



Date :

Dear Parent / Guardian

Thank you so much for your visit today.

This letter is to provide specific information relating to your child’s enrolment at our Centre.

There is always so much to discuss, so I have added the information into the format below which will assist you later.

Child’s Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child’s Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

Child’s Room \_\_\_\_\_

The age grouping for this room is \_\_\_\_\_

There will be a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ children in your child’s group.

Days of Attendance

Please Circle				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Other days as required

\_\_\_\_\_

Child’s Teachers

Lead Educator \_\_\_\_\_ Qualifications \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Educator \_\_\_\_\_ Qualifications \_\_\_\_\_

Notices stating the current information about groups and staffing are displayed at the Centre.

You are encouraged to ask your Lead Educator or our Director for information related to:

1. Your child’s enrolment at the service including the activities and experiences provided by the service.
2. Our philosophy about learning and child development outcomes and how it is intended the outcomes will be achieved.
3. The goals about knowledge and skills to be developed through activities and experiences.

The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care can be contacted at, PO Box 38 Toowoomba Qld 4350, Telephone: (07) 4616 3791



## Parent Handbook

### Free Range Kids Child Care - Gatton

UQ Warrego Hwy  
Gatton 4345  
Ph: 5460 1080

[uggchildcare@edu.au](mailto:uggchildcare@edu.au)

[www.freerangekids.com](http://www.freerangekids.com)

Hours of Operation: 6.45 am to 5.45 pm  
Monday to Friday

## OUR CENTRE INFORMATION

### Centre Director: Belinda Guy

Welcome! At Free Range Kids Childcare Centre our friendly professional staff share the same vision in providing high quality care in a warm, safe and educational environment.

We are a family owned centre which is licensed under the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. We provide a high quality long day care program for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years, before and afterschool care and vacation care. We are licensed for 74 children. We are purpose built and this ensures our spacious indoor and outdoor learning environments which have been designed enable children to participate in all areas of the program within their developmental levels. We are also air conditioned. We have a range of other services which are available to families.

### Centre Philosophy:

Our philosophy is to provide high quality care that promotes learning, development and positive self concept in a secure and supportive environment that is responsive to child, staff, families and community needs.

#### *Our aims – the children;*

To encourage play and appreciate play as a child's way of learning.

To ensure that all aspects of a child's development needs are programmed for and periodically assessed.

To encourage development of initiative and self reliance in an atmosphere of trust and structured freedom.

To respect that children learn most effectively when they feel positive about themselves.

To provide a rich learning environment (one deliberately designed with much to explore and discover) which assists in helping young children learn basic skills. To aim to ensure concrete and sensory materials are a vital part of this environment.

To provide age appropriate experiences.

To appreciate and respect that children are naturally curious and eager to learn and they learn best when they are able to follow many of their own interests and desires to learn.

To ensure that as individuals, no child is discriminated against, with all staff respecting the values, attitudes and cultural beliefs of all families in the best interests of their children.

To ensure through our programs all children are treated individually, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, language and ability

#### *Our aims – the families;*

To involve parents in decision making about centre policy development, staffing and general centre management.

We will ensure the centre should be a welcoming and trusting environment for families.

Centre family units, which can be represented in many forms, is supported and assisted in parental responsibilities and balancing work and family life.

To invite families to participate in children's daily programs and have input into the experiences offered to children.

To respect and be aware of families cultures and needs and be sensitive to their differing beliefs.

To form a link with other families and early childhood professionals and services.

To provide information to families about the centre and their child's day through newsletters, memos, resources, programs, suggestions books/boxes, what we did today sheets and more.

*Our aims – the community;*

To be advocates on behalf of young children and develop an understanding of the importance of Early Childhood in all people's lives.

To promote community awareness and understanding of quality children's services.

To invite members of the community into our centre for educational experiences. This includes dental nurses, community health nurses, police, fire and ambulance officers.

To liaise with surrounding schools, TAFE's and Universities.

*Our aims – the staff;*

We believe quality staff is paramount to a quality early childhood program.

We promote the need to work as a team to create an environment of skill and knowledge in early childhood.

To create a working environment that is fun and flexible and a high quality service.

To provide secure, supported employment through sound industrial rights, conditions and personal practices.

To promote ongoing training and professional enrichment to all team members. Ensure career advancement is mentored and planned for through succession planning

Should you have any questions or would like to raise any concerns you have about the centre philosophy, please feel free to speak to our friendly Director at any time.

