



Parent Handbook

Document Review

This Handbook will be reviewed annually.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

We welcome your family to our Service. Starting childcare can be an exciting but difficult time for both parents and children. As first-time users of large group care you could feel apprehensive about what is expected of you and how your child will respond to this new and different environment. For those of you changing Services, there is a whole new set of guidelines and faces to adapt to.

This booklet has been designed for you to refer to and hopefully answers some of the many questions you will have. Please feel free to discuss anything you are not sure of with a staff member, the director or a committee member.

Our aim is to develop a partnership with your family to create a caring, enriching environment for us all to share.

SPCCC is a Community based, non-profit Service, this means that, as parents, you share in the Service's management. This is done by electing a committee once a year at the Annual General Meeting. We operate under the Nation Quality Framework (accreditation) principles which enables you to apply for Child Care Rebate.

Our sponsor is the City of Darwin Council, who own the building and maintain it. No rent is paid but we pay for garbage collection and water usage.

We are licensed by the NT Government, through the Children's Services Unit, and this is renewed every 3 years with regular monitoring.

Our registration is for 59 children between the ages of 6 months to 5 years. We provide care on a full time and part time basis.

Staff employment consists of permanent, part time and full time to ensure a commitment to the program in both energy and time. A regular group of relief staff assist during leave, sickness and training. Our aim is to maintain continuity of care with familiar faces. A minimum of 50% of the staff hold formal qualifications in early childhood and all staff are encouraged to continue developing their skills and knowledge. All staff hold current First Aid Certificates.

1.2 Objectives

- To establish a trusting relationship between staff and parents and work in partnership for the best interests of the child.



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- To provide childcare facilities and a rich, stimulating programme that will recognise the child as a member of the family group. The experience for each child is built around an understanding of their individual differences and needs.
- To develop a programme reflecting a multicultural perspective.
- To support the individual family unit; recognise the changing needs in contemporary society and to cater for the differing family structures.
- To provide resource materials and support services at each stage of family development.
- To recognise and value the cultural diversity within the community and encourage integration and participation.
- To provide a safe, hygienic environment to meet the developmental needs of the individual child for optimal physical, social, cognitive and emotional growth.
- To promote the development of self- confidence and competence in the child.
- To nurture and encourage meaningful interactions with caring adults and other children.
- To encourage the child to explore and experiment at his own leisure and to develop new skills.
- To provide comfort and security to the child experiencing separation trauma from the parents.
- To encourage participation, shared responsibilities between the family unit and the Service.
- To maximise the use of community resources that are designed to benefit the young child and their family.
- To co-operate and communicate with other community groups and organisations.
- To promote an understanding in and the higher appreciation of the role of childcare personnel.
- To promote parent and community awareness of childcare.
- To provide opportunities for parents to develop individual talents and abilities through participation in the program and areas of management and advocacy.
- To employ appropriately trained or experienced staff and facilitate the development of a stable team.
- To encourage staff to share and develop their individual skills and knowledge through formal and informal training.
- To encourage staff involvement in professional organisations and interactions with similar community groups.
- To encourage staff participation in the decision-making process, recognising their knowledge and experience in early childhood development and service delivery.
- To obtain financial assistance to subsidise the cost of childcare.
- To advocate to improve services for all young children.



1.3 Association and Membership

Membership and use of facilities is available to all parents or guardians. The Service is run solely by the parents through the Committee, which is elected at the Annual General Meeting each year. All financial members are entitled to be elected to the Committee. This is held after the audited statement has been received, usually in October.

A family representative is invited to attend the AGM (apologies in writing accepted). One family constitutes one vote.

1.4 Management Committee

The 10 member committee consists of:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Public Officer
- Secretary
- Centre Director
- 4 General Members (one of which can be a Staff Representative)

These are elected at the AGM.

The Director is appointed by the Committee and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Service, e.g., staff organisation, record keeping, fee collection.

The Committee is responsible for overseeing the annual budget and expenditure.

The Committee acts on behalf of the parents to work with the Director where problems/issues beyond normal daily operation arise. For example, interviewing for new staff, determining action to be taken in particular cases of non-abidance of rules, dealing with complaints from staff or parents.

