

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 we 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

Child’s Educators

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

We provide morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. All nappies are provided. After your first week with us you will receive a FREE Free Range Kids hat and drink bottle.

All you need to bring each day is:

- A bag to carry your child’s belongings
- A wide brim hat (no caps please)
- A drink bottle or sippy cup
- 2 spare changes of clothes
- Set of cot sized sheets (one fitted, one flat)
- Any comfort items your child may need. E.g. dummy, blanket, teddy
- Any bottles and formula your child requires







Parent Handbook

Free Range Kids Early Learning Centre
Laidley 1

39 Robinson Road,
Laidley QLD 4341
Ph: 5465 1342

info@freerangekids.com

www.freerangekids.com.au

Hours of Operation: 6.00 am to 6.00 pm
Monday to Friday

OUR CENTRE INFORMATION

Nominated Supervisor: Tracey Abbott

Welcome! At Free Range Kids Early Learning 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. We are licensed for 74 children. We are purpose built and this ensures 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

The Centre's philosophy is based around the concept that *children learn through play. Play is a valued process for children's learning, thinking, imagination, story making and communication.*

We believe it is of utmost importance to nurture and educate the children in our care through the development of trust, security and positive relationships.

We believe that we should emphasise and recognise the family, the individual abilities and skills of each child, the richness of the environment and natural surroundings and the broader community.

Our philosophy is founded on the knowledge that early childhood development focuses on the holistic approach to the development of the individual child.

Principles and practices that support our philosophy are:

1) In relation to children:

- a) To encourage play and appreciate play as a child's way of learning, which may include sensory, explorative, physical, creative, symbolic, projective, role and dramatic play and games with rules.
- b) To develop a meaningful curriculum involving interactive decision making by children, parents and families, educators and the broader community with the aim to foster children's learning and to ensure that all aspects of a child's development needs are programmed for and periodically assessed.
- c) To encourage development of initiative and self-reliance in an atmosphere of trust and structured freedom.
- d) To provide children with opportunities to express a sense of agency and demonstrate their competence and be leaders in their own learning.
- e) To provide a rich learning environment by providing opportunities for discovery learning through self-selected activities and encouraging the development of children's abilities to observe, perceive, explore, investigate, imagine and problem solve.
- f) To provide age appropriate experiences.

- g) To appreciate and respect that children are naturally curious and eager to learn, and that they learn best when they can follow many of their own interests and desires.
- h) To ensure through our programs all children are treated individually, regardless of age, gender, race and religion, language and ability.
- i) To acknowledge and support children's individual learning styles.
- j) To interact respectfully, constructively and positively with children, families, staff and communities to promote the critical importance culture plays in developing children's sense of belonging, being and becoming
- k) Valuing positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour, thereby enabling the child to develop self-discipline within an established boundary setting and parent-supported value systems.
- l) Valuing daily routines such as eating, toileting, dressing and resting as opportunities for learning and therefore ensuring that these times are engaging and stimulating.
- m) Respecting the needs and rights of children to make choices and decisions by empowering them to take responsibility for the functioning of parts of the daily routines.
- n) Providing opportunities for children to develop responsibility by encouraging them in taking care of their environment and materials.
- o) Valuing the cultures of all children through presentation of relevant cultural activities.
- p) Recognising the need for children to practice skills and consolidate their learning by providing opportunities for repetition of experiences and extension of their ideas.
- q) Designing and establishing an enriched environment that stimulates the imagination, promotes creativity and enhances aesthetic development and appreciation of nature.

2) In relation to Families:

- a) To involve parents in decision making about centre policy development, staffing and general centre management.
- b) We will ensure the centre is a welcome and trusting environment for families.
- c) Centre family units, which can be represented in many forms, is supported and assisted in parental responsibilities and balancing work and family life.
- d) To invite families to participate in children's daily programs and have input into the experiences offered to the children.
- e) To respect and be aware of family's cultures and needs and be sensitive to their differing beliefs.
- f) To form a link with other families and early childhood professionals and services.
- g) To provide information to families and early childhood professionals and services.
- h) To provide information to families about the centre and their child's day through Newsletters, memos, resources, programs suggestion boxes/books and what we did today sheets and more.
- i) Supporting parents in their role as primary caregivers and sharing information of benefit to the development of their child

3) Communities

- a) To be advocates on behalf of young children and develop an understanding of the importance of Early Childhood in all people's lives.
- b) To promote community awareness and understanding of quality children's services.
- c) To involve members of the community into our centre for educational experiences. This includes dental nurse community health nurse, police, and fire and ambulance officers.
- d) To liaise with surrounding schools, TAFES, Universities and community groups and agencies.

4) Staff

- a) We believe quality Staff is paramount to quality early childhood program.

- b) We promote the need to work as a team to create an environment of skill and knowledge in early childhood.
- c) To create a working environment that is fun and flexible and a high-quality service.
- d) To provide secure supported employment through sound industrial rights conditions and personal practices.
- e) Implementing change derived from reflective practice which allows the education staff to draw upon diverse knowledge, experiences, views and attitudes of other individuals. This information is used to experiment with new ideas, ways of teaching and caring while being motivated about making a positive difference to children's learning.