**Room Arrangements:**

Each day we will display notices on the doors of each room which provides information about the groups and staffing. Should you have any further questions, please see the Director or the Group Leader in your room.

Group	Age	Group Size	No. of Staff	Price
Nursery	0-2 years	9	2	\$82.00 per day
Toddlers	18 m – 2.5 years	16	3	
Jnr Kindy	2.5 years –3.5 years	16	2	
Kindy	3.5 – 5 years	33	3	
BSC	5- 12 years	10	1	\$14.00

ASC	5- 12 years	10	1	\$21.00
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Like all work environments, staff, at times are on leave, have personal commitments or are unwell. On each room door we will provide you with the names and the qualifications of the relief person filling in for the day. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to let the Centre Director know.

### Regulatory Authority

The Department of Education and Training (Office of Early Childhood Education and Care) is our Licensing body and have responsibility to ensure all regulations are adhered to and it is the requirement of this service to comply with the Act and regulations including 1. Requirements about activities, experiences and programs. 2. Numbers of staff and children. 3. Staff qualifications. Please be advised that you can ask for information about the following

1. A general description of the activities and experiences given by the service.
2. Services philosophy about learning and child development out comes will be achieved.
3. The goals about knowledge and skills to be developed through the activities and experiences.
4. The centre's log book with details of contraventions issued by the Office of Early Childhood and Care.

### Our Groups

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We work within the National Quality Standards to ensure that children are safe and have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that encourage all aspects of development. Our qualified educators provide stimulating programs which develop each child's skills and encourage them to achieve positive outcomes. A weekly program is displayed in each room for you to view, please take time to discuss this with your child's group leader.

Each of our rooms maintains a flexible daily routine which allows for both indoor and outdoor play. Children and families are encouraged to contribute to each room's routine as we believe this allows children to feel settled and secure and promotes and sense of belonging.

We ensure your child is an active learner by creating an environment that is challenging and stimulating where children can explore and experiment through play.

- ✓ **Nursery & Toddlers** - Leaving your baby or toddler for the first time is a very difficult decision – our friendly team is here to support you and your child's transition to child care.

Our younger groups provide environments which are supportive and nurturing which assist our children's transition to care. Staff respect each child in their care. We work in partnership with families to establish children's individual needs and their routines.

We introduce children to diverse play opportunities and encourage them to engage in social interaction which is developmentally appropriate. As children are ready we also encourage their independence, again working closely with families to become toilet trained, pack up their environment and belongings and important self help skills such as; feeding, hygiene procedures, dressing etc...

Our families are welcome to share our day – we always love our special visitors! We are also here to assist with any questions related to your child’s development.

- ✓ **Kindy** - Each day in our older room’s staff are busy supporting children’s exploration of new language, new physical and emerging social skills. Our staff extend children’s natural inquisitiveness and their desire to find out more!

We encourage families to share our day and extend many invitations to parents – maybe you have a love, special skill, interest or job which the children would love to share with you, it makes your child feel very special and means that the whole class gets to learn something new and exciting. Be prepared for the questions!

As children prepare for their transition to school our staff will work toward ‘school readiness’. We focus on the developmental stages as well as ensuring their self help skills such as toileting, hand washing, opening lunches etc...

You are welcome to visit our centre at any time and we encourage you to spend time talking with your child’s teachers. We will work towards making the transition to our centre as smooth as possible so both you and your child feel part of this fantastic learning journey.

Please read this handbook thoroughly and speak to our director should you have any questions. We also encourage you to keep our handbook somewhere safe should you have any queries in the future; you can refer to it quickly and easily. When completing your child’s enrolment form you will also be asked to sign that you agree to all the policies contained in this handbook. That way we can be sure that your orientation process has been informative and thorough.

### **What to Bring to Childcare**

Please speak with our Director regarding what to bring each day. As a minimum guide we recommend:

- Shady / broad brimmed hat (bucket or legionnaires is recommended by the Cancer Council)
- Bag or back pack (must be able to fit in the children’s locker)
- At least two (2) spare changes of clothes (appropriate for the season) including underwear, training pants, socks etc
- Fitted cot sized sheet set and a blanket for cooler months. These should be placed in a sheet bag (or pillow case)
- Bottle/s with breast milk or formula
- Dummy or comforter (if required)
- Water bottle or sipper cup

We ask you to refrain from sending toys to the centre in case they get misplaced or broken.

