



Playtime Early Learning

# Family Handbook

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## **Centre Philosophy**

Our Philosophy...

We believe that children are like sponges, they soak up everything they see; they mimic roles, repeat words and sayings and are limited only by the restrictions we place on them. Children must have time to play. It is through play that they make sense of the world around them.

A child's learning environment should make them feel safe, valued and confident to learn new things without fear of failure. It is our job to provide opportunities for children to problem solve, explore, create and understand others by building relationships with their peers.

We believe in the importance of multisensory experiences for conceptual development. We believe in making constructive mess. We believe that books, song and dance feed our imagination. We believe that learning about our natural environment will make us appreciate the Earth. We believe that in play we can both make friends and enjoy being alone.

We believe in Playtime...

## **Centre Goals**

### **Educational programs and practice:**

In supporting children in ‘belonging, being and becoming’ as mandated in the Early Years Learning Framework we encourage children to follow their own interests within our free flow, play based learning environment. Through our fortnightly themes children are able to explore and discover new concepts and hopefully develop new interests as well as build on what they already know.

### **Children’s health and safety:**

To provide a clean, safe and healthy environment for all children and staff. Educators will model and encourage hygiene practices and encourage children to develop the personal skills such as washing their own hands properly, toileting and blowing their nose. Our play environment along with all toys and resources will be assessed daily to ensure the utmost safety for children engaging with the environment.

### **Physical environment:**

Children will interact with nature on a personal level in the nature playground and vegetable garden. Educators will model and educate children on ways we can care for our Earth and respect it’s creatures and the land. Our indoor environment welcomes children into a relaxed and calm play space filled with multiple learning opportunities and a sense of belonging.

### **Staffing arrangements:**

Staff ratios as per legislative requirements will be adhered to at all times. Consistent staffing of dedicated, motivated, caring and encouraging individuals who believe in our centre’s philosophy will be the backbone of Playtime Early Learning. Staff will be provided with professional development opportunities to develop and widen as well as keep up to date on their knowledge of Early Years Education and Development.

### **Relationships with children:**

We appreciate that a positive relationship with children in our care allows children to feel safe and secure in their learning environment. In feeling safe and secure, children develop the confidence to explore new things and develop their interests and skills. In supporting their learning experiences, educators are encouraging children to *be* and *become* confident, curious and creative learners. Children will be encouraged to follow appropriate social behaviours and treat others with care and respect and educators will model such behaviours at all times.

### **Collaborative partnerships with families and communities:**

Staff at Playtime Early Learning understand that by communicating and collaborating effectively, building a relationship with parents, a deeper understanding of the child as an individual and as a member of their family can be established. Through our Pre Start program, children and their families casually integrate into our learning environment, making the transition into care a positive one for everyone. Open communication between parents and educators is strongly encouraged.

### **Leadership service management:**

We are a family owned and run centre by qualified teachers who have a passion for Early Years Education. We understand the expectations set by legislative authorities and believe we are able to integrate high quality care and education with an exciting and curious play environment lead by highly motivated and passionate educators. Parents, carers and friends are encouraged to provide feedback on the service that is being provided in order for Playtime Early Learning to grow and develop and consistently offer the highest quality care available.

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## Welcome

Welcome to Playtime Early Learning. We are a family owned and run centre with a passion for Early Years Education and aim to provide the highest quality care available to children between the ages of 2 and 5 years.

Our day is crazy fun. Like it says in the name, we are an 'early learning' centre. Our free flow play environment means that children can move between the indoors and outdoors as they please. Children make sense of the world around them through play. This is any kind of play that takes their fancy. Two children can learn the same skill by engaging in two completely different activities but the activity they chose was what took THEIR interest, they chose it on THEIR own and by doing this they are developing a sense of themselves. How exciting is that !!! We DO NOT in any way, we CAN'T stifle that ridiculously important learning process.

On the flip side, life does have a few rules and there are things we need to know like how to listen, how to be still, how to love books and songs, how to be silly, how to sing and dance. Our daily mat sessions are filled with story telling, news time, nursery rhymes and silly songs, yoga and meditation. Children love routine, it makes them feel safe and secure in their environment so while we have plenty of free time to play, we also believe in the importance of mat sessions and a daily routine that the children pick up quickly and thrive on.

You're wishing you could come too hey!!!

## Our Team

Our team is filled with enthusiasm, energy, passion for the Early Years, creativity and the understanding that children are constantly able to challenge ideas, think of new ways to do things, look at objects in a million different ways and find the good in everything and everyone. We believe that children can teach us, they can think of more activities than we could ever plan for and they develop confidence through us encouraging all of these behaviours by allowing them to think freely. Our staff will always be ready for a chat and talk to you about how your child is going each day.