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 Nominated Supervisor 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			
				6 hr session 9am – 3pm	9 hr session 8am – 5pm	10 hr session 7.30 – 5.30	12 hr session 6am – 6pm
Nursery	0-2 years	9	2	\$89.50 per day	\$90 per day	\$90 per day	\$90 per day
Toddlers	18 m – 2.5 years	15	3	\$89.50 per day	\$90 per day	\$90 per day	\$90 per day
Jnr Kindy	2.5 years – 4 years	27	3	\$87.50 per day	\$88 per day	\$88 per day	\$88 per day
Kindy	4 – 5 years	22	2	\$87.50 per day	\$88 per day	\$88 per day	\$88 per day

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 Nominated Supervisor know.

Regulatory Authority

The Department of Education (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 outcomes 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

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 a 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 and 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.

- ✓ **Junior Kindy and 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 Educators. 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 Centre Nominated Supervisor 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 the Centre:

Please speak with our Nominated Supervisor 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 milk or formula (both water and formula must be measured and ready for preparation)
- 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
15 mths – 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 12.15 pm and 2.15 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 6.00 am to 6.00 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 Educators 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 Centre Nominated Supervisor 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 is 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

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 nondiscriminatory 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 Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment made by the Australian Government to assist families with the cost of quality childcare. Registering for CCS is the responsibility of the parent and can be done using your Centrelink online account through myGov. Information and forms can be accessed from your nearest Family Assistance Office, calling 13 61 50 or logging onto www.humanservices.gov.au

Once you have completed your claim for CCS the Centre will submit enrolment details for your child. You will need to confirm the enrolment details using your Centrelink online account through myGov.

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

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

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 you can use Centrepay to make regular Deductions from your Centrelink payments. Centrepay is a voluntary and easy payment option available to Centrelink customers. Go to humanservices.gov.au/Centrepay for more information.

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.

Session Hours

On enrolment at the Centre, the Centre Director will assist you in allocating the most appropriate session times for your child in accordance with your eligible hours for CCS. Session times are fixed and you are required to ensure your child is dropped off and collected within these sessions. In the event that your child arrives before their session time, or is collected after their session time, a fee of \$10 per hour will be charged. This fee will be added to your account and will not attract CCS.

Late Fees:

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 6 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 child 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. Our drills cover possibilities such as fire, bomb threats, floods / storms, blackouts, smog episodes and disgruntled persons attacks.

It is important that Educators 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 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 or 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 Nominated Supervisor.

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 out 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, staff 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 staff are unable to reach the parent / guardian, they will then begin to contact the individuals listed on the emergency contacts list. If after 30 minutes they are still unable to contact anyone, Nominated Supervisor will follow the Department of Communities Abandoned Child procedure, including contacting the Child Protection and Crisis Centre 24-hour service.

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-immunisation (if there is a contagious illness outbreak in the centre)
- 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.

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 Lead Educator or Teacher. Our programs are developed in line with the national Early Years Learning Framework and the Kindergarten Learning Guidelines 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, through the participation in activities such as storytelling, drama, poems and games. Music also plays a large part in our program, as children are able to experiment 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.

Health and Hygiene

To minimise 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 (Pertussis). 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

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

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
- immunisation

We promote thorough hand washing and hand drying as the most effective way for our team to minimise 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 behaviour 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.

Immunisation

Immunisation is compulsory to attend our centre and is relative to the paying of Child Care Benefit. Parents must provide up to date immunisation records to the centre upon enrolment and keep them current at all times. Any child who is not fully immunised 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 immunised children.

For more information please call the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50 or log on to 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 prescription 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 and timing to be given. Over the counter medications can be administered if a medication form is completed by the parent, however labels must be intact and readable. Directions will be followed as outlined on the medication label, even if the parent requests a higher or more frequent dose be administered. This includes homeopathic medication.

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 Nominated Supervisor 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 be provided 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 organise 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 Nominated Supervisor 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 or as soon as reasonable in the event of an emergency situation.

Sun Safety

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

Children will play outside before 10.00am and after 3.00pm where possible to minimise the exposure of the sun to the children and staff. Parents / guardians are encouraged to ensure that children have sunscreen on all uncovered areas of their body 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 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 (i.e. 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 labelled 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 re-group 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 Behaviour

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 behaviour. Children are encouraged to respect themselves and others. When staff members guide a child's behaviour, they aim to provide each child with clear guidelines as to why a particular behaviour 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 behaviour. 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 no 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 Nominated Supervisor.

Birthdays

We encourage families to celebrate their child's' birthday at the centre. You are welcome to organise 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 cupcakes to share with friends. We ask that candles are not sent to our centre. We prefer to do it this way to minimise 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 notices 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 Educators 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 Lead Educator. Alternatively, you may also speak to our Nominated Supervisor 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. Please speak to our Nominated Supervisor for more information.

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.

Following this procedure 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 where possible, 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 only. 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 concerns you may have. Should you wish to arrange an interview time, please speak with the Educators in your child's room or the Nominated Supervisor.

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, 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 towards 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

Educators 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, which 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.