Please ensure that all items are clearly labeled with your child’s name. If items are misplaced, this will assist us to return them to you as soon as possible.

## About our centre

At our centre we are committed to a holistic approach to learning and this is fostered in an environment that promotes and supports all aspects of a child's development. Our centre is licensed and must comply with the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Please note copies of these are available at our centre at all times. As specified in the Childcare Regulations 2011 there are minimum staffing levels for each group of children and these are as follows:

0 – 15 mths	1 staff member to a maximum of 4 children
2 – 3 years	1 staff member to a maximum 5 children
3 – 5 years	1 staff member to a maximum 11 children

## Staff during rest periods

As per the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, the following staffing arrangements will be made during the hours of 12.00 pm and 2.00 pm each day.

Children aged 0 – 2 yrs = 2 qualified staff members present at all times, including rest periods

Children aged 2 – 5 yrs = 2 qualified staff members at all times excluding rest periods. During rest periods there will be 1 qualified staff member in the room and a secondary staff member available to be called into the room as required.

Our centre is open from 6.45 am to 5.45 pm 52 weeks per calendar year and is only closed for gazetted Public Holidays.

Our centre is approved by the Federal Government for the payment of Childcare Benefit Subsidy. Our centre operates in line with The National Quality Standards. This initiative is linked to the funding of Child Care Benefit for Long Day Care Centers.

## Settling In

The transition to childcare for the first time or starting at a new childcare centre can sometimes be very emotional for both the child and their families. All of our educators and particularly your child's teachers look forward to supporting your child and your family so they can look forward to coming to our centre each day. If possible prior "visits" with your child are a great way to assist your child to become familiar with the centre, their room and the teachers who will care for them as well as reducing some of the anxiety around separating from parents on their first day. Please speak with the Director to discuss when would be most suitable for you and your child to visit. Please note you are required to stay on centre premises during these visits.

On your child's first day it is a good idea to allow plenty of time to settle your child. On arrival, please put away your child's bags where appropriate (if not sure, please ask a staff member to assist you). If your child is able, please assist them to do this themselves, this is a great opportunity to foster their self help skills. If time permits, sit with your child and assist them to transition to the centre and engage in an activity. Please see any of our staff members to pass on any messages or instructions for the day as well as giving them an approximate time for you to return to the centre. When it is time for you to leave, we encourage you to say goodbye to your child and let them know when you will be back, even if your child is upset, say goodbye and leave. This will help build trust between you and your child. We discourage parents and families from prolonging their departure as this can be very stressful for your child and often for you too. One of our staff members can assist by reassuring your child and engaging them in another activity as you leave. They will continue to support your child and encourage them to participate in the fun and exciting activities programmed for the day. Please do not hesitate to phone our centre to see how your child has settled as many times as you need. The easiest way for your child to understand when you will return is by linking this to their routine. For example after your sleep, or after afternoon tea etc.

It is important that you return when you have said you would. If you are going to be late, please let the centre know and we will explain this to your child. "Separation Anxiety" is normal during early childhood and occurs when a child becomes upset when separated from a parent / guardian. Separation anxiety usually occurs from six to eight months of age and can last until about four and a half years of age although it can last longer if the child has had painful separation in their early years. Separation anxiety reflects the child's attempts to hold onto what is safe in a very scary world and it will settle down as the child grows older and more confident.

### **Centre Policies**

You are able to access Centre Policies at any time. A complete copy of the policies are available in the foyer for your perusal.

### **Priority of Access & Multicultural and Equity Policy**

The Australian Government has Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating places in a long day care centre. They set out the following three levels of priority:

PRIORITY 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

PRIORITY 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies or of parents who both satisfy the work / study / training test

PRIORITY 3 – any other child

For more information visit

[www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Resources/Documents/FactSheets/CCFactSheet16.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Resources/Documents/FactSheets/CCFactSheet16.pdf)



In the event of the service requiring a parent to vacate a position for a priority 1 or 2 child, you will be given 14 days notice of the need to change or drop days. If your circumstances change and your priority level changes the Director may request proof of employment, training etc to ensure that you are placed in the correct priority level.

