



EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

# FAMILY *handbook*

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnership with Families



We have an open-door policy. You and your family are welcome to visit our Service at any time.

## **Welcome to Country**

### **Acknowledgement of the First Nations' people of Australia**

*We would like to acknowledge the Wathaurong peoples as Traditional Owners of the land on which our centre is located. We honour and respect the cultural heritage, customs, and beliefs of all Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander people. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future and value the traditions, culture, and aspirations of the first Australians of this land. We recognise that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have spiritual, social, and cultural connections with their traditional lands and waters. We would like to express our sincerest gratitude for the contribution the diverse cultures and identities have made to the development of EATSIPEC.*

### **Service Information**

Our Service caters for children aged 6 weeks to 12 years. We are open from 6:30am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday, (52 weeks of the year) and closed on Victorian public holidays. Notice will be given in our newsletters when these days occur.

### **We have 6 classrooms:**

6 weeks - 13 months room – Nursery 1 (Earth)

13 - 20 months room – Nursery 2 (Wind)

20 - 29 months room – Toddlers 1 (Fire)

29 - 36 months room – Toddlers 2 (Water)

3 - 4 years old room – Pre-Kinder (funded) (Space)

4 - 6 years old room – Kindergarten (funded) (Harmony)

### **Contact Information**

Phone: 03 5248 4155

Email: [bellarine@twinklekidselc.com.au](mailto:bellarine@twinklekidselc.com.au)

Website: <https://twinklekidselc.com.au/>

Service Providers: Bellarine Moolap ELC Pty Ltd ATF Bellarine Moolap ELC Trust

Centre Director: Tarrah Turner

Educational Leader: Sharon Smith

### **Fees**

Our full fees are as follows:

\$128 per day, before Child Care Subsidy (CCS) has been applied.

**A copy of our Service Philosophy can be located in our foyer and in each room at the service.**

## **Our Team**

We value our team members and pride ourselves on employing experienced educators who are passionate about providing quality early childhood education and care. Our educators must meet the qualification requirements as per the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Educators are required to hold current Working with Children Checks and are also required to hold their current First Aid, CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis certificates. We aim to ensure continuity for children in care and develop strong, stable teams so that children have the opportunity to bond with regular carers responsible for their group.

Information about team members is displayed at the centre including team member's qualifications and positions.

## **Childcare Chef**

The Centre employs a part-time Chef who plans and prepares healthy and nutritious meals for the children each day. In addition, the Chef plans and displays the weekly menu, is responsible for purchasing all food supplies and works closely with the Centre Director to ensure that food safety standards are consistently maintained. The Chef is recognised as a member of the Centre's educator team and, in collaboration with others, ensures that children have many opportunities to be actively involved in aspects of menu planning, shopping and meal preparation.

## **External Management**

We are supported by our owners/management team who are located in Melbourne. Our management team is responsible for overseeing the operations of the service including practices and programs offered, administrative aspects, recruitment, HR, customer service and compliance. Parents are encouraged to contact our management team as part of the grievance policy at the service, you can find their contact details on display in the foyer.

## Settling into Care

You are embarking upon the serious task of choosing the right childcare centre for your precious little one. We know this process can sometimes be overwhelming, so we do hope that the information enclosed within this booklet makes this difficult decision easier for you. Please take the time to read all the programs and services we can offer you and your family at Bellarine Kids Early Learning Centre. Please also feel free to stop by the service to talk to our Centre Director with any further questions or concerns on how we can best serve your needs.

### When you arrive

- Sanitise your hands and your child's hands
- Sign your child in using our Kiosks
- Place your child's bag in their locker
- If you haven't supplied sunscreen at home, apply sunscreen. We will encourage your child to play in the shade for the first 20 minutes.
- Share any news or important information with our educators – for example, did your child have a bad night's sleep?
- When you are ready to leave, help your child transition to an educator or play area and say goodbye

### When collecting your child

- Sanitise your hands on arrival
- Sign your child out using our Kiosks
- Talk with our educators about your child's day
- Collect your child's belongings
- Wash your hands and your child's hands
- Take special care in car park areas

### What to pack

Every day is different and with this we encourage families to pack a range of spare clothes including underwear, shirts, pants, jumper and socks. As play can be messy, please ensure clothing packed can allow for this.

Please ensure all items are clearly labelled with your child's name and packed in a backpack.

Please provide the following:

- Spare clothes x 3 sets
- Water bottle/feeding bottles
- Sun safe hat
- Cot sized sheets (preferred to fit our sleeping mats/beds)
- Comforters, e.g., dummies, security toys etc. Your child's educator can discuss any further individual needs or room requirements.

