

# FAMILY HANDBOOK



# OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR FAMILY

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**Play Patch Early Learning Centres are your home away from home.**

There's more to early learning than simply care. The early years are fundamental to a child's emotional, cognitive and social development.

Research suggests that a quality early childhood education sets a child up for success throughout their school years and later in life. That is why we are focused on providing our families with quality programs to support children's learning and development from birth right through to school age.

Our children and our families are at the heart of our service. Our commitment to you and your child is that we take the time to invest in our centres and our team, so that they can best support your child, nurture them, empower them and help them to grow. We know that doing this goes a long way to ensuring that the children in our care can flourish.

# Contents

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- 4 Settling Into Care**
- 5 Your First Day**
  - When You Arrive
  - When You Leave
  - What To Pack
- 6 Curriculum**
  - The Early Years Learning Framework
  - The National Quality Framework
  - Kindergarten and School Readiness
  - Extra Curricular Activities and Excursions
- 9 Watching Your Child’s Progress**
- 9 Helping Your Child on Their Journey**
- 10 Government Assistance**
- 11 Flexible Hours & Childcare Subsidy**
- 11 Payment of Fees**
  - Discounted Holiday Fees
- 12 Childcare Policies and Procedures**
  - Accident and Incidents
- 13 Signing In and Out of the Centre**
- 13 Open Door Policy**
- 15 Health and Hygiene**
  - Emergency Evacuation
  - Immunisation
- 16 Medication**
- 16 Nutrition**
- 17 Confidentiality of Centre Records**
- 17 Sun Protection**
- 17 Clothing**
- 19 Priority of Access**

## Settling Into Care

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Ensuring your child feels safe and secure is our top priority. Our aim is to see you and your settle in as smoothly as possible and start to enjoy our service and care.

Starting at a new environment can be full of emotions for both you and your children. Rest assured, we are here to support you in this transition in anyway we can. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with our programs and services contained in this handbook.

Our team is here to assist you and your child in their early learning journey. Please feel free to talk to our director with any concerns, queries or suggestions so we can best serve your needs.

Our settling in process is tailored to what works best for your family and children however below are some features of how we are here to support.

- We offer “Stay and Play” experiences where you attend the service for a few hours over a few days together with your little one. This allows them to familiarize themselves with their surrounding and also provides you with the chance spend time with the educators and centre director.
- A primary educator will be assigned to you to assist with settling your child in each day and to ease any anxiety that your child may be feeling.
- This educator will also actively be gathering as much information as possible from you, your child and family to determine the best approach for your child.
- Our director and educators are always available over the phone to discuss your child’s day.

Building strong relationships with you, your child and your family is especially important to us and is the difference in achieving the best outcomes for you and your child. We especially like to know as much as we can about your child’s interests, likes, dislikes and any special needs they may have.

This will become integral as our team incorporates your child’s interests into our educational programs, so please take the time to share information about your child with their educators regularly.

The settling in process is a unique journey for each individual child and although we’d like to say the process takes two weeks, in reality, it could be shorter than this – or longer.

We will proudly reach that destination when your child arrives into our care environment feeling confident and ready to learn. That’s when we’ll know we’ve made strong and lasting connections.

# Your First Day

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On your child's first day in care, educators will seek to make immediate connections with your child to make the transition process run more smoothly. We want to establish an environment in which meaningful and lasting relationships can develop between educators and children as well as between educators and families. You are encouraged to call at any point of the day to discuss your child's learning and activities with their primary educator or centre director.

## When You Arrive

- Sanitise you and your child's hands
- Sign in using our kiosk system at the reception desk.
- Store your child's belongings in their lockers
- Share any information regarding your child with educators (what you did on the weekend, new interests, new challenges)

## When You Leave

- Sanitise your hands prior to or on arrival at the centre
- Sign your child out using the kiosk system at the entrance.
- Talk with our educators about your child's day.
- Collect your belongings and take care in the carpark when driving out

## What To Pack

- 2 x Spare sets of clothes including underwear, shirts, pants, socks and jumpers/jackets for colder days.
- Water or Feeding Bottle
- Sun Safe Hat
- Any other items your child requires, such as dummies, comforters, etc.

