by legislating minimum qualification requirements for staff working in early childhood centres. Eligibility to receive funding includes requirements for additional qualifications.

A current listing of approved qualifications may be found on the DEECD website, or by contacting a Children's Services Adviser at a regional office of the DEECD.

When qualifications are not found on the listing of approved qualifications, such as qualifications gained overseas, Early Childhood Australia (Vic.) Inc. will assess the qualification for equivalence and provide a recommendation to the DEECD.

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- *Children's Services Act 1996 (CSA)*
- Children's Services Regulations 2009 (CSR)

Definitions

Early Childhood Association (ECA): National peak organisation responsible for advocating to ensure quality, social justice and equity in all issues relating to the education and care of children from birth to eight years. The Victorian branch of the ECA conducts assessments of qualifications for equivalence to an approved qualification under the Children's Services Regulations 2009 via the Qualifications Approval Committee. ECA undertake these assessments on behalf of the DEECD and provide the department with a recommendation.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD): The state government department responsible for the funding, licensing and regulation of children's services in Victoria.

Emergency staff: A staff member who is engaged for a period of up to four consecutive days to replace a staff member in a staffing emergency.

Fit and proper assessment: Consideration by DEECD under the Act as to whether a person is a fit and proper person to manage or control the children's service.

Qualified staff: A staff member who is a teaching staff member or has successfully completed a two-year full-time, or part-time equivalent, post-secondary approved early childhood qualification, or an approved qualification that is substantially equivalent or superior to that qualification.

Staffing emergency: When a service has an unplanned, sudden or unexpected inability to engage staff with recognised early childhood qualifications in accordance with the CSR.

Relief staff: A staff member who is engaged for a period in excess of four days to replace a staff member who is absent.

Staff member: A person aged eighteen years or more who is employed or has been appointed or engaged to be responsible for the care or education of the children (does not include volunteers, family day carers or visiting early childhood intervention staff members). Staff, other than a qualified staff member or teaching staff member, must hold a Certificate III in Children's Services or approved equivalent, or hold a primary school teaching qualification or acceptable and approved qualification in their speciality field (early childhood intervention staff member).

Teaching staff member: A staff member who holds an early childhood teaching qualification at degree level or above that has been approved, or a qualification that has been approved as substantially equivalent or superior to that qualification.

Note: These definitions refer to the requirements of the full implementation of the CSR 2009. Prior to 2014 there are a range of transitional timelines in place that should be taken into consideration with the implementation of this policy (CSR Part 9, Division 5).

Sources and related centre policies

Sources

- DEECD, *Children's Services Guide*
- DEECD, *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria (VKP)*

Centre policies

Nil

Procedures

The committee is responsible for:

- Employing staff who hold a qualification included in the Schedule of Early Childhood Qualifications, Government Gazette, or a qualification that has been assessed as equivalent to those qualifications

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- Employing teaching staff in the funded (four-year-old) program as required by DEECD *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*
 - Employing, wherever possible, teaching staff in the unfunded (three-year-old) kindergarten program; where it is not possible to employ teaching staff, qualified staff will be employed and the program will be referred to as a three-year-old activity group
 - Implementing extensive and genuine endeavours to employ appropriately qualified teaching staff, and seeking ministerial approval and to be funded outside the VKP and ministerial exemption from compliance with the CSR when recruitment has been unsuccessful
 - Ensuring that all staffing requirements of the Act and regulations are met at all times when the service is operating (CSA 29, CSR r38 and Part 5)
 - Referring applicants with overseas and interstate qualifications not included on the schedule of recognised qualifications to ECA for assessment for suitability
 - Determining which staff member will be nominated as the primary nominee/nominee, and ensuring that all forms (Fit and proper assessment and Change of advice) required by DEECD are completed and given to the DEECD within thirty days (CSA 32 and Part 3, Division 3)
 - Developing procedures to ensure that the licensee or primary nominee has read a person's current assessment notice before that person becomes an employee or is otherwise engaged as a staff member (refer to Management of working with children and criminal history checks policy); ensuring also that details of the police records check/working with children assessment are recorded on the staff record as per CSR r38(3)
 - Ensuring that all staff have (an approved) current first-aid and anaphylaxis management training on engagement or employment (CSR r63)
 - Developing procedures to ensure the required first-aid qualifications are checked regularly, and that staff are provided with the opportunity to update them before their expiry dates
 - Ensuring that staff records (including regulatory requirements) are updated annually or as soon as new information is provided by a staff member, or rostered hours of work are changed
 - Ensuring that a staff member's health does not adversely affect the staff member's ability to care for or educate the children, or they are not adversely affected by alcohol, drugs or any other deleterious substance while on duty and developing procedures to deal with such situations
 - Informing parents/guardians, via a sign on the door, the name of the person replacing the qualified staff member when that staff member is absent
 - Complying with the requirements of the CSR 2009 and *Victorian Kindergarten Policy, procedures & funding criteria* in relation to the employment of relief staff and child-to-staff ratios at all times, including throughout lunch breaks (see [Attachment 1](#)).

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the committee will:

- Check qualified staff records on an annual basis to ensure staff are employed in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy.

Attachments

[Attachment 1](#): Requirements for employment of relief staff in the funded kindergarten program

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the **Parkdale Preschool** committee of management at a committee meeting on.

Review date: 17/ NOV/2010

Requirements for employment of relief staff in the funded kindergarten program

To comply with funding requirements in emergency situations where a teacher with an approved early childhood teaching qualification cannot be found for a funded kindergarten program, the committee or authorised person will inform the DEECD it has:

- Cancelled the session
- Engaged a person with a primary teaching qualification in accordance with the qualified staff exemption in emergency periods (DEECD *Children's Services Guide*, Practice Note)
- Engaged a qualified person in accordance with the CSR r52 (2). In this situation, a sign will be displayed in the main entrance informing parents/guardians that the kindergarten program will not operate but a qualified person has been employed, which meets the requirements of the Children's Services Regulations 2009 and the *Children's Services Act 1996* to operate a licensed children's centre.

Qualified staff requirements over qualified staff members' lunch breaks

Services may satisfy the child-to-qualified staff ratios during qualified staff members' lunch breaks if the qualified staff members (required for the number and age of children in the service) remain on the premises and are on duty. In this instance the qualified staff member can be replaced with an unqualified staff member.

When the qualified staff member/s does not remain on the premises and on duty, services may:

- Use qualified relief staff to replace the qualified staff on their lunch breaks
- Roster another qualified staff member (who may be responsible for administration) to cover the qualified staff members' lunch breaks

These options apply only for the duration of the qualified staff member's lunch break. They do not apply to the whole period over which qualified and other staff may take their lunch break.

Qualified staff who remain on the premises and are on duty must be able to be directly and immediately accessed by staff in the room with children as the need arises.

If the qualified staff member is not on the licensed premises, they may not be included in the child-to-qualified staff ratio and must be replaced by a relief qualified staff member.