The Committee is also responsible for liaison with and reports to our supporting bodies; Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Training (DEET) and City of Darwin Council.

The Committee makes recommendations or refers matters to the Parents where necessary. The Committee decides procedures and policies and sets administrative guidelines to be implemented by the Director and Committee. That is ALL members have a say in how this Service operates.



2 The Service

2.1 Hours

Opening hours are from 7.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday, excluding Public Holidays and 1 week over the Christmas/New Year break. A late fine will be imposed for children left after hours – please refer to late fee policy.

Care is offered on a full time and part-time basis. Part time consists of a full day(s) less than 5 days.

The Service ensures vacant childcare places are filled in accordance with the following Australian Government's Priority of Access Guidelines for Child Care Services. The Priority of Access Guidelines must be used by approved services to allocate available childcare places where there are more families requiring care than places available.

When filling vacant places, a service must fill them according to the following priorities:

- 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, training, or study test
- Priority 3 – any other child.

Under the Priority of Access Guidelines, a childcare service may require a Priority 3 child only to vacate a place to make room for a higher priority child.

2.2 Fees

A list of current fees is displayed on the notice board. These are to be paid two weeks in advanced by direct debit (iDebit through Kidsoft).

PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING THEIR ACCOUNTS VIA THE CUSTOMER ACCOUNT STATEMENT, SENT TO THE NOMINATED EMAIL ADDRESS WEEKLY. PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR NOTIFYING THE SERVICE OF ANY CHANGES TO CCS (Centrelink) RATES, AND HENCE CHANGES TO DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS REUIRED.

Accounts must not lapse without prior arrangement with the Director or the Committee. If a parent falls behind in their fees without explanation to the director, the childcare place will be forfeited and made vacant.

Any outstanding payments not received within two weeks of leaving the Service will be given to a Debt Collection Agency and the cost of recovery added to the account.



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ALL HOURS BOOKED FOR WILL BE CHARGED. THIS INCLUDES PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, ANNUAL AND SICK LEAVE. THIS MEANS THAT THE COST OF A CHILD CARE PLACE IS WORKED OUT IN THE BUDGET FOR THE WHOLE YEAR AND PAID FOR IN 51 WEEKLY INSTALMENTS.

The service complies with the Commonwealth Government requirements to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The guidelines in claiming and administering the Child Care Subsidy, as directed in the Child Care Service Handbook are followed (*Refer to Child Care Service Handbook* <https://www.dese.gov.au/resources-child-care-providers/child-care-provider-handbook-2018-2021>).

In order to be eligible for the Commonwealth Child Care Subsidy, the Service participates in the Ratings and Assessment process through ACECQA to ensure that National Quality Standards are met.

All children must meet the Government's immunisation requirements, or have approved exemption, to be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy. Records of each child's immunisation status must be provided on enrolment and updated as requested or when boosters are administered. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the records held at the Service are up to date.

Applications for reduced fees through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) are obtained from the Family Assistance Office. Full fees are applied for enrolled hours until notification is received of the Child Care Subsidy percentage. Once this has been received, fees will be adjusted to the date applicable. The Service cannot back date rebates for families already using care.

Families will only be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy if childcare attendance records are accurately completed by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult, and other eligibility requirements are met. Parents must sign their child/ren in and out of the service through the Konnect system.

Child Care Subsidy is paid for up to 42 allowable absence days for each child per financial year across all approved care services.

The Service undertakes to keep parents informed of any changes to the Child Care Subsidy scheme as they become available. For information regarding individual Child Care Subsidy payments, you will need to contact the Family Assistance Office.

PLEASE READ CHILD CARE FEE POLICY

2.3 Funding

Since 1983, the Service has received Government funding as follows:



(a) Fees, as set by the Committee. A reduced rate is applied for through the Family Assistance Office. This is based on gross family income and assessed as a percentage. Parents must always ensure that they book and sign their children in and out of the Service to remain entitled to claim the Child Care Assistance.

(b) Department of Education and Training pay an amount for each child attending the Service.

2.4 Constitution

Available on request.