## Our Learning Environment

Our free flow learning environment means that children are free to explore their own interests both indoors and out as well as engage in a number of mat sessions that focus on language, number, yoga and meditation, music and nursery rhymes.

When you leave in the morning you can smile knowing that your child's day at Playtime will be one where they go home excited and exhausted, with a bag exploding with artwork and collage constructions and enough sand between their toes to start your own sand pit at home.

- Elevated fort, climbing wall and cubby house
- Nature trail and vegie patch
- Play dough
- Painting
- Sand pit and water play
- Puzzles, blocks, trains
- Collage and drawing table
- Sensory wall

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- Chill out area
- and SOOOOOOO much more.....

We believe that a learning environment should be constantly evolving according to the interests of the children so while we will have the constant activities listed above, we will always be integrating new and exciting activities to motivate the children and keep them interested.

## **Operating Hours**

Playtime Early Learning is open Monday to Friday **7.30am – 5.30pm** and is closed on Public Holidays. We are also closed for a brief period between Christmas and the New Year.

## **Centre security and access**

Upon arrival please ring the doorbell. The supervisor in charge will greet you and let you in through our entrance gate. It is at the Supervisor's discretion to allow access to the service. Photo identification is necessary for adults collecting children who are not regular visitors to the centre. In relation to our policy, please inform the nominated Supervisor if an alternative person will be collecting your child through either phone call, text message, email or write in our communication book in our entrance. Staff have the right to refuse entry into the premise if they feel that the safety of the staff and children are at risk.

## **Late collection**

Playtime Early Learning have strict operating hours of 7.30am – 5.30pm that have been granted by the Education and Care Regulatory Unit, therefore it is of utmost importance that we follow these guidelines. Upon enrolment it is agreed that a fee of \$1.00 per minute after 5.30pm (full day enrollees) or 12.30pm (morning session enrollees) will be charged. This is charged separately to your fees and will be added to your next statement. Playtime Early Learning have the right to cancel care if late collection becomes an ongoing issue. If a child has not been collected by 6.00pm, Crisis Care will be called to care for the child.

## **Enrolment and Orientation process**

Upon enrolment, it is necessary that the Playtime Early Learning handbook is read thoroughly and both an enrolment form and an EziDebit form be read and signed by the enrolling parent. A copy of your child's immunisation record and birth certificate is also required upon enrolment.

The purpose of orientation is to start building relationships between children, families and educators, and to help children and families feel comfortable in a new environment and with people they have not previously met. Orientation is a one hour session usually the day before your child commences their full day with us and will be booked in from 10.30am - 11.30am. This will all be arranged via a detailed email from our administration staff.

The child's enrolment records must be completed in full and returned to the centre prior to orientation.

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## Daily personal requirements

Please ensure that you provide your child with the following items upon drop off ready for their day at Playtime:

- An appropriate hat for sun protection
- Water bottle filled with **WATER** only please
- Change of clothes
- A small cushion, blanket and your child's comforter if they use one at rest time.
- A spare set of clothes including underwear and additional items if your child is toilet training
- A piece of **FRUIT** that will be used for our share plate at morning tea time
- **LUNCH** in a suitable lunchbox that can be stored in the fridge. Please see our Policy 1.1 with regards to Lunch;

*Children are to be supplied with a nutritional packed lunch and a piece of fruit to share for each day that they attend Playtime Early Learning. Age appropriate foods that meet the child's nutritional needs. An adequate amount of food must be supplied by the parent/carer based on the requirements of the child.*

Playtime Early Learning has been licensed by the Education and Care Regulatory Unit and in that license states that we are unable to provide lunch to children. If a child has not been provided with lunch, the enrolling parent will be called. If this becomes a regular occurrence Playtime Early Learning will request a meeting with the parent to discuss this issue.

***Please ensure that every item that you send to Playtime is clearly labelled with your child's name.***

## Meal times

*Please ensure that your child has a substantial breakfast before attending Playtime Early Learning. They will need lots of energy to play!*

**Morning Tea:**                   **9.45 am**

**Lunch:**                           **11.45 am**

**Afternoon Tea:**               **3.00 pm**

*(Meal times may alter occasionally)*

## Allergies

Please notify Playtime Early Learning of any allergies that your child has upon enrolment where an Action Plan will be developed and implemented in our centre. We will display all action plans for staff to see and notify families of any foods that are unable to be brought into the centre.

Our educators are trained in asthma and anaphylactic management and first aid.

## **Birthday and cultural celebrations**

We enjoy celebrating each other's birthday and welcome a small treat for everyone to share if you would like to send something in with your child. It is preferred that these items are in single serves eg. A small chocolate or cupcake. Please ensure that the ingredients are made visible to staff so that we can ensure the safety of any children with allergies.