**Please no toys from home.**



# Curriculum

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Our services are guided by the National Quality Standards and the Early Years Learning Framework. These frameworks guide and shape the curriculum for all education and care services for children under school age.

## **The Early Years Learning Framework**

The Early Years Learning Framework provides the framework for children's learning from birth to five years and for their transition to school.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming.

Belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationship they have with their family, community, culture and place.

Being is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be' – time to play, try new things and have fun.

Becoming is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

The Framework's five learning goals educators will assist your child to develop:

- A strong sense of their identity.
- Connections with their world.
- A strong sense of wellbeing.
- Confidence and involvement in their learning.
- Effective communication skills.

## **The National Quality Framework**

The National Quality Framework sets a National Quality Standard for childcare providers to improve on themselves and their centres in all aspects of their service. Particularly on areas that affect the development of children in their early years.

This initiative aims to improve educator-to-child ratios in services, increased skills and qualifications, national regulations and a quality ratings system which will help you to make informed choices about the education and care you choose for your child.

Our centre's aim is to exceed the National Quality Standards across all areas of our service. The centre has a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in place to show what is happening in our centre to achieve this.

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Our QIP is consistently assessing the below aspects of our service:

- Educational programs and practice,
- Children's health and safety,
- Physical environment,
- Staffing arrangements,
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Governance and leadership

### **Kindergarten and School Readiness**

Our centre also offers an extensive Kindergarten and School Readiness program.

To facilitate this we have a Bachelor qualified early childhood teacher who designs the kindergarten curriculum to prepare our children for their next step into school.

Our service also has local connections to primary schools in the area. In working with these institutions and with families we facilitate a smooth transition to school.

Throughout the year our kindergarten children also regularly attend events at these schools including the under 8's day and sports day as well as end of year events.

### **Extra Curricular Activities and Excursions**

All of our centers have an extra-curricular program.

Although the exact program differs from center to center, we cover swimming, science, music, language, soccer and tennis.

Please check with our director to see what is available at your centre:

In addition to the above, we consistently provide excursions to nearby points of interest including local parks, libraries, museums, supermarkets and many other places.

Prior to any excursion we will carry out risk assessments as required by law provide parents with a permission form. If the permission form is not filled out prior to the excursion, your child will not be able to attend.





## Watching Your Child's Progress

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Using the Early Years Learning Framework educators will observe your child's learning so they can build on it and plan the next steps. They do this by listening, watching and talking to your child.

**Portfolio** - Each child will have their own portfolio or collection of learning. This may contain photos and children's work to show what your child is learning. This learning journey is available for you to view at any time.