2.5 Policies

2.5.1 Sick Children

Parents are not to bring unwell children to the Service, which is:

- Running a temperature in excess of 38 degrees Celsius.
- Suffering from, weeping sores, vomiting, diarrhoea, head lice, worms. A child may return after treatment or if a doctor's certificate is produced stating that he/she is no longer infectious.
- Any communicable disease, e.g., hepatitis, mumps, measles, chicken pox, rubella, conjunctivitis. Details of these illnesses and their exclusion periods are displayed in the foyer on our *Time out* posters, issued by Disease Control.

It is in everyone's interest that children are immunised. You must provide documentation on enrolment that your child's vaccinations are up to date. Any child not immunised will be required to be removed from the Service if there is an outbreak of a communicable disease, e.g. measles.

If your child becomes sick whilst at the Service, then you will be notified and expected to collect him/her within One (1) hour. Children need to not exhibit any symptoms of the illness for 24hrs before they return to the Service. If you are unsure about whether to bring your child or not, please ring and discuss it with the staff.

2.5.2 Medications

Only prescribed medications will be administered to children. These are to be handed to staff upon drop off. The dosage and times are to be written into the Medication Book and signed by the parent. Staff will double sign when they are given the medication.

PLEASE READ MEDICATION POLICY



2.5.3 Settling in Children

You are encouraged to attend the Service with your child prior to admittance, where possible. This can be at any time during opening hours and there is no charge. Many aspects of long day care Services can be very frightening to young children, e.g. large open spaces, lots of people, noise etc. If parents appear comfortable and relaxed in an environment it helps their child to settle in. A gradual introduction is acceptable, when the parent can leave children for increasing periods at a time. We encourage parents to ring at any time to enquire about their child.

2.5.4 Records

Parents are urged to keep their emergency contact details current and to notify the management team of any change of address, telephone number or work situation. This can also be done through the Kidsoft parent portal.

2.5.5 Collecting/Delivering Children

A child will not be permitted to leave the Service with any person other than the parent or adult responsible for that child, unless written permission is obtained beforehand. We can only refuse access to a parent if a court order is handed to the management team, stating who has custody rights.

A parent must bring a child into the Service, ensuring all gates and doors are securely closed.

Your child/ren's attendance must be signed in and out of the Service via the Kidsoft software on the centre iPad or via the Kidsoft QR code both in the centre foyer.

Please inform staff when arriving and leaving as we like to welcome you and say goodbye.

2.5.6 Meals

As we try to avoid the use of sugar, salt and 'junk' food, we ask that **no snack food** is brought to the Service. It also causes problems with ants/cockroaches in the lockers and children wanting and taking the food of others. If your child has any special dietary requirements, please discuss these with the management team.

We provide a well-balanced, nutritional diet based on the 'five food plan', i.e.:

- Milk, cheese
- Meat, poultry, fish and eggs
- Potato, root vegetables, green vegetables and fruit
- Bread and cereals
- Butter or margarine



Meal times are approximately:

- Breakfast 07.30 – 08.15am
- Morning Tea 09.00am
- Cooked Lunch 11.00 - 12.00pm
- Afternoon Tea 2.30 - 3.00pm
- Late Snack 5.00pm (if required)

2.5.7 Clothing/Skin Protection

All articles of clothing are to be clearly named. It is inevitable when teaching children to be independent and responsible for their personal belongings that things will get mixed up. This causes unnecessary hassles for the staff and distress amongst the children when similar items are disputed.

Protective clothing is provided for 'messy' activities, but accidents still happen. Your child will feel less restricted if he/she does not have to worry about getting dirty, so whenever possible, please encourage them to wear play clothes.

We would like you to provide two or more sets of clean clothes every day and a minimum of three sets in the wet season.

Living in the tropics we need to be especially aware of the danger of skin cancer. We have a policy that children will wear a hat when playing outside. T-shirts and dresses must have sleeves in accordance with our sun safe policy.

Sunscreen is provided at the entrance to the centre for parents to apply before entering the service. Sunscreen is re-applied after rest time and swimming. We expect that children will have it applied before arriving in the morning. This allows the children to go straight outside for play time.

At various times during the year, we are annoyed by either sand flies or mosquitoes. We have an insect repellent to apply as required but it is also expected that parents will put some on their child before coming to the Service.

2.5.8 Personal Belongings

Children love to bring special items from home, either to share with their friends or for comfort. It can be very distressing for all concerned when a favourite toy become lost or broken so we ask your co-operation in keeping them at home. Security items only will be permitted.

