

Early Years Service Level Standards

Service Level Standard	Purpose	Measure(sample of how)	Frequency	Accountability/Responsibility
1. PARTNERSHIP				
Early Years Service Providers and Nillumbik Shire Council are committed to working in partnership. We believe that in working collaboratively we can achieve the best outcomes for children and their families.				
1.1. Services and Council demonstrate a commitment to partnerships and networking opportunities with other service providers, programs and organisations within the Shire.	Working in partnership promotes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolution of sector challenges together opportunities to discuss local issues and to work on improvements and solutions understanding of the local community needs and expectations. 	Evidence of connections within the local area between the Early Years service and other local services such as (but not limited to) other EY providers, Council, the local primary schools, MCH, fire brigade, local retirement village, health programs/organisations, early intervention etc is demonstrated through documentation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minutes terms of reference program delivery project plans 	Ongoing	Lessee and Council
1.2. Council and Service Providers will work together to provide best outcomes for children and families attending the Service/s.	To provide opportunities for the service provider and Council to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review how the partnership is working for the service and for Council ensure two way discussions and review occur to benefit service outcomes and identify opportunities across the municipality. 	Annual review between Council and Service.	Annual	In partnership Lessee and Council
		6 month check in between Council and Service.	6 monthly	In partnership Lessee and Council
		Attendance at bi-annual sector meetings focusing on community-wide and sector issues specific to Preschool and Child Care.	2 x per year	In partnership Lessee and Council
1.3. Council and Service Providers will seek and receive two way feedback from all stakeholders of the service in all areas of Early Years. This information will be used constructively to look at improvements that need to be made and opportunities.	Two way feedback is vital for the continued improvement and development of the work and partnership between Council and the Service.	Formal and informal mechanisms of gathering and receiving feedback will be sought and shared between Council and Service through meetings and discussions	Ongoing	In partnership Lessee and Council

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2. GOVERNANCE				
The Early Years services within Nillumbik Shire recognise the importance of good governance to achieve better outcomes for families and children and the broader community by developing and implementing transparent and fair processes for making and implementing decisions.				
2.1. Council will provide information and training that supports Service Providers to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their roles and responsibilities in providing licensed education and care services to the community • processes, policies and requirements pertaining to the conditions of the Lease Agreement and Service Level Standards. 	To ensure that volunteers and staff deliver and manage education and care services according to relevant laws, regulations and guidelines.	Attendance is required by at least one service representative at information and training sessions, as determined by Council.	As scheduled	Council – identification, provision and facilitation of training
	To ensure that the Service provider complies with the conditions of the Lease Agreement and Service Level Standards.	Attendance at compulsory sessions provided by Council targeting members of Committees of Management	As scheduled	Lessee – attendance as required by NSC
2.2. There are formalised systems and processes are in place to ensure appropriate handling, management and handover of information and knowledge from one year to the next or where there is a change in staff or volunteers.	There is a legal requirement to manage and handover information appropriately to ensure continuity of business. There is a legal requirement to comply with Privacy Law.	As part of the quarterly meetings Services must provide evidence of processes and systems to manage how information is received, actioned, stored handed over by the entity as well as individual representatives of the Licence.	Ongoing	Lessee
2.3. Policies and processes identified and developed by Council need to be implemented into service management and operation. Policies may include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Management • Gender diversity and equity 	Education and Care Services are required by law to have a range of policies and procedures. Council may determine the need for other policies and procedures in the best interest of the Nillumbik community, families and	Desktop audit of policies	Annually	Lessee

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement 	children attending the service and for the protection of Council's asset.	Demonstrated implementation	As requested by Council	Lessee

