



FAMILY HANDBOOK

www.macquariechildcarecentre.com.au

Educational program and practice

We base our educational program on children's interests, strengths and families input. We value inquiry-based learning where children are able to explore, investigate and experiment.

Reconciliation

We believe in engaging with local Aboriginal communities to provide culturally appropriate practices and teach children about the Indigenous history.

Environment and sustainability

We believe in providing a safe, welcoming and visually pleasing environment within our classrooms. Our outdoors environment provides opportunities to develop physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing of children. Sustainability is a part of our daily practice, teaching children respect and care for our natural environment.

Our Philosophy



Partnerships with families and the community

We believe in communicating openly and respectfully, and building reciprocal and trusting relationships with families. As a centre we engage with a wider community building a positive sense of identity whilst broadening children's experiences as active participants in different relationships and communities.

Relationships with children

We believe in building positive, trusting and respectful relationships with children. We do this through listening, observing and providing a nurturing environment to build a strong sense of belonging and support children's agency.

Reflective Practice

We believe reflective practice and critical reflections are ways to improve our curriculum, practices and professional knowledge.

Updated 19/3/2021

REF: Macquarie Operational Folder/Enrolments/Families/Family Handbook

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Settling- in Period

Macquarie Child Care Centre provides three settling-in periods of two hours FREE of charge to all new enrolments. Each of these can be at different times of the day to allow the educators to familiarise themselves with each child’s daily needs. On the first visit the child will have the opportunity to explore the environment whilst parents and educators discuss the child's individual needs. On the second visit parents stay for an hour and are then encouraged to leave their child in the care of the educators for an hour. On the third visit the parents leave the child for the full 2 hour visit. During your settling-in period, parents may feel free to make themselves comfortable in the foyer, enjoying a *Nespresso* while they wait.

Settling-in is an effective way to meet both parents and children’s needs and minimises disruptions to the child's normal routine. Once your child has settled-in to their room, please feel free to visit and join in the room program.

What does research show about the importance of the early years?

It is now well-known the importance of a child’s early years, throughout Australia and the rest of the world. During these years the brain lays down and develops much of its ‘wiring’. Health and nutrition as well as the relationships and interactions, can actually affect this enormously. The brain develops in healthy ways through positive interactions. On the other hand, seriously adverse interactions like abuse and neglect, influence brain development in more detrimental ways, and can impact on emotional and behavioural complications later on in life. So the early years’ interactions a child has, can either hinder or assist learning. As the Zero to Three organisation states in its handbook titled *Getting Ready for School Begins at Birth*: “The brain is the only organ that is not fully formed at birth. During the first three years, trillions of connections between brain cells are being made. A child’s relationships and experiences during the early years greatly influence how their brain grows”.

Childcare Subsidy-How Much Can You Get?

Please refer to the attached link to calculate the amount of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) you are entitled to claim.

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-much-you-can-get>

This will depend on your circumstances regarding:

- Family income
- Hourly rate cap
- Hours of activity

Child Care Subsidy (CCS):

Families will need to complete a claim for Child Care Subsidy online. If assessed as eligible and entitled, the Child Care Subsidy will be paid on your behalf.

Payment of Fees

Children are not to commence at the centre without the family first paying the bond and required fees. The bond required to be paid by families is based on two (2) weeks full fees for each enrolling child. This bond money will be held in the trust account and must be paid prior to commencement of care. The bond is to be paid either by Eftpos or Debit Success. Bond receipts will be printed and issued to families on request. **If care is cancelled before the commencement date on the enrolment form, the bond WILL NOT be refunded.**

Fees are charged via Debit Success and unless the start date for your child is the off week, then you will be required to pay one (1) week in advance. Families are to sign the contract at the end of the enrolment form, agreeing that fees will be paid fortnightly. These payments must be made to ensure the account is kept in credit or at a nil balance.

Any family enrolling at the centre that is not linked to CCMS to receive Child Care Rebate (CCS), are required to pay full fees until they are formally linked. Fees will be deducted automatically from family accounts via Debit Success on the centre's nominated date of choice, as per the centre's charging calendar system.