Our centre has a non discriminatory access policy which ensures children of different needs, religion, cultural and ethnic backgrounds are treated equally. Their needs are accommodated and their family diversity of background is respected.

### **Child Care Benefit**

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is a payment made by the Australian Government to assist families with the cost of quality childcare. Families using approved childcare are able to choose to receive their CCB through fee reductions on a weekly basis or as a lump sum. A family's eligibility is subject to an income test which is administered by the Family Assistance Office (FAO).

Registering for CCB is the responsibility of the parent. Information and forms can be accessed from your nearest Family Assistance Office, calling 13 61 50 or logging onto [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

With the introduction of the Government's new Child Care Management System (CCMS), families are now linked through computer software to receive CCB through fee reductions. Your enrolment form clearly outlines the information you need to provide to our Centre to receive your CCB reduction.

If families are not eligible for CCB, or become ineligible at any time, **Full Fees must be paid.**

### **Child Care Tax Rebate**

The Child Care Tax Rebate is paid to families or guardians who meet the requirements of the work / study / training test. It is not income tested and the Australian Government will make a payment of 50% of your out of pocket childcare costs up to \$7,500 per year for each child. The Child Care Tax Rebate will be paid quarterly as a lump sum payment. For more information contact the Family Assistance office on 13 61 50 or visit [www.childcarerebate.gov.au](http://www.childcarerebate.gov.au)

### **Payment of fees**

At Free Range Kids we use Ezi Debit or Centrepay for payment of accounts. Parents can opt to use either a debit account (cheque or savings) or a credit card for payments or a Centrelink payment for Centrepay. Payments can be deducted either weekly or fortnightly, on any day of the week. Accounts need to be kept a week in advance at all times. A \$10 administration charge will be added to your account in the event of an Ezi Debit payment declining. If fees are not kept up to date it will jeopardize your child's booking and their position may be suspended or cancelled. Your child's booking at the centre is permanent. Therefore fees are payable for all days including absences (sickness or holidays) and public holidays. This ensures that a booking is always reserved for your child.

Two weeks' notice is required if your child leaves our centre. All accounts must be finalized by this time as any outstanding accounts will be forwarded to a debt collection agency. Any additional charges incurred by collection of the debt will be added to the account and will be the responsibility of the parent.

**Late Fees:** As you may be aware, employees in Children's Services and early childhood education are paid as per the Children's Services Award 2010.

Overtime and penalty rates payable to employees when they must work past 5.45 pm due to parents arriving late (i.e. after closing time to pick up their children).

The *Children's Services Award 2010* states the following:

#### 23.2 Overtime Rates

(b) Where permanent staff are required to work beyond their rostered hours because a parent fails to arrive on time they are entitled to be paid overtime, unless the delay constitutes an emergency.

An Emergency is defined as:

- A natural disaster affecting the parent;
- A natural disaster affecting another employee at the service;
- The death of a child or parent;
- A children requiring urgent hospitalisation or medical attention

The definition of natural disasters includes any one or a combination of the following: bushfire, earthquake, flood, flooding as a result of a storm surge, cyclone, landslide, tsunami, meteorite strike or tornado.

In light of the above requirement late fees are set at the following rates cover the cost of the two staff who remain with your child until collection. Costs are calculated in fifteen minute increments.

**Late Collection Fee:: \$25 for each 15 minutes or part thereof per family per occurrence.**

**This will be calculated on the time you exit the centre with your children not the time you arrive.**

When you are completing your enrolment form you will be asked to sign that you have read and understood your responsibilities in relation to fee payment.

### **Outstanding Accounts**

We have a proven debt management procedure. If your account falls in arrears we will take steps to collect the amount outstanding. You may risk losing your child's position within our Centre and a possible bad credit rating if the amount remains outstanding.

All costs incurred during recovery of outstanding fees will be charged to your account.

### **Emergency and Evacuation**

Emergency evacuation drills are held regularly at our centre to ensure a thorough understanding of emergency procedures and to demonstrate how safety procedures may be applied in an emergency situation. Our drills cover possibilities such as fire, bomb threats, floods / storms, blackouts, smog episodes and disgruntled persons attacks.

It is important that staff use teaching opportunities and discuss emergencies and evacuations with the children in both a formal and informal manner.

Our centre has up to date emergency plans in place and ensures that all of our centre staff are trained in what to do when there is an emergency. Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are placed strategically throughout the centre. Each child is identified during an evacuation and an attendance record is taken.

