



BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY NO. 3.44

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OBJECTIVES..... 1

POLICY STATEMENT 1

GOALS..... 2

ATTACHMENT A..... 4

 Current Involvement..... 4

 Long Day Care & Occasional Care..... 4

 Out of School Hours Care..... 4

 CARE Inclusion Support Team..... 4

 CARE Parent Support Program..... 5

 Community Preschools..... 5

 Suffolk Park Integrated Child Care Facility..... 5

POLICY NO. 3.44

SECTION	CORPORATE SERVICES
POLICY TITLE	CHILDREN’S SERVICES
FILE REFERENCE	ADM301800
Date Adopted	29 March 2005
Date of Review	

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 To play a major role within the community in supporting the provision of services which address the care, support and education of children in Byron Shire.
- 1.2 To ensure that Children’s Services provided by Council continue to effectively meet the needs of children and their carers in Byron Shire.

POLICY STATEMENT

Local Government is well placed to perform a range of important functions in the provision and stewardship of children’s services. Many NSW Councils have had a strong and influential role in the planning, development, provision and support of children’s and family services over a long period.

The Local Government and Shires Association of NSW in conjunction with the NSW Local Government Community Services Association has produced a Policy Framework for the future involvement of Local Government in services for children and families. This policy endorses a vision for the future, which acknowledges that:

- 2.1. Children’s best interests are the primary consideration in the provision of services;
- 2.2. Children have the right to care and education for individual development and participation in society;
- 2.3. High quality children’s services and education is an investment which develops and enhances the social, spiritual and economic wellbeing of the entire community;
- 2.4. Community participation in decisions about services for families and children is essential for the development of responsive services that meet local needs

Recent research and understanding of brain development in the early years confirms the expectation that quality early childhood programs promote and strengthen the capacity of families to care for children and prevent the associated long term issues of learning, behavioural and emotional problems in

later stages of life. Investment by all sectors of society in the early years is necessary to enhance community well being and strengthen the economy for the future.

Byron Shire Council is committed to ensuring the availability of a diverse range of responsive and quality children’s services to the community by provision of land, buildings and office space, employment of staff, auspicing of government funds, providing financial advice and participating in management of individual services.

GOALS

- 3.1. To strengthen, support and promote the provision of affordable quality childcare, by:
 - Providing professional development and support to ensure services are staffed by skilled and suitably qualified workers
 - Ensuring services are suitably equipped to provide a stimulating and caring environment where children’s social, emotional and educational needs are met
 - Delivering children’s services at affordable cost for all families
 - Producing publications and information to promote the location and availability of Council managed childcare services
 - Maintaining the “Children’s Services Directory” database
- 3.2. To ensure continued accessibility of children’s services to all potential users, including children with special needs, low income families, families from diverse cultural backgrounds and Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal families, by:
 - Encouraging multicultural awareness and cross cultural sensitivity, and an awareness and recognition of Aboriginal culture and heritage in Council childcare services
 - Promoting greater integration of children with special needs in Council childcare services
 - Facilitating training opportunities for Council’s childcare staff seeking to integrate children with additional needs
 - Employment of indigenous staff or staff from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds where possible
- 3.3. To ensure continuous quality improvement of Council provided childcare services, by:
 - Monitoring services for compliance with regulatory standards and quality assurance principles
 - Regular review of processes and programs through consultation with service users
- 3.4. To identify options open to Council for future development of additional children’s services, by:
 - Monitoring the growth in supply and demand for child care places
 - Providing land or identifying sites for community based childcare centres
 - Maximising revenue from available grants to Council

- Monitoring the political and social issues in childcare as they relate to the local community
- Participating in local, regional and state forums which relate to the provision of children’s services in the local government area

3.5. To continue to extend support to families by:

- Regularly updating and extending the Children’s Services Directory
- Setting up a disability database network support system for parents of children with a disability
- Providing cultural network support to families from linguistically diverse backgrounds

3.6. To acknowledge Byron Shire Council’s support of children’s services by:

- Providing appropriate signage to Council supported facilities
- Promotion in advertising and public relations information
- Regularly updating Council’s web page in relation to children’s services

ATTACHMENT A**Current Involvement*****Long Day Care & Occasional Care***

Sandhills Early Childhood Centre is situated in Gilmore Crescent, Byron Bay, and was opened in August 1995. The centre was established to provide the Byron Shire community with a high quality child care facility for children aged 0 – 5 years. It is licensed to accommodate 51 children per day in long day care and 3 children in occasional care. The centre is directly funded by the Department of Community Services and the Department of Family and Community Services provides child care benefit to eligible families.

Out of School Hours Care

Recurrent funding for Vacation Care and After School Care is provided by the Department of Community Services and the Department of Family and Community Services provides fee subsidies to parents through the Child Care Benefit scheme. DoCS funding is auspiced through Council as licensee of the services. Council has been pro-active in obtaining funding for additional services following identification of the need for extended hours of care for children in Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby.

Service	Venue	Licensed Places	Hours of Operation
Byron Bay Vacation Care	St. Finbarr’s Catholic School	30 children/day	8.00am – 6.00pm during school holiday periods
Byron Bay After School Care	St. Finbarr’s Catholic School	20 children/day	3.00 – 6.00pm during school terms
Brunswick Heads Vacation Care	Brunswick Heads Public School	30 children/day	8.00 am – 6.00pm during school holiday periods
Brunswick Heads After School Care	Brunswick Heads Public School	20 children/day	3.00 – 6.00pm during school terms
Mullumbimby Vacation Care	Mullumbimby Showground	30 children/day	8.00 am – 6.00pm during school holiday periods
Mullumbimby After School Care	Mullumbimby Showground	15 children/day	3.00 – 6.00pm during school terms

CARE Inclusion Support Team

This service provides training, advice and resources to support childcare staff for the inclusion of children who are:

- Aboriginal
- Torres Strait Islanders
- Australian South Sea Islanders
- From diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Disabled
- Refugees

The team support childcare services that receive Commonwealth Government Funding. Support is provided to long day care centres, before and after school care and vacation care services. The program covers children from 0 – 12 years of age.

Byron Shire Council has auspiced funding from the Department of Family and Community Services for the CARE Team, since 1998.

CARE Parent Support Program

This program was originally funded by the Department of Family and Community Services as a pilot project from July 2001 – July 2003. The program has successfully been extended for a further year and aims to contribute to the well being of young children through strengthening and supporting parenting and carer roles. This is achieved by working with families and children’s services staff to individualise support, counselling and education.

Community Preschools

Council continues to support several community preschools in the shire by providing land and/or buildings for the delivery of services for children aged 3 – 5 years. Council’s involvement includes acting as Trustee of Crown Land, lease of operational and community land at nominal cost to the organisations, and the lease and maintenance of buildings. Services include Federal Community Preschool, Lillypilly Preschool at Brunswick Heads, Ocean Shores Community Preschool, Bangalow Long Day Care Centre, Durrumbul Preschool, Cavanbah Preschool and Periwinkle Preschool.

Suffolk Park Integrated Child Care Facility

Council has identified the need to provide a facility in Suffolk Park to cater for the needs of children and families.

A plan of Management has been adopted which supports the construction of this facility which will provide pre school, early intervention and family support services.

Council plans to complete this facility prior to 2006.