Overdue Fees:

Fees are expected to be paid when the fortnightly payment cycle is processed. If fees are not able to be deducted from a family's account, it is considered to be a dishonour. If the reason for fees dishonouring is due to financial difficulty, families are encouraged to speak to the Director/Nominated Supervisor to organise a payment plan. It is at the Director/Nominated Supervisor's discretion to allow a family to re-enrol at the centre if they have had an outstanding debt at the centre in the past. The Director/Nominated Supervisor or Adminis-

tration Officer will ensure family debts do not accrue over the bond amount paid initially at time of enrolment.

Dishonours:

If a payment from your account dishonours, a courtesy call will be made and a manual charge scheduled to recover the fees. If a payment dishonours, it must be paid within three (3) working days of your Qikkids (software) account being charged. If you dishonour twice in a row, or on a regular basis, it is at the discretion of the Director/Nominated Supervisor if care will be cancelled or suspended immediately. If fees are still not paid, they will be recovered through the bond that was paid at the time of enrolment, and any further fees owed will be sent to a debt collection agency for recovery. When a payment dishonours, the centre is charged a fee. This fee will be added to the family's account. This means the family will incur a dishonour fee from Debit Success of **\$14.95**.

Withdrawal:

Two (2) weeks written notice is required when a family intends to withdraw their child from care. This is to ensure all paperwork is finalised before the child departs. If a child does not attend the centre during the notice period, full fees will be charged in line with Centrelink laws and regulations.

Bonds are to be transferred to the child's Qikkids General account. Families will be requested to provide bank details so the bond can be electronically transferred into the family's account. The refund of bonds takes eight (8) weeks. This is to ensure there are no changes to family accounts that can be affected by the CCS adjustments. **Please be aware that adjustments may take longer than eight (8) weeks and can sometimes take up to fourteen (14) weeks to return to your account at Macquarie Childcare.**

The refund of bonds to families with no CCS adjustments will occur as soon as the paperwork is forwarded to management.

Absences:

If your child is going to be absent we ask you to phone or email by 10.00am and inform us the reason for the absence and how long you expect he /she will be away. When your child is unable to attend on the day that they normally attend, fees are still charged for this absence. ALL children's absences, holidays and public holidays require payment by each family, and as such need to be approved on the MyGov app. Absences need to be signed off. The next time you log into the *Kiosk* software, you will be prompted to sign off on your child's absence.

Children are entitled to 42 days allowable absences through Centrelink; this means you are eligible to still claim Child Care Subsidy for 42 absent days during a financial year. After this, full fees apply if grounds are not met for additional absences. For further information on additional absences, please contact Centrelink.

Attendances:

A responsible adult as nominated on the enrolment form, must sign children in and out daily. The centre has an online signing in/out system. There are two tablets available for all families/guardians to use when dropping off and collecting children. The exact time of arrival/departure must be entered for benefits to be paid by Centrelink. If you have forgotten to sign out your child, you will be prompted to do so the next time you come into the centre. Please ensure you enter the correct time. ***This is for compliance reasons.***

FEES for July 2019-June 2021:

Part time daily **session** fee is \$132.00 (11.00 hours)

Full time daily **session** fee is \$130.00 (11.00 hours)

- Weekly fees for 5 day enrolments are \$650.00

Preschool **session** fee is \$70.00 (9.00am to 3.00pm for **6** hours)

Morning session fee is \$47.00 (8.00am to 12.00pm for **4** hours)

- Casual bookings are available

CHILDCARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Accidents and Incidents:

The Director/Nominated Supervisor will ensure the family of a child who suffers an illness, injury or trauma at the centre is notified as soon as practicably possible and without undue delay. Families will be notified no later than 24 hours after the injury, illness or trauma. An Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record will be completed without delay.

The roster will be organised to ensure at least one first-aid qualified educator is present at the centre at all times.

Clothing:

The centre will keep a short supply of spare clothes, which caters for all ages and weather conditions. Families are required to supply at least two (2) sets of clothes for their children each day. This may include shorts, t-shirts, socks, undies and dresses (summer); or long pants, long sleeved tops, jumpers, dresses, socks and undies (winter). Families need to provide a spare pair of enclosed shoes (winter) and more clothing if the child is toilet training. Families are to provide a hat for summer and a jacket and beanie for winter.

The centre will send all wet and dirty clothing home with children in a plastic bag, which has been double bagged. These bags are labelled with the child's name and hung in the bathroom for collection. Faeces in undies/pants will be removed as much as possible and flushed down the toilet. Undies/pants will then be double bagged labelled with the child's name and hung in the bathroom for collection.