## **Food and Nutrition**

Research is clear that nutrition plays a key role in the quality of a child's physical and neural development. For this reason, our service provides children with delicious and nutritious meals and snacks using fresh ingredients and seasonal produce, whilst working within the Feed Australia guidelines, Nutrition Australia and regular reviews from family feedback.

If your child has any allergies, intolerances or cultural beliefs please discuss this with your Centre Director. Please note, we are a nut free service.

This Service supports breastfeeding. Families that are breastfeeding should speak to the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to be aware of our policies on storing and serving breast milk. Families that are formula feeding should also consult our Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to be aware on how we need the formula prepared and stored.

## **Medication**

If your child requires medication, a medication record must be filled in and signed by a parent/guardian. 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 an educator 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 our Medication Policy for further information.

**Please do not send your child to care if they are showing symptoms of any contagious illnesses.**

## **Immunisations**

The Australian Government's 'No Jab, No Play' policy came into effect in 2016. Under this policy, children are required to be fully vaccinated for their age. Children that aren't fully immunised will not be able to attend our centre. Your Centre Director will take a copy of your child's immunisation statement from MyGov for our records. We no longer accept the 'Red Books' as a form of immunisation history. For any subsequent vaccinations your child receives, please inform your Centre Director.

## **Rest and Sleep**

Rest and sleep are essential for your child's learning and development. Your child will be offered the opportunity to rest and sleep throughout the day. Individual sleep routines will be accommodated, where possible, and your child's daily rest and sleep activity will be communicated with you. Infants will be assigned their own cots and strict Red Nose (SIDS) safe sleeping practices are followed. Individual calming and soothing techniques can be discussed with your child's educator.

## **Emergencies**

It is important that you provide our service with the contact details of at least two people who may be contacted to collect your child in the case of an emergency or illness, in the event that you are unable to collect them.

Our educators have been trained in emergency evacuation procedures. Evacuation and lockdown drills will be practiced monthly to familiarise children with emergency practices. In evacuations, children will assemble at the designated meeting point and return to the building once the roll is marked. In the event of a real emergency evacuation, you will be notified as soon as possible.

## **Curriculum**

### **The Early Years Learning Framework**

Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) describes the principles, practices and outcomes that support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The framework offers a vision where ‘all children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life’.

### **The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework**

The Victorian Framework adopts a comprehensive approach to children’s learning and development from birth to eight years of age. The framework recognises children’s health and wellbeing from birth as both an essential need and an outcome of learning. The framework guides our practice towards school transitions and upholds the image of the child as "a rights holder and a competent learner with capacities to learn from birth."

### **The National Quality Framework**

The National Quality Framework was designed and implemented to help providers improve their services in the areas that impact on a child’s development and empower families to make informed choices about which service is best for their child.

The National Quality Framework includes:

- A national legislative framework that consists of the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- A National Quality Standard
- An assessment and rating system
- A regulatory authority in each state and territory who will have primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the National Quality Standard.
- The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). ACECQA, the national body, is responsible for providing oversight of the new system and ensuring consistency of approach.

## The National Quality Standards

The National Quality Standards sets a new national benchmark for the quality of education and care services.

The seven quality areas in the National Quality Standard are:

1. Educational Program and Practice
2. Children's Health and Safety
3. Physical Environment
4. Staffing Arrangements
5. Relationships with Children
6. Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
7. Governance and Leadership

The National Quality Standard is linked to national learning frameworks that recognise children learn from birth and outline practices to support and promote children's learning. These are:

- Belong, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)
- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (MTOF)

## Kindergarten Program

Our services run a Victoria Government approved kindergarten program. This means that we have a Bachelor qualified teacher who provides a kindergarten curriculum designed for preparing your child for Prep. This program is offered to children in their last year before formal schooling and our early childhood teacher uses the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). The VEYLDF provides the guidance for planning, documenting and assessing children's learning and development. There are 5 broad learning and development areas identified in the VEYLDF which are aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework and guide the decisions of our early childhood teachers.

Approved Kindergarten programs are designed to meet government guidelines that make sure children take part in quality early childhood education in Victoria. Our service prides itself on our local connections with schools in our area. Your child must be at least 4 years of age by the 30<sup>th</sup> of May in the year in which they are enrolled to participate in a Victorian government-subsidised kindergarten program. By working together, parents/carers, kindergarten teachers and school staff assist children to experience a positive transition to school.

## Storypark

We believe that consistent communication between families and educators is vital for your child's development. Storypark is a secure, private online community in which educators, parents, and family members work together to respond to children's learning captured via images, audio, video and text. We use Storypark to capture children's learning progression, friendships made, snapshots from the centre and share information from home to childcare.