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2.4. Services are required to provide notification to NSC of any changes of Management/Committee.	To ensure good governance, the handover of information and knowledge from Committee members is essential.	Any changes in management personnel is notified to Council Annually after the AGM, the service provide; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of key registers • Security access codes • Current list of names and contact details of Committee of Management and other staff responsible for providing out of hours access 	Within 7 days of change Within 30 days of the AGM	Lessee
2.5. Services must have an active membership with Early Learning Association Australia/Community Child Care.	Access to industry peak bodies provide expertise and contemporary best practice resources and advice.	Evidence of membership is submitted with information provided after AGM.	Within 30 days of AGM	Lessee
2.6. Service must operate according to all regulatory and funding requirements including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Care Services National Regulations • Children’s Services Regulations 2009 • Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 • Kindergarten Funding Guidelines • Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 • Equal Opportunity Act 2010 	To ensure that the service is meeting all of its legal responsibilities.	All positions on the Committee of Management must have a copy of the Constitution.	Annually	Lessee – Committees of Management only
		Any incidents whereby operations have occurred which are in breach of relevant Acts, Laws or Funding Guidelines must be notified to Council within five business days unless otherwise stated in this agreement.	Ongoing	Lessee

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Standards • No Jab, No Play • Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 • Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 		Council is provided with a copy of the Service’s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution • Licence • Any inspection reports pertaining to those listed in 2.6 	Annually within 30 days of AGM or within 5 days of changes Within 5 days of inspection	Lessee

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		Council may, at any time, request evidence of compliance pertaining to any of the law/regulations listed within this service level standard.	As need arises	Lessee
2.7. All relevant insurance policies must be current. Please refer to references in this agreement.	<p>To ensure that all persons attending or involved in the service have the relevant protection in the case of an incident or accident.</p> <p>To ensure that equipment of the Licensee is insured in the case of loss or damage.</p>	<p>Services must provide evidence of current insurance</p> <p>Refer to the following sections of the lease agreement for obligations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.19 Report to Council includes public liability • 5.26 Obligation to insure • 5.27 Principles of Indemnity • D12 Additional Insurance in the Special Conditions section 	Within 5 days of renewal	Lessee
2.8. Services must have a documented Risk Management process that includes, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Register • Risk Matrix which outlines the severity of risks 	<p>Services have an obligation to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that services understand their risk profile, identify risk activity and put systems and processes into place to reduce risk. • ensure that services protect the organisations knowledge, capability and consistency of education and care. 	Risk Register to be reviewed monthly and updated by service	Annually	Lessee
		Any identified risks involving Council facilities or operations must be reported to Council	Within 24 hours of identification	Lessee

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify risk that should be reported to DET and Nillumbik Council. • Identifying risks that Council may be able to provide support to reduce or mitigate. 	Submit Risk Register to NSC at the completion of the annual review.	Annually	Lessee

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<p>2.9. Service Providers must formally notify Council where a non-compliance has occurred. This includes, but is not limited to, notifying Council of notification of non-compliance to any of the following regulatory authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Department of Education(DET) Worksafe Department of Health and Human Services Council's Environmental Health Commission for Children and Young People Consumer Affairs Victoria Any other regulatory body. 	<p>How they manage the incident and what they learn from it will be enriched by sound incident management processes.</p> <p>Incidents carry a range of risks to Service Providers and Council.</p> <p>To enable Council to provide appropriate response and support to the service and the users.</p>	<p>Council must be notified of any non-compliances associated with this Service Level Standard</p> <p>Non-compliance of this service level standard will become evident once regulatory authority notifies Council</p>	<p>Within 24 hours of occurrence</p>	<p>Lessee</p>
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3. QUALITY

A high level of Education and Care is essential to achieve positive outcomes for children. Services and Council are committed to maintaining high quality educational experiences to ensure opportunities are provided to improve children's educational experience.

<p>3.1. The Service has a formalised and transparent process in place to seek/receive feedback from all stakeholders including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families 	<p>Feedback provides information about the level of service being provided.</p> <p>It is vital that children and families have a voice and that the information collected from</p>	<p>Annual survey must be distributed, completed and analysed by the service.</p> <p>Action plan must be developed in response to survey results by Service</p>	<p>Within 30 day of survey closing</p> <p>Within 60 days of survey closing</p>	<p>Lessee/Council</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children Staff/students/volunteers delivering the children's program Volunteer members of the management body/parent reference group <p>The Service has a documented process to</p>	<p>stakeholders is considered in the planning of future service delivery</p> <p>Continuous Improvement and service quality relies on receiving, analysing feedback and implementing new things to improve the education and care experience for children and families.</p>	<p>Survey/feedback results, analysis and action plan is submitted to NSC</p> <p>Service to provide Council with a copy of the response to feedback received.</p>	<p>Within 30 days of survey closing.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Lessee</p> <p>Lessee</p>