Clothes with drawstrings are not to be worn at the service as they may become a strangulation (drawstring may catch on outside equipment or furniture) or choking hazard. These include various forms of hats and hooded jackets.

Cultural diversity:

Multicultural practices are implemented throughout our weekly programs. Multicultural members of the community are invited to visit our centre regularly to give children an insight into various cultures, and encourage respect of diversity. The centre is committed to educator training in multicultural awareness, and we utilise these skills to promote an understanding of other cultures with the children.

Anti-bias practices are implemented on a daily basis. All children, educators and families will be treated equally at all times regardless of race, culture, sexual preferences, beliefs, religion, values, traditions, practices, physical and/or non-physical disabilities and impairments or socio-economic status.

The centre provides a service with wheelchair/disability access into the building and throughout the centre. The centre will identify whether a child has **additional needs** through the centre's orientation procedure, enrolment form and enrolment procedure. A child's specific needs in regards to physical environment and in individual areas of develop-

ment, will also be identified. The centre will discuss procedures with families and educators on how the centre can cater to the child's individual needs.

Emergency Evacuation:

The whole centre participates in quarterly evacuation drills. This procedure is to be executed if there is a fire, gas leak, bomb threat or any other case that the centre requires evacuation.

All educators, staff, children and visitors are to exit through the front door or the gate in the Toddler backyard. In the event the front door is unsafe or inoperable, the educators and children from the Nursery and Toddler rooms will exit through the Toddler gate in the playground. The junior and senior Preschool educators and children will exit through the Toddler gate in the playground, or the side gate next to the chicken coop. All educators, staff, children and visitors are to proceed to the Macquarie oval, which is the meeting point for emergency evacuations.

Excursions:

Educators must complete the *Excursion Risk Assessment Checklist* prior to the excursion being arranged. Each excursion must have a separate parent permission note for each child. Children without a written parental permission note will not be able to attend. Excursion notes are to be given to families two (2) weeks (14 days) prior to an excursion. Volunteers, notes and or money are to be recorded and received one week (7 days) prior to an excursion.

Health and Hygiene:

All children, educators and staff are encouraged to practice good personal hygiene to minimise the instances of illness. If your child is sick, the best place for them is to stay home so they can recover faster from their illness.

If a child is displaying any signs of illness, they will be made comfortable in a quiet area. Their temperature will be taken three (3) times to determine if they have a fever. Parents will be informed by phone if their child is suspected of suffering from an illness. As there are concerns for the child's health, the educator will ask the family to pick the child up from care. This is especially important if it is suspected the child's illness may be contagious. A medical clearance certificate may be requested before returning to the centre, if your child is suffering from a contagious illness.

Immunisation:

Families are encouraged to immunise their children, except of course if there is a medical condition or concern. As per the *ACT Public Health Regulations (2000)*, the centre requires families to provide two (2) copies of their child's immunisation history when enrolling. This can be in the form of:

- The child's original immunisation record (Blue Book); or
- The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) Immunisation History Statement.

Children who have not been vaccinated against any or all of the vaccine preventable diseases will be recorded as being **not** fully immunised. This means if there is a vaccine preventable disease outbreak at the centre, the child will be excluded from the centre for a period of time.

If a child cannot be immunised because of a medical condition, the family will need to complete a 'medical contraindication form,' and have this witnessed and signed by a medical practitioner. This then needs to be submitted to The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, and a letter provided to the centre for the child's file. Upon enrolment, the child's immunisation status must be recorded as well as each immunisation milestone.

Medication:

If your child requires medication while in care, a medication record must be filled in and signed by a parent/guardian. The medication must be in its 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 an educator and will be stored either in the kitchen fridge door or in a locked medication box, away from children. Under no circumstances is any type of medication to be left in children's bags.

Nutrition:

Our centre chef provides nutritious snacks as well as a cooked lunch, as per Australian Food Guidelines. Milk and water is provided with each meal. Children with allergies, religious or other requirements, will be accommodated with suitable food substitutions according to parents' wishes. Menus are reviewed every six (6) months and rotate every four (4) weeks.

Privacy:

Information will only be collected and used specifically for the purpose of delivering and operating a Children's Service. Collection of this information will be limited to the amount that is necessary for the centre's activities. It is generally only collected with the consent of the family.