This highlights why it is so important your child is **signed in and out** every day so we can ensure your child's safety in the event of an evacuation.

All persons on the premises during an evacuation must participate in the evacuation and must follow the direction given by our Centre Staff.

### **National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating**

The National Quality Standard (NQS) promotes continuous quality improvement. Children's education and care services covered under the Education and Care Services National Law are assessed and rated against the NQS. The process reflects a uniform approach to assessment and reporting across the range of service settings.

The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care (OECEC) is responsible for the assessment of children's services under the National Quality Standards (NQS). Our centre operates according to the NQS and is therefore eligible to receive CCB (Child Care Benefit) from the Australian Government.

The objective of the NQS is to ensure that children in childcare are safe and have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that encourage all aspects of development.

Ratings promote transparency and accountability and help parents assess the quality of education and care services available. Every service receives a rating for each quality area and an overall rating. These ratings must be displayed by each service and are published on the ACECQA and the MyChild websites.

For more information on the National Quality Standards Assessment and Ratings process, please speak to the Centre Director or log onto [www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood) or [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

### **Emergency Care**

As outlined in the Child Care Regulations a room in a Child Care Centre may have more children than the maximum number of children prescribed for the group. This will occur only if the centre is

providing Emergency Care. Should this occur a notice will be clearly displayed and should you have any further questions, please see our Centre Director.

## **OUR CHILDREN**

### **Signing Children In and Out**

Your child must be signed in and out of our centre every day they attend. This is a legal requirement and must be followed. The sign in and our records are used for emergencies and for the calculation of CCB (Child Care Benefit).

If your child is away for a booked day, ill or on holidays, the corresponding days must be signed for by the parent or guardian. Failure to sign for any booked days or absences will result in the removal of CCB (Child Care Benefit) for that day and you will be charged full fees.

Please ensure our staff members are aware that your child is arriving / departing and you must complete the sign in and out sheet, ensuring you document the time, sign and print your full name.

### **Dropping Off and Collecting Children**

Our Centre will not release any child into the care of someone not known to staff members. If staff members do not know the person who has arrived to collect the child, then that person must provide photo ID as proof they are the person authorised to collect the child from both the enrolment form and / or other confirmation of collection. Person's collecting children must be 18 years of age (unless they are the biological parent of the child)

In the event that the child has not been collected by closing time, we will then begin to contact the parent / guardian on the numbers provided (it is important that you keep these up to date at all times). If we are unable to reach the parent / guardian, will then begin to contact the individuals listed on the emergency contacts list. If after 30 minutes we are still unable to contact anyone, the Centre Director will follow the Department of Communities Abandoned Child procedure, including contacting the Child Protection and Crisis Centre 24 hour service.

### **Programs and routines**

Our qualified educators provide a stimulating and involved curriculum which aims to develop each child's skills allowing them to achieve positive outcomes. A weekly program is developed based on each child's individual interest and abilities and is displayed in each room for you to view. Please take time to discuss this with your child's Group Leader. Our programs are developed in line with the national Early Years Learning Framework and are flexible and adaptable to meet the individual and group interests, talents and abilities. Each child's learning journey is documented and available for families to view at any time.

Children have the opportunity for both indoor and outdoor play as part of each room's routine. Routines allow time for individual, small and large group play. Children's language and literacy skills are further developed during this time with social interactions that involves children in storytelling, drama, poems and games. Music also plays a large part in our sessions as children are able to experience with dancing, singing and exercising their bodies.

We ensure your child is an active learner by creating an environment that is challenging and stimulating where children can explore and experiment through play.

### **Absences and Holidays**

Parents are requested to phone the Centre in the morning if their child is unable to attend for the day. Please note, notification is urgently required if the instance of an infectious or contagious disease.

Families receiving Child Care Benefit are allocated 42 absent days (allowable absences) per child per financial year (including Public Holidays). When the 42 days have been used, CCB will not be paid for any further absences unless they are for the following reasons:

- Illness with a medical certificate
- Non-immunization
- Parent with a rostered day off and a Statutory Declaration signed by a JP
- Parent with a rotating shift and a Statutory Declaration signed by a JP
- Periods of Local emergency
- Court ordered shared custody
- Attendance at Preschool (where applicable)

Please note there is no limit to the number of approved absences as listed above.