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<p>analyse and respond to feedback using a continuous improvement framework.</p> <p>Where a formal complaint or feedback that involves Council matters is received by the Service, the Service must notify Council with two working days of receiving this.</p> <p>The Service will provide 30 days advanced notification to Council of the intention to seek feedback and provide the opportunity for Council to contribute to feedback measures.</p>	<p>Gaining feedback from the community about Council services is an important part of the partnership. Services participating in opportunities to provide feedback and encouraging families to engage in surveys and feedback is vital to understand whether community need is being met.</p>	NSC are notified of any formal complaints submitted to the Approved Provider.	On identification	Lessee
		<p>Services will assist Council to gain feedback from services and families about the services delivered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through their own surveying • By encouraging participation in Council surveys • Including Council questions in their surveying 	Ongoing	Lessee/Council
<p>3.2. Services must notify Council within seven business days where a service receives a “Working Towards” or “Significant Improvement Required” through the National Assessment and Rating process. Where this occurs, Council will work with the Service to understand their improvement plan and identify opportunities for support where applicable.</p>	<p>Quality education and care early in life leads to better health, education and employment outcomes later in life. The early years are critical for establishing self-esteem, resilience, healthy growth and capacity to learn. Quality education and care shapes every child’s future and lays the foundation for development and learning.</p>	Provision of National Quality Framework Assessment and Rating.	Within 7 business days of assessment	Lessee Not applicable to Services licensed under Children’s Services Regulation 2009
		Where an NQS outcome is “working towards” or below a plan and timeline must be provided and regular meetings with NSC in place to determine progress towards expected rating.	At time of identification	Lessee Not applicable to Services licensed under Children’s Services Regulation 2009

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<p>4. SUSTAINABILITY AND PLANNING</p> <p>Early Years services and Nillumbik Shire Council are striving for service sustainability and will achieve this by committing to planning, good governance and innovation</p>				
<p>4.1. The service will use data and knowledge about the service demand and demographic characteristics of local families to inform its service planning and delivery.</p>	<p>The needs of the community should be at the forefront when delivering Community Services.</p>	Hours of operation	Annually when determining service delivery	In partnership Lessee and Council
	<p>The needs of families with preschool aged children living in Nillumbik should be reflected</p>	Group composition and timetabling	Annually when determining service delivery	Lessee

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	in the services being delivered within the municipality.	Co-located and complimentary services/programs are considered and incorporated into the service delivery	On developing and reviewing strategic plan	In partnership Lessee and Council
<p>4.2. Services will demonstrate financial planning and sustainability by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> meeting with DET monitoring requirements budget management sound financial planning(5 year horizon) responsible financial decision making identification of cost efficiencies identification of cost savings identification of cost increases – i.e. award increase, utilities increase. 	<p>Good financial management and planning will support the future of Early Years services. The Community will benefit from services in a sound financial position.</p> <p>A basic budget for the year alongside future financial planning is vital for the financial viability of services.</p> <p>A requirement under the Department of Education's compliance, Council can also request to access or discuss information in relation to financial planning and sustainability to understand the services position.</p>	Copy of auditors report within 30 days of AGM	Annually	Lessee
		Service to notify Council when net budget position variance exceeds 5%	Within 30 days of identification	Lessee
		Council to be notified of projected decrease in income exceeding 10% of annual budget	Within 30 days of identification	Lessee
		Council to be notified of project increase in expenditure exceeding 10% of overall annual budget	Within 30 days of identification	Lessee
		Service to report to council on cash collection (balance sheet with detail debtor and creditor ledger)	Quarterly	Lessee