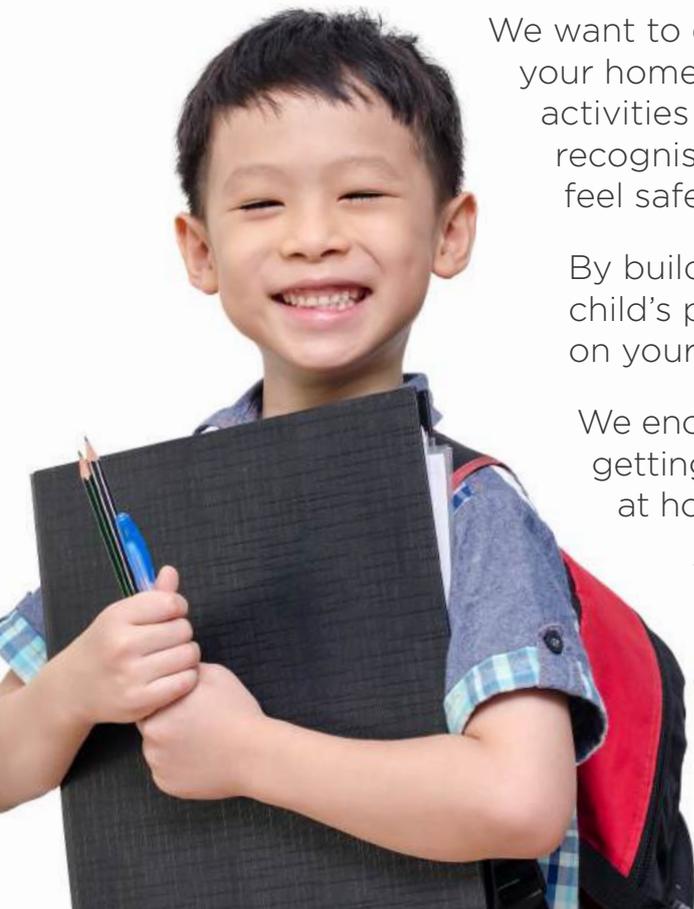
**Kindyhub** - In keeping with our belief in strong and consistent communication between families and educators and to ensure you are connected to your child's early education, parents have access to the Kindyhub app which can be downloaded on your smartphone. The app will provide parents with updates, photos and learning outcomes of your children throughout the day.

Your child's room will also show on-going learning through daily journals/books, photographs, project work, learning stories and a program documenting the day's progress. The contents of these works will be collated and provided to parents at the end of the academic year.

## Helping Your Child on Their Journey

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As the old adage goes, it takes a village to raise a child. That is why it is so important for us to work together right from the start.



We want to ensure our centre becomes an extension of your home life and that the relationships, cultures and activities that are important to your child are recognised. This creates an environment where they feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

By building a strong relationship with us and your child's primary educator, we can support you to build on your child's learning and development at home.

We encourage you to do this by asking questions, getting involved and continue the learning activities at home.

Working together, engaging in your child's interests and learning and discovering with them is the best way to ensure a high quality education for your child. It also helps to build the foundations for their success not only in the centre but throughout their school years.

# Am I Entitled to Government Assistance?

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment made by the Australian Government to help families with the cost of quality child care and early education. This is paid directly to the service to reduce your weekly fees.

Three things will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy:

- A family's combined income will determine the percentage of subsidy they are eligible to receive.
- An activity test will determine how many hours of subsidised care families can access, up to a maximum of 100 per fortnight.
- The type of child care service will determine the hourly rate cap.

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy. These include:

- The age of the child (must be 13 or under and not attending secondary school).
- The child meeting immunisation requirements.
- The individual, or their partner, meeting the residency requirements.

The number of hours of subsidised child care that families will have access to per fortnight will be determined by a three-step activity test.

In two parent families both parents, unless exempt, must meet the activity test. In the case where both parents meet different steps of the activity test, the parent with the lowest entitlement will determine the hours of subsidised care for the child.

Low income families on \$80,000 or less a year who do not meet the activity test will be able to access 24 hours of subsidised care per child per fortnight without having to meet the activity test, as part of the Child Care Safety Net.

Step	Hours of Activity	Max. number of hours of subsidy per child
1	8-16 hours	36 hours
2	More than 16-48 hours	72 hours
3	More than 48 hours	100 hours

*You can read more about childcare subsidy, the activity test and complete an online estimator at [www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au).*

*It is the responsibility of the parent to register for childcare subsidy. This can be done by contacting Centrelink in person or on **13 61 50**.*

*Alternatively you can log into your MyGov account.*

## **Flexible Hours and the Childcare Subsidy**

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We know that there is no one size fits all option for our families when it comes to early childhood education and care. That is why we are giving families the freedom to choose which hours best suit their needs with flexible drop off and pick up times within our operation hours.

## **Payment of Fees**

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Payment of fees must be made via Debit Success and all families must complete a debit Success application form upon enrolment, or EFTPOS is available at reception.