2.5.9 Toilet Training

We wait until the child shows signs of being interested in and is ready to use the potty/toilet before commencing training. This will be discussed with each individual



family at the time. Staff are also kept up to date with current toilet training methods which can be shared with the parent.

2.5.10 Excursions

Visits and excursions are arranged from time to time, and ample notification will be given for special trips. Sometimes, as the opportunity arises, short trips to such places as the Library, Museum, Beach, Airport may be undertaken. This depends usually on the number of children attending on that particular day to accommodate the reduced ratios of children to staff. This also means that children have to take it in turns to go out but the staff keep records so everyone is considered for something they would enjoy.

You are asked to sign a consent form on enrolment and all safety aspects are considered before we approve a venue. Adequate insurance cover is held.

Children preferably travel in the SPCCC minibus fitted with approved safety harnesses, in the company of adults at the regulation ratios. Occasionally transportation may be via public or private bus if required. Excursions are in no way compulsory; however, they are encouraged to help broaden the child's experiences and relieve the routine of the Service. You are always welcome to join the group in an outing.

2.5.11 Behavioural Expectations

The aim of this Service is to provide a loving and caring family atmosphere. Therefore, attempting to resolve conflict situations by using any form of threatening or abusive behaviour, physical or verbal, by staff and parents, whether to each other or children, is in no way permitted.

Corporal punishment of children in this Service is forbidden.

Children are not to be abused in any way; verbally, physically or emotionally or sexual assault.

Both parents and staff must be positive role models for the children. This means showing respect for themselves and others and also showing control of and responsibility for their own actions.

In the event of any physical abuse or threatening behaviour, the Director will immediately seek legal advice and/or police assistance when the occasion warrants.

All decisions made by the staff and Management Committee on any issue relating to service delivery will be made in the best interests of the Service as a whole.



At All Times Open Communication Is Encouraged

Your suggestions are welcome and may be discussed in person, email or over the phone.

2.5.12 Sleep Policy

Our Service ensures that all children have appropriate opportunities to sleep, rest and relax in accordance with their individual needs. The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) for infants will be minimised by following practices and guidelines set out by the national authority on safe sleeping practice for infants and children- Red Nose Foundation. Our policy sets out quality practice and is informed by recognised and evidence-based principles. Safe Sleep practices are informed by Red Nose and guidance from ACEQCA.

We do 10 minute sleep checks for all children, which is recorded via the Story Park App. All educators will discuss children's sleep needs with families. We are committed to supporting our families and children to ensure that all children are well rested during the day.



3 Other

3.1 Religious and Cultural Practices

If you would like special arrangements for your child, please discuss these with the educators or Director. We encourage families to help us to make it a special event for families, children and staff to share and we can benefit from learning about other people and how they live, which will be a valuable learning experience. We remain mindful that, our main priority is for the wellbeing of the children in our care as well as considering the individual. Providing these practices cause no physical or emotional harm, they will be respected.

3.2 Information Sharing

We aim to share with you your child's experiences, friendships etc. during their time at the Service. We also like to hear about the things you enjoy together at home and special occasions, like grandparents visiting or a new puppy. Talking to you on a casual basis is very informative and you are always welcome to make an appointment for a more detailed discussion whenever you wish. A time can be negotiated at the end of each year for us to look at your child's progress and interests throughout the year and to make plans for the year ahead.

Storypark App contains the daily information for your child's eating and sleeping routines as well as nappy changes. Daily activities and learning are communicated via Storypark. An invitation to this will be sent after enrolment.

3.3 Involvement

Since this is a parent run Service, we need the active involvement of as many parents as possible to keep costs at a minimum and help with the accreditation process. Some of the areas you may wish to consider are sharing ideas and skills, suggestions, odd jobs, working bees. All are valuable contributions.

3.4 Contacts

A list of current Committee Members is displayed in the parent foyer and is also available from the office.

For further information on Service Operations, Policies etc. read our Operational Plan which is available in the foyer or via email.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO GIVING YOUR CHILD A REWARDING AND ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCE, HELPING THEM DEVELOP INTO THE BEST THAT THEY CAN BE!