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<p>4.3. Demonstrate that the financial position and decisions support the future of the service by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing, reviewing and updating the Service strategic plan Referring to the strategic direction when making decisions about the service. Ensuring there is a maintenance, renewal and replacement process and financial plan in place for the service assets. 	<p>Strategic planning is essential for service sustainability, particularly where the Committee of Management members change annually. The goals and objectives of the current year must be aligned with the future objectives of the service to ensure a sustainable future.</p> <p>Where equipment needs replacing and it hasn't been budgeted for, it leaves a vulnerability to the service which can be avoided with forward planning. Items such as white goods, outdoor equipment expenses must be identified to support service viability. Planning purchases includes the quality and life span of the equipment and making a determination that meets current and future needs.</p>	Provide Council with a copy of Strategic Plan including a financial component with a 5 year minimum horizon.	Annually	Lessee
		Identify reviewed items and modifications, providing Council with rationale for change.	As required	Lessee

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4.4. Services and Council will work together to understand community need by ensuring two way transferral of information, data and knowledge.	Evidence based decisions need to inform Nillumbik Shire Councils current and future planning. When services providing information and evidence on Infrastructure and enrolments process, this contributes to Early Years outcomes.	Information as requested, which includes, but is not limited to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enrolment data, • patterns and trends observed • attendance data • facility timetable/utilisation 	As required	Lessee and Council
4.5. Services and Council work together to identify and plan for facility maintenance, upgrades and improvements using a long term strategic approach	Council as the facility owner/manager must ensure responsible and efficient management of Council's financial resources Council is committed to maintaining and renewal in consultation with Services. It is vital that each service determines their priorities through a demonstrated long term strategic approach and communicates this with Council to assist with planning and maintaining infrastructure.	Services and Council must follow the agreed facility management processes	As required	Council in consultation with Lessee

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5. ACCESS AND INCLUSION				
Early Years Service Providers and Nillumbik Shire Council recognise that all children are entitled to have fair and equitable access to high quality education and care that meets the diverse needs of the community and gives all children get the best start.				
5.1. Demonstrate the encouragement of gender equity through policy and processes.	Nillumbik Council recognises the advantages of a workplace which is rich in diversity and gender equity. Nillumbik challenges gender stereotypes and roles. Early Years services will benefit from gender equity and inclusion across paid and volunteer roles that support the service.	Recruitment policy and processes – paid and committee need to be able to demonstrate inclusiveness	Annual	Lessee
		Services have a gender equity policy statement	Annual	Lessee

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<p>5.2. Council will determine individual service capacity based on applications received through the Central enrolment program. Consultation with Services will ensure that funding guidelines, national law and financial sustainability is not compromised</p>	<p>All children are funded by State Government to receive four year old kindergarten.</p> <p>Council provides the infrastructure to ensure these programs are provided to children within the local community.</p> <p>Families with young children have the right to access programs that meet the individual needs of their child and their family.</p>	<p>All Children receive a place at one of their preferred Preschools to ensure services are meeting the demand aligned with application numbers.</p>	<p>Annual</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>N/A for Long Day Care & Restricted hours services</p>
<p>5.3. Council manages a central enrolment system to allocate children into funded standalone preschool programs across the Shire.</p> <p>The management of this program includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving applications Allocation of places to Services Development of priority of access All policies and processes associated with the program 	<p>The Department of Education and Training support Preschool Central enrolment programs to ensure children are provided transparent, fair and equitable access to funding preschool.</p>	<p>The Lessee must;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not make any offers for 4 year old places in the preschool program conducted at the preschool; and abide by all associated policies and timelines from 2021, must not make any offers for 3 year old places in the preschool program conducted at preschool, and 	<p>Annual process</p>	<p>Lessee/Council</p> <p>N/A for Long Day Care & Restricted hours services</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving and seeking feedback from users and stakeholders of the program 				
<p>5.4. Where Council identifies a need, universal policies will be developed and applied to program operations including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority of access to groups Cancellation and refund of fees Procurement 	<p>Children and families have the right to access programs and groups that meet their individual family and child needs.</p> <p>Family and child needs and circumstances can change unexpectedly and families should not be disadvantaged or penalised where their situation changes as a result of unforeseen circumstances.</p>	<p>Development of Shire wide policies and processes in consultation with Services</p> <p>100% implementation of Shire-wide policies and processes</p>	<p>Reviewed annually</p> <p>Ongoing/as need arises</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Lessee</p>

