

# Non-Custodial Parent Policy

**Reference:** Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, regulation 47  
Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008, GMA10

**Rationale:** This policy provides the staff at Little Explorers with knowledge and skills for how to deal with situations regarding non-custodial parents, which can potentially be complex in their nature.

## Objectives:

- To ensure that the centre follows the legal requirements and acts in the best interest of the child

## Procedures:

- Full details of the child's custody arrangements will be collected on enrolment. Any staff member taking an enrolment must follow the enrolment procedures, ensuring that the form is fully filled out. A copy of the child's birth certificate or passport is also required upon enrolment.
- The management team will ensure that parents that have separated are aware of this policy.
- Children's enrolment forms will be checked a minimum of annually with a midyear prompt to update any changes.
- Staff will ensure that the privacy act requirements are adhered to.
- In the event of there being a court agreement or access restriction, the centre will request a copy for the child's file and all staff will be informed.
- Little Explorers will remain neutral in any dispute between parents acting in the best interest of the child. Any conflicts should be resolved by parents or court if necessary.
- Non-custodial parents have rights to receive information on their child's development, receive centre newsletters and contribute to the centre decisions and programming as any other parent.
- Ensure that all visitors to the centre report to the office to sign in.
- Any person who has or who is suspected of having physically ill-treated a child will be excluded from the centre.
- The centre child protection policy states that no child can leave the centre without parental permission and photo 'id', if this person has not been previously introduced.

## Should a Non-Custodial Parent approach the centre seeking access to their child:

- Should a non-custodial parent enter the preschool to either collect or visit the child, they will be directed to the office to the person in charge.
- The non-custodial parent's wishes will be established.
- The custodial parent will be contacted to check arrangements
- Centre staff will check the child's records for information about access. The non-custodial parent may be requested to provide court order documents if they cannot be found.

- Where possible written permission should be obtained from the custodial parent prior to visits/ collection
- If approval is given to a parental visit, every effort will be made to ensure that the visit is a normal event with the parent being encouraged to play in the play environment in the usual manner. A time limit may be placed on the visit. If the child becomes distressed by visits, the centre staff will ask that the visits are ceased within the child's centre hours.
- The staff will discuss with the parent after the meeting to determine what follow-up action if any is necessary.

**Should a Non-Custodial Parent seek access to the child in the centre or it's vicinity without direct approach to the centre:**

**In the Centre**

1. Check the records for information about access/check with custodial parent
2. Approach the parent to ask his/her intent.
3. Request the parent see the person responsible
4. If the request is refused, ask the parent to leave the grounds, particularly where the parent does not have access rights
5. If the parent refuses to leave the grounds, phone the police

If the parent insists on taking the child from the centre, do not attempt to restrain him/her, but ring the police.

**At the Gate**

1. Contact the custodial parent for direction if possible check records
2. If there is any reason for the person responsible to be suspicious or if the child expresses an unwillingness to accompany the parent she/he should ring the police or the custodial parent.

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