### **Health and Hygiene**

To minimize the risk of infection in our Centre we follow the 'Staying Healthy in Childcare' guidelines for exclusion periods. An exclusion table can be viewed in the foyer for your reference. If a child in care has a suspected infectious condition, the parents will be contacted and asked to collect the child as soon as possible. Parents are encouraged to seek medical advice and inform our centre of the outcome. If parents cannot be contacted we will endeavor to contact other individuals listed on your enrolment form.

In accordance with the Health Department please inform the centre Director IMMEDIATELY if your child contracts German measles (Rubella) or Whooping Cough (Pertusis). If your child contracts either of these illnesses they may need to be excluded from our centre to prevent women in the early stages of pregnancy contracting the disease when they enter our centre as it affects the developing fetus. For more information please log onto [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

Children with a suspected or confirmed infectious condition must produce a medical clearance before the child can return to our Centre. The centre will post signs to inform families of confirmed infectious

outbreaks with information relating to the illness. 'Staying Healthy in Child Care' provides essential information to early childhood services. For more information please log onto [www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses)

As per the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 each staff member must observe good health and hygiene practices and ensure the childcare facilities be kept clean and in good repair.

The three most important ways of preventing the spread of infectious disease are

- effective hand washing
- exclusion of sick children and staff
- immunization

We promote thorough hand washing and hand drying as the most effective way for our team to minimize the spread of infection. This is important for staff and children. Please refer to our hand washing policy for further information on hand washing.

Good oral health is vital to general wellbeing and early childhood dental hygiene is a key factor in the development of healthy adult teeth. Our centre plays a vital role in promoting good dental hygiene behavior in children to reduce the risk of dental decay and to facilitate the prevention and management of dental trauma in children.

Rinsing the mouth with water after eating is the most effective way to combat tooth decay (without brushing after every single meal). Our centre will provide water for each child to drink during and after eating or drinking. This includes milk bottles.

We also use our group times and transition times to discuss dental care. We provide a range of resource material for children and their families relating to dental health.

### **Immunization**

Immunization is compulsory to attend our centre, and is relative to the paying of Child Care Benefit. Parents must provide up to date immunization records to the centre upon enrolment and keep them current at all times. Any child who is not fully immunized will be excluded from the centre in the event of a breakout of a vaccine preventable disease for the duration of the outbreak. This includes partially immunized children.

For more information please call the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50 or log on to [www.familyassist.gov.au](http://www.familyassist.gov.au)

### **Head Lice**

Head lice (pediculosis capitis) are a part of life for children in childcare and school. Children have close contact with each other and this provides an opportunity for head lice to transfer from head to head although head lice cannot jump. Our centre staff will take every precaution to limit the spread of head lice within our Centre. The Centre will notify families of any reported case within the centre. Children must be treated prior to attending the Centre again.

### **Medication**

If your child requires medication to be administered at the centre, a medication form must be completed by a parent / guardian. All medication must be in its original container with the dispensing label or doctor's letter confirming the child as the prescribed person and the dosage to be given. This applies to all medications, regardless of whether they are non-prescribed such as teething gels, nappy creams etc or prescribed such as antibiotics. Please note pharmacies can provide dispensing labels for non prescribed medication, including homeopathic medicine.

Under no circumstances can medication be left inside a child's bag. Please hand it to a staff member upon arrival for correct storage.

### **Unwell Children**

A child who is unwell cannot participate fully in their day. We ask that parents keep children who are unwell at home as it is more comfortable for your child as well as protecting others from the spread of infection or illness.

If your child does become unwell whilst at our centre we will follow the steps below:

- attempts will be made to limit contact with other children (to ensure the other children do not become sick if the illness is infectious)
- We will contact the parent / guardian and request that your child be picked up as soon as possible.
- If we are unable to make contact, our Director will use their discretion in deciding to seek medical attention
- We will complete an illness form and this will be provided to the medical practitioner
- We will request a medical clearance prior to your child returning to our centre.

Our centre will, at all times, maintain a clear concise record of both staff and child illnesses as they occur at our centre.

### **Incidents**

Staff organize indoor and outdoor environments daily to ensure it allows for maximum supervision and promotes safety. In the case of an incident involving your child at our Centre, our staff will administer first aid immediately.