All children's booked days, including public holidays and absent days, must be paid to retain your child's place. Late fees are charged if children remain in the centre after closing times. The charge is \$1.00 per minute and will be added to your account.

Two weeks' notice is required if you wish to cancel a booking. Failure to do so will require parents to pay two weeks full fees. All accounts must be finalised within seven days and any outstanding accounts will be forwarded to debt collection agencies.

Once the child is enrolled and bond and enrolment fee is paid, each child will receive a welcome pack consisting of a bag, water bottle, shirt and hat

### **Discounted Holiday Fees**

If you are planning holidays, a Holiday Application form is available from the office. This form must be filled out two weeks prior to the holiday absence to receive 50 per cent off your fees for up to four weeks each financial year.





## **Childcare Policies and Procedures**

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Our centre has a number of policies and procedures pertaining to the care of your child. Our policies are located in the centre foyer and are available to review at any time. For more information on our centre policies please speak with your Centre Manager.

### **Accidents and Incidents**

Our educators take a proactive approach to safety and conduct thorough risk assessments of all play areas so that each child can feel safe and free to explore their environment.

A Senior First Aid qualified staff member is present at all times as well as nominated asthma and anaphylaxis supervisors. Should an accident or sudden illness occur. Educators will immediately commence first aid and you will be contacted to collect your child. In emergency situations you will be advised of the plan of action regarding further medical treatment.

During an emergency, if you or your authorised nominee cannot be contacted , the Nominated Supervisor will provide the ambulance officers with information regarding your child and a team member known to the child will accompany them to the hospital and stay until you arrive. Full documentation of the incident will be made available.

## Signing In and Out of the Centre

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Each child must be signed in and out of the centre every day they attend. This is a legal requirement and is in the interest of your child's safety.

These records are used in case of emergencies and for the calculation of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Days must be logged using **Qk kiosk** if a child is away, ill or on holidays.

On arrival at the centre you are asked to:

- Sanitise you and your child's hands
- Sign in using our kiosk system at the reception desk.
- Store your child's belongings in their lockers
- Share any information regarding your child with educators (what you did on the weekend, new interests, new challenges)

When you collect your child, we ask that you:

- Sanitise your hands prior to or on arrival at the centre
- Sign your child out using the kiosk system at the entrance.
- Talk with our educators about your child's day.
- Collect your belongings and take care in the carpark when driving out

To ensure the safety of all children, no child will be released into the care of any persons not registered as authorised by the parent/guardian in on the enrolment.

If team members do not know the person collecting your child by appearance, the person must be able to produce some form of photo identification to prove that they are authorised to collect the child as per the authorised information.

In the event that a child has not been collected 15 minutes after closing time then the parents/guardians will be contacted on the emergency telephone numbers provided.

If the child has still not been collected 30 minutes after closing time then staff will contact the relevant authorities.

## Open Door Policy

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You're welcome to drop in and see your child or speak with an educator. You don't need to call and tell us you are coming, you are welcome at any time.

We'd love for you to come in and join in our programs - your participation is valued.



# PLAY PATCH, COORPAROO



# Health and Hygiene

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Children and educators are actively encouraged to practice good personal hygiene to minimise the instances of illness. We also believe that if your child is ill, the best place for them is to be at home where they can recover faster.

If your child presents at the centre with signs of illness, the nominated supervisor may advise that they are not well enough to participate in the day's activities. You will be asked to make alternative arrangements until they are well or the exclusion period has ended (you may be asked to provide a medical clearance letter before your child can return). Although this can be inconvenient for parents, it is in the interests of all children and families at the centre to minimise the risk of infection.

Should your child become ill during the day, documentation and first aid will commence and you may be contacted to collect your child from the centre and seek further medical advice (please note that paracetamol is not regarded as a first response and can only be administered in emergency situations and with prior written parental consent). It is important that you read the centre's medication policy carefully to know when educators can administer medications.