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Service Responsibilities include	Council Responsibilities include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a high quality Early Years service to Nillumbik residents • Meet obligations under relevant laws and legislation • Meet obligations in the Lease Agreement • Provide a community service and act in the best interests of the Nillumbik Community • Notify Council of changes to Management, service and other relevant items that impact program delivery and children and families experience of Early Years services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the delivery of high quality Early Years services, offering a range of accessible options • Meet obligations under relevant laws and legislation • Meet obligations in the Lease Agreement • Provide infrastructure and support for the provision of a community service, acting in the best interests of the Nillumbik Community • Council to give Lessee reasonable notice for attendance on site for maintenance work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report incidents and issues to DET and Nillumbik(D3) • Allow Council Maintenance staff to enter to complete maintenance works (5.21 Permit Council to enter) • Provide constructive feedback to Council and identify improvements that could be implemented in relation to building maintenance and support • Work collaboratively and in partnership with Council to achieve quality outcomes for children • Coordinate with Council in relation to Central enrolments • Working with Council to create opportunities for learning and development, with the shared view of maintaining a high standard of Early Years education and care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that maintenance work meets the service needs – give “reasonable notice” for maintenance work to have the lowest impact possible on program delivery(5.21 Permit Council to enter) • Work collaboratively and in partnership with Council to achieve quality outcomes for children • Manage the Preschool Central Enrolment program for standalone preschools • Working with providers to create opportunities for learning and development, with the view of maintaining a high standard of Early Years education and care

Early Years Service Level Agreements – Timeline for Communication and finalisation of new agreement with Early Years Providers

DATE	ACTION	SUMMARY DETAIL
October 30	Communication to all Early Years Providers	All providers will receive a letter confirming the change to a Service Level Agreement, outlining key dates and will be provided with a PDF copy of the Service Level Standards to read and sign. They will be advised that they must sign and return to Council by November 13, 2019.
October 30 – November 13	Queries and questions about the new Service Level Agreement	Providers can contact Council for queries and questions in relation to the Service Level Standards. Narelle Hart will be their key contact person for this purpose.
November 4	Reminder to providers by email	Email will be sent to all providers to remind them of deadline for submitting signed copy.
November 8	Reminder to providers by email	Email will be sent to all providers to remind them of deadline for submitting signed copy.
November 11	Telephone follow up	Contact will be made by telephone to Presidents of Services that have not yet submitted their signed agreement.
November 13	Deadline for signing agreement	COB 5pm.
Date range of October 30 to mid December (<i>date range dependent on date of signed SLA received</i>)	Council to provide the Lease agreement within 30 calendar days of receipt of signed SLA.	30 calendar days and then signed off within 30 calendar days.
Date range of October 30 to mid January) From date of Lease receipt.	Lease Agreement to be signed by providers.	Council will email out Lease Agreement and Service Providers will be asked to send back signed agreement within 30 calendar days.
November 14	Check final tally of signed SLA agreements	Advice to Narelle and Corrienne by 10am on this date.
November 14 - 15	Follow up where there are services that haven't responded	Contact by telephone to check in
November 18	Where there are services that opted not to sign new SLA Expression of Interest issued to Early Years Managers	EOI to Early Years Managers, which will include Service level agreement information in the EOI specs. With closing date of December 2.
December 2	Close of Expression of Interest	12pm
December 2 - 5	Assessment and determination	Process for review of EOIs and determination against the selection criteria. Recommendation and approval process.
December 6	Successful EYM/s advised.	Determination of successful Early Years Management service

December 6	Letter of offer/s to successful EYM service/s and Service Level Agreements sent.	Letter will contain timelines for signature and return. Sign and return date of December 16
December 16	Deadline for EYM service signing agreement	
January date TBC	Service set up and commencement in late January	
February	Information session for all service providers about the new Service Level Agreement	Outlining the key features, Councils expectations and how to meet with the Service Level Agreement requirements.