## **Attendance and Absentees**

Upon drop off, parents/carers are required to sign in using the tablet in our entrance. This process ensures that we have an up to date log of who is in our building and the times of drop off and collection are recorded. If your child does not attend due to sickness, holidays etc. they will be marked as absent by the supervisor. This ensures that you will still receive CCB and CCR entitlements. You are provided with 42 absences per year before full fees apply.

If your child is unwell, please do not send them in to avoid the spread of infection. If it is deemed by staff that your child is too unwell to stay at Playtime, the enrolling parent will be called to collect their child. If we are unable to contact you, the emergency contact will be called.

## **Family's terminating care**

Two weeks notice must be given upon termination of your child's place at Playtime Early Learning or two weeks full fees will be charged in lieu. Child Care Benefit and Rebate entitlements cannot be paid in the last two weeks of care if you are absent, please be advised that in this instance full fees will be charged.

## **Parent to staff communication**

We believe in the importance of relationships between staff and parents of the children in our care. Parent communication with staff about how their child is feeling, recent experiences, interests, likes and dislikes are all things that help educators develop a positive relationship with your child, gain a deeper understanding of them and therefore use this to work with them to play and learn is an extremely positive way.

Parents will be notified of any news and events by email and via our email. Our entrance will also display news and events.

We will also be using the app See Saw to communicate with you and keep you up to date on your child's achievements from their day at Playtime. By using this app we are able to take photos of your child whilst engaged in a learning experience, take photos of their work and include comments on what we post. The items that we upload are connected to your child so the only person that can see something that your child has been tagged in is you.

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You will receive automatic notifications via iOS and Android Parent apps, SMS text message, or email when new items are added, parents only get updates for their child and can only view their child's journal, parents can access journals via iOS app, Android app or on the web.

Towards the end of each school term we will have an outing where all families are invited to attend. Families will be notified of these outings by email, Facebook and on display in our entrance.

We encourage parents' feedback and any ideas that we could implement in our centre.

All conversations between parents and educators are confidential.

## **Centre fees**

It is our policy that families pay their fees one week in advance at all times. The parent must then continue to pay the weekly fee in advance in order to maintain a credit balance equivalent to one week of fees.

ALL payments must be made via EziDebit and all families must complete a EziDebit application form upon enrolment. Our service has a no cash policy.

ALL children's booked days, including absent (holidays or illness) days must be paid to retain your booking.

## **Public holidays**

We DO NOT charge for public holidays.

## **Extra days**

If you require additional days other than your child's regular spot please call us and we will try to slot your child in. Fees for the extra day will be charged on that day. Please note that we are unable to swap regular days.

## **Policies and procedures**

If you wish to read through our comprehensive policy file please speak with our Director, Michelle Neagle

## **Child care benefit and rebate entitlements**

### **Understanding the Child Care Rebate**

You meet the work, training, study test for Child Care Rebate if you and your partner, within the week, participated in;

- paid work or self-employment
- setting up a business

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- training or studying
- looking for work
- voluntary work to improve your work skills

This rebate is NOT income tested and gives you 50% off of your child care fees.

## **Understanding the Child Care Benefit**

You may also be eligible for the Child Care Benefit. This is a payment from the Australian Government that helps you with the cost of child care. You can choose to receive CCB as an annual lump sum payment or as reduced child care fees throughout the year. Child Care Benefit is assessed by the Department of Human Services <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/comtact-us/phone-us> and cannot be claimed unless we receive your family's Customer Reference Number (CRN) and your child's CRN on the enrolment form. Please be aware that any changes made to your rebate is done so by the Department of Human Services and **not** Playtime Early Learning.

**Please be aware that if child care entitlements have not come through on our system full fees apply, amounts will only be paid back if Centrelink pays these on your behalf.**

## **Toilet training**

We understand that toilet training can be a tricky and time consuming period of the toddler years. We are more than happy to help with your child's toilet training and understand that consistency between the home and Playtime is key. We will work with you to assist your child developing these skills. Please ensure you communicate with staff on how you are working through this new skill with your child and we will try to do the same. We have child sized toilets and a wash basin that they will be able to access themselves to encourage independence. As accidents do happen, please provide enough spare clothes and underwear for your child. We do not have washing facilities at Playtime but we will rinse clothing out as best we can and return to you in a plastic bag.

## **Still in nappies?**

If your child is still wearing nappies please provide enough for the time they will be spending at Playtime. We have baby wipes and nappy sacks.

## **Rest and sleep**

Your child will be on the go at Playtime with an abundance of activities to keep them active and engaged. Along with our mat sessions where children have time to sit and enjoy stories and songs, our routine will include a rest period directly after lunch. At this time all children are gathered on the mat area, the lights are turned off and they are offered a cushion to rest on. An educator will read a soothing story and we may have some relaxing music playing to calm the room. At this time some children will fall asleep, while others will not. After 20 minutes of rest those children who do not wish to sleep will be led by another educator to work on a quiet activity.