The centre will only disclose personal and sensitive information to the educators for the specific and single purpose of education and care of children. The centre will obtain family permission before disclosing a child's personal and sensitive information to a professional attending our centre for the purpose of providing a service for your child. This includes early intervention teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, doctors, or counsellors.

We will not disclose your personal information to third parties for their own marketing purposes without your consent or for any other reason than for the purpose in which it was collected in the first place.

If you provide the centre with personal information of others such as doctors, emergency and delivering and collecting contacts, we encourage you to inform such persons that you are disclosing such information to the centre and why.

Priority of Access Guidelines:

Under Family Assistance Office Guidelines, there are guidelines to Priority of Access to Care which are:

- Priority 1) children at risk of serious abuse or neglect;
- Priority 2) children of a single parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test;
- Priority 3) any other children.

Within these main categories, priority should also be given to the following children:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- children in families which include a disabled person
- children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold of \$45,114 for 2017-18, or who or whose partner is on income support
- children in families from a non-English speaking background
- children in socially isolated families
- children of single parents.

A child care service may require a Priority 3 child to vacate a place to make room for a child in a higher priority group. They can only do so if the parents are:

- notified when their child first entered care that the service follows this policy.
- given at least 14 days' notice of the need for their child to vacate.

For more information please go to:

<https://www.education.gov.au/priority-filling-child-care-places>

Social Media:

The centre maintains a public Facebook, Instagram and Website pages for advertising purposes. Parents are given the option to have their children's identity remain confidential, when enrolling their child. This means any photographs of children's faces will not be posted on any social media platforms. In the case of group activities, their faces will be covered with a star/circle to maintain anonymity.

Sun (UV) Protection:

We encourage parents to apply sunscreen prior to arriving during the warmer months, as the children maybe outside already and the sunscreen needs to be applied fifteen to twenty (15-20) minutes before going outside to play (see *Cancer Council website*). This is located in the foyer. We encourage children with sensitive skin or allergies to bring their own sunscreen.

At the end of May, hats can come off while children and educators are outside for short periods of time. Due to low daily UV levels (under 3) during the June and July period in Can-

berra, sun protection is generally not required unless spending long periods outdoors. Please ensure you provide your child with a beanie to wear in the cold weather outside. At the start of August, sun hats are again to be worn outside at all times. Please make sure your child has a sunhat with a wide brim.

Our motto is: *No hat, play in the shade.*

Parent Code of Conduct:

The centre has a Code of Conduct for Parents that encompasses our centre values and policies. It talks about:

- The ethical conduct and communication with educators, staff and children attending the centre;
- Communication and interaction with educators, staff, other parents and children;
- Use of Social Media;
- The process for making a complaint; and
- Breaches of the Parent Code of Conduct.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Centre Hours

7.00AM to 6.00PM

Office Hours

8.00AM to 5.00PM

Weeks

52 Weeks of the year (closed on public holidays)

Ages

0 to 6 years old

Contact Details

Phone: 02 62514144

Email: macquarieccc@bigpond.com

Website: www.macquariechildcarecentre.com.au

Facebook: Macquarie Child Care Centre

INSTAGRAM: @macquariechildcare

Address:

11 Birch Place
Macquarie ACT 2614

Mailing Address:

P.O Box 483
Jamison Centre 2614

Groups

Macquarie Child Care Centre has six groups:

Senior Preschool (Kook-aburras)	Ratio 1:11	22 children aged 4-6 years
Junior Preschool (Possums)	Ratio 1:11 Ratio 1:5	17 children aged 3-4 years 5 children aged 2-3years
Toddlers (Kangaroos)	Ratio 1:5	20 children aged 2-3 years.
Nursery 3 (Koalas)	Ratio 1:4	12 children aged 13m-2 years
Nursery 2 (Joeys)	Ratio 1:4	8 children aged 0-12months
Nursery 1(Echidnas)	Ratio 1:4	8 children aged 0-12 months.

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND CARE ASSURANCE

General Enquiries: 62071114

Fax: 62071128

Address:

Level 3, Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning
Fremantle Drive, Stirling, ACT 2601

Mailing Address:

GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

Website:

<https://www.ecrh.edu.au/national-quality-framework/regulatory-authority>

TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING SERVICE

<https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

USEFUL WEBSITES

Education and Care Services National Regulations,

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/regulations/2011-653.pdf>

Education and Care Services National Law ACT (Act 2011)

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-42/current/pdf/2011-42.pdf>



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