If an injury requires further medical attention the parent / guardian will be contacted to arrange a plan of action or in the case of an emergency an ambulance will be called. If our centre is unable to contact a parent / guardian or another person from the emergency contact list on the enrolment form, we will arrange a plan of action. The Director or person in charge will act on behalf of the parent / guardian to seek the appropriate medical assistance. We will ensure that a staff member the child knows accompanies them at all times until the parent / guardian arrives.

Documentation of all incidents will be made on the Incident Form and the parent / guardian will be asked to sign this on collection of their child.

### **Sun Safety**

We protect the children and staff members from direct exposure to the sun. Children are very vulnerable to sunburn with increases their risk of acquiring skin cancer.

Children will play outside before 10.00am and after 3.00pm where possible to minimize the exposure of the sun to the children and staff. Parents / guardians are encouraged to ensure that children have sunscreen on all uncovered areas prior to leaving home in the morning or on arrival at the centre. Staff members will also use a variety of age appropriate teaching tools to ensure that children are developing sun safe habits. Parents / guardians are encouraged to dress children in loose comfortable clothing which covers as much skin as possible (singlet or halter neck tops are not appropriate). All children and staff members must wear a sun safe hat when outdoors at all times. The Cancer Council of Australia recommends the use of a 'broad brimmed or legionnaire style hat.'

We are aware sun damage can never be repaired, prevention is the best cure. For more information log onto: [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au) or call Cancer Council helpline 13 11 20.

### **Toys from Home**

We have lots of wonderful, fun and educational toys for the children to enjoy at our centre. We encourage children to leave their own toys at home. Home toys are special to children and if they are lost or broken children can become very upset. Toys that are brought from home can pose a safety risk to children (ie small parts etc) and may not be safe for childcare. Please refrain from bringing toys with small button batteries.

We understand that some children may need 'comfort' items. Can you please ensure they are clearly labeled with your child's name and that their teacher is aware of them?

If your child brings a special item in for show and tell, please hand this to one of our staff members so they store it in a safe place

Our centre cannot accept any responsibility for the care of any personal items brought into the centre.

### **Rest Time**



We provide 'quiet time' for our children to regroup after a busy morning of fun and learning. This is a requirement as per the Child Care Regulations and it allows for a minimum of 45 minutes for resting. If our children do not sleep, they will be supplied with quiet activities for them to use on their beds. We are unable to intentionally stop children from sleeping or wake sleeping children.

### **Positive Behavior**

Staff and families share a common goal of positive outcomes for children. Children are encouraged to develop social skills that will allow them to resolve conflicts and meet their needs without the use of aggressive or destructive behavior. Children are encouraged to respect themselves and others. When staff members guide a child's behavior they aim to provide each child with clear guidelines as to why a particular behavior is unacceptable. Children are given realistic limits to follow whilst they are in care.

We are here to work in partnership with you to encourage positive behavior. If you would like to discuss anything with us, please let us know and together we can put strategies in place to assist your child to make good choices.

### **Nutrition**

Good food habits need to be developed at an early stage. It is important that we are meeting the nutritional, social, cultural and educational needs of the children in our care. We provide 3 meals each day at our centre and a menu is displayed in the parent information area in your child's room. If you have any questions about the type of foods your child will be served at our centre, please see one of our staff members who will be happy to discuss this with you.

Don't forget that water is the ideal drink for children and is available during inside and outside times. Parents are asked to send along a drink bottle of water for your child.

Nut allergies are an extremely common food allergy in children. To ensure the safety of all children in our care, we ask you to send nut free foods to childcare. This includes peanut butter, nutella, nuts etc. Any products containing nuts will not be served to your child.

If your child has a food allergy or dietary requirement, please speak to the centre director.

### **Birthdays**

We encourage families to celebrate their child's birthday at the centre. You are welcome to organize a celebration with the centre staff prior to the birthday so that both you and your child can fully enjoy the special day.

We encourage parents / guardians to bring in individual cup cakes to share with friends. We ask that candles are not sent to our centre. We prefer to do it this way to minimize the spread of droplet infection by the child blowing out the candle.

### **Shows and special visits**

We have a number of special shows / visitors that come to our centre each year. These include police, dentists, magicians, reptiles etc. Any planned shows are outlined in the Parent Newsletter for you prior to the day.

Our centre also encourages participation from local schools and local organizations.