A list of common infectious illnesses, their exclusion periods and policies and procedures related to illness and minimising the spread of infectious diseases are available in the foyer.

## **Emergency Evacuation**

Emergency evacuations as well as lockdown procedures are regularly practiced and the centre has individual plans for local emergencies including cyclone, flood and bushfire. Fire extinguishers are strategically located throughout the centre. As part of our fire safety measures all children in attendance are noted from the electronic sign in device in the event of a drill or evacuation. This is why it is important to ensure that you sign your child 'IN' and 'OUT' of the centre each day.

## **Immunisation**

As part of your enrolment process you will be asked to provide details of your child's immunisation status. In the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease it may be necessary to exclude any children who are not immunised for their health and wellbeing.



## Medication

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If your child requires medication while in care, a medication record must be filled in and signed by a parent. The medication must be in original packaging and accompanied by a prescription label/doctor's letter which states who the medication is for and the dosage. Medication must be handed to a staff member and will be stored in a locked cupboard. Under no circumstances is any type of medication to be left in children's bags. Please refer to the Medication Policy for further information.

## Nutrition

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We understand the important role we play in supporting the nutritional needs of children while in care. We have a qualified centre cook on site daily who freshly prepares all meals from scratch. We take into consideration any child's food intolerances or families food and religious choices. A 4 week rotating menu is available to all parents to give feedback at any time.

**“We have a commitment to provide all our children with a balanced diet and meal plans as well as promote healthy food attitudes and eating habits”**



# Confidentiality of Centre Records

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We value your privacy and have a number of initiatives in place to ensure the protection of your data. For more information on our Confidentiality of Centre Records policy, please head to our centre website or ask the Centre Manager for more information..

## Sun Protection

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Our centres take care to protect children and team members from direct exposure to the sun by all state regulations and the child care building code in regards to the amount of manufactured and natural shade available in the playgrounds.

We recommend that parents pack clothing for children that will protect them from the sun, including a hat, longer sleeved t-shirts and loose clothing which covers all of their body (i.e. no midriffs, singlets or bare backs).

Sunscreen will be applied to those children with prior written permission in accordance with the blanket permission form guidelines relating to the use of Foreign Substances. Sunscreen will be applied to these children 20 minutes before going outside and is then regularly reapplied.

Literature on sun care is available at the centre. For more information on the centre's Sun Protection policy, please ask the Centre Manager.

## Clothing

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Please dress your child in play clothes that wash easily. In choosing what your child should wear to the centre, please consider the following:

Your child will be working with messy materials such as paint, glue, water and sand so clothing must be able to stand a little wear and tear.

Clothing must provide some protection and be comfortable for both indoor and outdoor experiences.

Children will be climbing, running, jumping and swinging so they will need clothes that neither restrict their activity nor reduce their safety (e.g. slippery shoes, long skirts)

Children will need clothes which allow for growing independence i.e. pants that can come off easily for toileting.

Please name all clothing and footwear.



## Priority of Access

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The Australian Government funds child care to support working Australian families and ensure all children have access to quality early childhood education and care. However, the demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply in some areas. When this occurs, it is important for services to allocate places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.

To ensure that the centre adheres to the guidelines issued by the Australian Government, priority of access to child care will be given according to children falling in the following categories:

**Priority 1:** A child at risk of abuse or neglect.

**Priority 2:** A child of a single parent or of parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test under section 14 of the New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999.

**Priority 3:** Any other child.

In relation to priority three, there are some circumstances in which a child who is already in a child care service may be requested to give up their place or change days at the service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child, but only if the parent is notified of this policy upon enrolment AND the service gives parents 14 days' notice of the requirement for their child to give up their place or change days.

**Within the main categories, priority is also given to children in:**

- Families with low incomes.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Parents or children with disabilities.
- Families from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Socially isolated families.
- Single parent families.





THANK YOU  
FOR CHOOSING



WE LOOK FORWARD TO  
WATCHING YOUR CHILDREN  
LEARN AND GROW