Families have ownership of their child's account and content and can also invite others to join their child's account, like grandparents, friends, and health professionals. When their child moves on to

school, all information can be taken with them to help support the transition and continuity of learning.

For more information, please visit [www.storypark.com.au](http://www.storypark.com.au)

## **Fee Responsibilities**

Prior to your child's commencement, one payment cycle is required. Fees must always be paid one week in advance by the end of the week and any changes to bookings must be made in writing. You will be required to confirm your child's attendance bookings through your MyGov account.

If you experience hardship or trouble in maintaining your fees, please notify your Centre Director, and if your fees fall into arrears, the Centre Director can arrange a payment plan. Your child's enrolment may be jeopardized if you fail to follow the contractual payment plan. Fees are charged for every booked day the service is operating, whether your child is in attendance or not. Fees are also charged for statutory public holidays.

## **Method of Payment**

Enrolment fees and bonds are paid via EFTPOS/Debit Success at the service. Fees are paid via your nominated method from your nominated bank account, either on a weekly or fortnightly basis. You will be supplied with a direct debit form to complete and return to the Centre Director prior to your child's commencement.

## **Absences**

Each financial year, Centrelink will pay your CCS entitlements for the first 42 absent days. These absences can be for any reason, including public holidays. These initial absent days must be utilised before additional absences can be claimed. Absent days are charged for as per usual. Please advise the service if your child is going to be absent in advance or at your earliest convenience.

## **Child Care Subsidy (CCS)**

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

There are 3 factors considered to determine a family's eligibility and level of CCS payments:

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

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive the CCS:

- The age of the child (must be 13 years or younger and not attending secondary school)



- The child is up to date with their immunisations
- The individual, or their partner, meets the residency requirements.

The number of hours of subsidised childcare 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.

## **Late Fees**

We kindly ask that you arrive at the service with enough time, prior to closing time, to collect your child and their belongings and exchange information, to allow educators to close the service as per our licensed operating hours.

As a courtesy, it is expected that if you will be late collecting your child, after closing time, that you phone the service to advise of this. This allows educators to alleviate any anxiety in your child and allows educators to make their own plans.

If your child is not collected by closing time, a late fee will be applied to your account.

If your child is not collected by closing time, and our service has not been notified by you, our educators will contact you. If you are uncontactable at this time, our educators will phone any authorised persons as detailed on the enrolment form. If after 30 minutes your child is still not collected, our educators will notify the police.

## **Priority of Access**

The Australian Government funds childcare to support working Australian families and ensure all children have access to quality early childhood education and care.

However, the demand for childcare 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 childcare support.

To ensure that the centre adheres to the guidelines issued by the Australian Government, priority of access to childcare 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 childcare 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 Torre Strait Islander families
- Parents or children with disabilities
- Families from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Single parent families

## Holiday Discounted Fees

Each family is entitled to two (2) weeks at 50% off rate for holiday discount per financial year. This is based on days of attendance. This must be taken in a one-week block.

For example, if you attend 3 day per week you would be entitled to 6 days at 50% off per financial year.

Please see our Fees and Attendance Policy for more information.

## Other Important Information

### Service Policies and Procedures

A copy of our service policies can be located in our foyer. These policies contain information on the procedures we follow at our service. We expect our staff and families to adhere to these policies at all times. If you have any feedback on these policies or procedures, please contact the Centre Director.

### Grievance Procedure

We value all feedback including concerns raised and use these to guide our continual improvement. We encourage families who have concerns to raise them on the onset so that they can be dealt with immediately to avoid further conflict, confusion or concern. If you have a concern you wish to raise you should:

- Raise your concern in a calm manner with the person with whom you have the grievance If you are unable or not comfortable in doing this or you were not happy with the outcome then you should
- Raise the concern with the Centre Director

If you are unable or not comfortable in doing this or you were not happy with the outcome, then you should

- Contact the External Management
- If you are unable or not comfortable in doing this or you were not happy with the outcome, then you should
- Contact the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care – **South-Western Victoria Region (QARD)**

75 High Street, Belmont VIC

PH: 03 5215 5136

E: [bsw.qar@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:bsw.qar@edumail.vic.gov.au)

We ask that you please work through the above stages when raising a grievance so that each person has an opportunity to address your concerns prior to elevating it to the next level. The contact details for the department are updated regularly and on display in the foyer.