If a special visit to the centre is required by a health care professional (speech therapist, inclusion support therapist, health care worker etc) during the year, discussion and permission will be sought from the child's parent / guardian. Should you have any concerns about your child, please see the staff members in your child's room.

All shows and visitors are under constant staff and Director Supervision.

### **Parent support structure**

Partnerships between staff and families are crucial for positive outcomes for our children. Should you require any assistance, please see your child's Group Leader. Alternatively you may also speak to our Centre Director regarding any concerns or queries you may have.

### **Parent / Teacher Communication**

Information regarding your child's day will be documented and available for you each afternoon. The information provided includes details regarding sleep, toileting, meals and activities (if appropriate). You can locate this information in the parent information area in your child's room. Please see any member of staff if you are having difficulty locating any information you require.

Our centre staff will speak to you informally at drip off and pick up times. Should any issue arise during the day we will give you a courtesy call to discuss.

Please ensure that you look out for notices around the centre, in your child's room and of course in your child's pocket.

### **Parent participation**

We encourage parents to actively participate in the care of their children by becoming involved in and spending time at our Centre. Parents are welcome to share special occasions with their child, or come in at any time and spend time participating in the room, reading a book to the class, playing an instrument, doing some cooking or painting and much more.

### **Parent Grievances**

We are here to ensure that your child is happy and healthy in our care. If there are any concerns, please let us know. We have a grievance procedure in our policy folder.

By following this procedure it gives those involved an opportunity to address any issues and ensure that your concerns are followed through and you are satisfied with the end result and the action taken.

All grievances are taken very seriously and we will always ensure the resolution is discussed with the family involved.

### **Parent and Visitors Conduct**

It is expected that families using our Centre and associated visitors demonstrate patience and courtesy at all times. Our staff and management endeavour to provide the children with positive behaviour role models. We will not tolerate inappropriate language or behaviour at the centre at any time.

Smoking is not permitted at the centre or in the car park.

The car park is for staff parking and for families dropping off or collecting children. Please be thoughtful, especially during peak times. Please drive carefully at all times.

### **Parent Teacher Interviews**

Educators are available for formal parent/teacher interviews. Interviews allow your child's teacher an opportunity for you both to discuss your child's progress and developmental milestones. It is also an opportunity for you, as the parent / guardian to discuss any items you may have. Should you wish to arrange an interview time, please speak with the staff in your child's room or the centre director.

### **Newsletters**

Our centre regularly provides all families with a centre newsletter. These will be placed in your child's pocket or sent out via email. Our newsletter gives information relating to the centre, policies etc as well as news and updates to ensure that all families are kept up to date with the Centre activities. Each room also provides information on room activities, special events and other items of interest. We also provide great food recipes and art / craft ideas for you to try with your child at home.

## **OUR STAFF**

### **Staff Recruitment, Selection and Retention**

Children need to develop trusting relationships with staff. When devising the Centres' roster we consider the continuity of care for each child. When staff are on leave, we endeavour to advise parents / guardians and children and if possible use staff which are already familiar to our centre.

Staff meetings are conducted regularly and each staff member is encouraged to attend.

We encourage staff to use this forum to discuss any suggestions or to raise any concerns they may have. We promote an environment of respect, value each staff member's input and endeavour to create a dedicated team of early childhood professionals.

### **Staff Training and Development**

A quality program relies upon staff having a thorough knowledge of current theory and practice in early childhood. We continually work toward developing and implementing formal programs for staff member orientations, training and development, including external training and education as well as in house professional development sessions. Our investment in staff training and development ensures that our current and future skill requirements meet legal obligations and assist individual career development.

We ensure that at least one (1) staff member with prescribed first aid competency is present at the Centre at all times.

### **Staff Philosophies**

Staff take time to develop not only our Centre philosophy but also their own philosophies and these are available to families in each room. Staff consider a variety of perspectives regarding child learning and development and practices within early childhood education when creating their philosophy.

### **Students and Visitors**

We welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge with students and volunteers and seize the opportunity to learn new skills from them too. All students and volunteers are required to undergo suitability screening by the Commission for Children and Young People (suitability card, with is to be carried at all times).

All students and volunteers will be interviewed and have orientation visits supervised by our Centre. Our students and volunteers will also be asked to sign that they have read, understood and will abide by our Student and Visitor's handbook.

All students and volunteers will be supervised by our senior staff and will not be left alone to care for children under any circumstances.