## Guiding children's behavior

As per our policy 7.0 – Interactions with children:

Best endeavours are made to build positive, respectful and equitable relationships with children that are maintained in a way that: encourages children to express themselves and their opinions; allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self esteem; maintains at all times the dignity and rights of all children; gives each child positive guidance; and has regard to the family and cultural values, age and physical intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the centre.

1. Staff will use best endeavours to ensure the atmosphere of the service is relaxed and happy.
2. Throughout the day each child is engaged with all staff members in meaningful open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
3. Staff members will ensure routines such as meal times, toileting, nappy change and rest times are relaxed, unhurried and are used for positive interactions with individual children.
4. Staff will participate in and treat respectfully children's play and projects.
5. Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships.
6. Children's efforts to communicate are responded to sensitively and appropriately supporting the child to feel safe, secure and confident.
7. All staff members will support each child to work with, learn from, and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
8. All staff members will support each child to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and to communicate effectively to resolve conflict.
9. All staff members will respond positively and respectfully to children's comments, questions and requests for assistance.
10. The dignity and rights of every child will be maintained at all times.

**Please be aware that Playtime Early Learning places utmost importance on the safety of our staff and children. Where a child places any other child or staff member in danger or injury, the parent will be asked to seek alternative care.**

**Incidents such as biting, closed fist hitting, swearing and spitting are not tolerated. The Director will request a meeting with the parent to discuss the issue. On a Termly basis an incident occurs, parents will be advised upon pick up, on the second occasion parents will be called immediately to be notified. On a third occurrence the parent will be asked to collect their child immediately.**

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## Incursions

In conjunction with our programs we will integrate relevant incursions to enhance understandings and develop a deeper interest in a topic. We believe children should be exposed to a variety of new experiences and opportunities to engage with our community.

## Educational program and routine

3 Ups is our Pre Kindy program and is prepared by a qualified Early Childhood Teacher to bring your child super fun activities in language and numeracy that will prepare them for school. This program is perfectly suitable for our two years olds as well. Children develop at such different rates and in so many different areas of their being that they will take on learning experiences to suit themselves due to our open ended activities being prepared in such a way that children can get as much or as little out of it depending on how developmentally ready they are. All programs of work are developed using the Early Years Learning Framework. Each fortnight our theme will change offering new and exciting open ended learning experiences for your child. As we have as strong belief in following the child's interests, if we find that they have found an interest in something other than what has been planned, we will adapt and follow that journey instead.

More important than this are the social and personal skills they will develop, learning how to listen to others, take turns and make independent choices. A large part of their day will be making choices in our free flow learning environment but within this they will be developing their fine motor skills, problem solving skills and decision making skills without even knowing it.

It is so important to give your child the very best start to their school life. Knowing the basics before they start will set them up for kindy and hopefully make the transition to school life a positive one for everyone.

### **BUT ABOVE ALL.....**

**We want your child to have fun. When it comes down to it, our aim is for them to be happy, confident, curious little souls and we will have fun and play with them all day to encourage exactly that!**

## Child portfolios

Each child at Playtime Early Learning will be provided with a scrapbook that will record their learning journey with us. Work pieces will vary but they will all be connected to an outcome from the Early Years Learning Framework. Important assessments that document your child's development, interest and experiences with us at Playtime will also be included.

## No smoking and alcohol

Playtime Early Learning is a strictly NO SMOKING zone.

As per our policy 1.5

*'Playtime Early Learning staff will provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illegal and illicit drugs and alcohol'.*

Any person intoxicated or under the influence on the premises will be asked to leave immediately.

## **Immunisations**

Upon enrolment a copy of your child's immunisation record is required.

As per our policy 2.1

*'Children who are not immunised will be **unable** to attend Playtime Early Learning. Immunisation status is to be sighted at the time of enrolment and a copy held at the service on file.'*

## **Weather protection**

At Playtime Early Learning we play outside all day every day. Please provide your child with an appropriate sun hat and in the summer months apply sunscreen before drop off. We will also apply sunscreen to children throughout the day as we see necessary. Please advise staff if you have a sunscreen that you prefer us to use on your child and send it in with your child's name clearly labelled. During the winter months, please provide a wet weather coat and gum boots if possible as we still play outside in the rain (Not when it is pouring though)! As we will be playing with lots of sand, mud and water all year round please send in changes of clothes in your child's bag. Please ensure all items are clearly labelled with your child's name.

## **Medication**

If your child requires medication while in our 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 which states who the medication is for and the dosage. Medication must be handed to a staff member and stored out of reach from children. Under no circumstances is any type of medication to be left in children's bags. Please see our Policy 2.3 for further information.

*Handbook last updated on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2017*