## Social Media

We understand that families may at times wish to share information about the service their child attends including exciting events and milestones. Families are asked to consider the following when posting:

- not post images which include other children or educators without their permission
  - any reference to the service should be respectful and accurate
  - social media sites are not the channel for venting frustration or concern, please follow our Grievance Resolution Policy and give us the opportunity to help resolve your concerns
- Any social media posts which reflect poorly on the service or other families may be seen as a breach of the Client Service Charter, we want to work with you to resolve any concerns and ask that you refrain from using social media as a platform for raising concerns.
- We will not post any images of your child on our centre social media pages without permission provided on your child's enrolment form.

## Monitoring and Compliance

1. The best interests of the child are the paramount consideration
2. Children's services should provide care, which is safe, positive and nurturing; and
3. Children's services should promote the educational, social and developmental wellbeing of the child
4. All services receive regular visits from their allocated Early Childhood Officer from the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care

Each centre is required to keep a compliance history logbook containing any information about any formal notices issued to a service under the Childcare Act 2002 and Early Childhood Education and Care National Regulations 2011.

For more information, please go to:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/Pages/default.aspx> or speak to your Centre Director.

## Enrolment Checklist

To confirm your enrolment, the following items will need to be provided before your child's commences at our Service.

- A completed enrolment form
- A photocopy of your child's birth certificate
- Medicare card and Driver's licence
- A photocopy of your child's immunisation records from MyGov
- Completed direct debit form
- A photocopy of any custody arrangements.
- Parent/Guardian CRN and Date of Birth
- Child's CRN and Date of Birth
- Medical documents (asthma/allergy risk communication plans and action plans for any long-term medication etc.)
- Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook
- Bond and enrolment fee

## Family Conduct within the Service

National Law and Regulations, part 4.6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities  
(157 – Access for parents)

Our Family Conduct is in place to emphasise the commitment and ethical responsibilities that each family adopts upon enrolment at the Service. The aim is to provide a pathway that supports you

and the Service in communicating and interacting whether that be as advocates for your children - or complex issues that call for astute attention and respect.

Qualities that are valued and must have a place in our interactions are:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Democracy
- Respect
- Confidentiality

All stakeholders within the Service are expected to always adopt these qualities.

It is expected that families support their child's Educator and look for ways to work with them. Educators appreciate that families are very busy and are always eager to find ways to strengthen the link between home and the Service. Such a link is of great value to your child's experience within the Service.

We appreciate it when you share information, no matter how insignificant you may think it is at the time. A simple 'heads-up' that your child had a restless night will help us support them during the day if they are tired or begin to look unwell.

Communication is vital and we ask that you nominate your preferred method of communication so we can do our best to be open and responsive.

If there is a matter or incident that has occurred that you are concerned about, we always want to hear and discuss the issue with you. As a rule, we ask that families be careful about discussing sensitive issues in front of others. Confidentiality is something we will not waiver on and expect the same from everyone involved, Educators and families alike.

If you do have concerns regarding your child, please see your child's Educator to arrange a time to meet. The meeting will be in a private area within the Service. If issues are still unresolved, then contact our Nominated Supervisor and reschedule a second meeting.

It is not always possible or effective to discuss issues 'on the spot'. Usually, the most communication between families and Educators occurs at child drop-off and pick-up times. This transition time typically is not conducive to meaningful exchanges; families can be rushed, Educators are understandably focused on children's transitions, and in the case of full-day programs, Educators who spend the largest amount of time with your child may not be available or not rostered on that day.

By arranging a time away from the learning environment, the Educator can give you their full attention and make decisions that have been given careful consideration.

We remind families that there are some issues that their child's Educators have no influence over. There are also some issues that the Service has no control over such as CCS, ACCS and Government Rebates or timing of payments to the Service and your account.

As first stated in this guideline: Respect is our expectation for all concerned. This includes parents and other family members - likewise, families should expect to be treated exactly the same way.

If we work to share information, contribute ideas and together, reflect on practices we will have a network for your child that not only supports their time here at the Service, but will also see them thrive.

We all have a common goal: What's best for your child.

With that in mind, this journey will be rewarding for all.

*If parents or family members are consistently in breach of these guidelines and following an evaluation by the Nominated Supervisor and/or Licensee, any related enrolment/s may be at risk of being terminated.*

### **Parent Acknowledgement**

*I/We have read this handbook carefully. I/We understand the commitment that you are undertaking and your responsibilities to the Service.*

*I have completed the enrolment form at the Service. I have read and agree to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook and in the Service's policies.*

FAMILY NAME	
PARENT NAME	
CHILD/REN'S NAME	
PARENT SIGNATURE	

*Please list what skills talents, interest and culture that you and your family (not forgetting grandparents) are able to share with the Service.*

**Have you completed the orientation evaluation? Please circle:**

Yes / No