

Parklands Drive Early Education and Kindergarten

Family handbook

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

Service Information

Parklands Drive Early Education & Kindergarten is a family operated long day Child Care Centre committed to providing a very high standard of care and education in partnership with the educators, families, communities, and our children.

The Centre is designed for 76 children from 6 weeks to school age.

Hours of operation: Monday-Friday 6.30am – 6.30pm, 52 weeks per year (except public holidays).

The Centre is registered as an Approved Provider of Early Childhood Services by the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care (OECEC) under the Education and Care Services National Law 2010.

We have 4 classrooms:

0–2-year-old – Kookaburra Room / Nursery

2–3-year-old – Koala Room

3–4-year-old – Possum Room

4–5-year-old – Platypus room / Kindergarten

Our educators and staff

Our Service is made up of a team of high-quality professional educators who are committed to and passionate about early childhood education and care. Our staff promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children and consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children. We create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.

Our educators are continually evaluating how our curriculum meets the educational needs of our children and reflecting on ways to improve children's learning and development and are supported by a team of highly qualified professionals. Our educational leader and early childhood teachers guide our educators in providing quality, research based educational programs.

Our educators consider children's learning styles, abilities, interests, linguistic and cultural diversity, and family circumstances when planning and implementing learning programs. We support and respect the history and backgrounds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and aim to foster each child's sense of identity.

All staff are encouraged and supported to attend professional training and development to further their knowledge and skills.

All staff hold valid Working with Children Checks/Cards and all Responsible Persons (placed in charge of the day-to-day running of the service) have current ACECQA approved First Aid, Emergency Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications. It is a requirement that all early childhood education and care staff, visitors, students, and contractors visiting our service, are fully vaccinated with two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination.

Centre Environment:

The Centre has served the community for over 20 years and the credit of its longevity goes to long serving staff and the close-knit community. We are committed to bringing a fresh new perspective in developing a strong sense of learning and education by creating a stimulating learning environment.

We want to enhance the wellbeing of our children by extending quality care, which will assist them in developing a strong sense of belonging and identity in our richly multicultural society. We endeavour to provide excellent quality of Childcare and Education which includes beautiful centre with massive rooms, natural landscape, full up to date educational resources, excellent and caring staff, music program, phonics program, literacy and numeracy program, onsite pets, experience with vegetable garden, all fresh and healthy meals, nappies, and many other aspects of education for your children. Our Centre environment is custom built with expansive indoor and outdoor areas. The interior buildings have high ceilings, large rooms with air conditioning and windows to allow natural light and fresh air. The newly landscaped outdoor area provides:

- Separate playing area for young children up to 2 years
- Bike track with ample space for obstacle course
- Covered sand pit
- Covered play fort on a safe matting
- Vegetable garden
- Animal enclosure for guinea pigs and chickens
- Worm farm

Educational Vision and Learning Curriculum

At Parklands Drive Early Education & Kindergarten we believe that setting great foundations in the early years will enable each child to have a confident and successful journey ahead. Children develop best when they are provided with a physically comfortable, nurturing, and safe learning environment.

We believe parents are happiest when they trust their child is safe and well cared for each day. At Parklands Drive you can be assured these expectations are always met. Our ongoing curriculum will be guided by the Early Years Learning Framework, Queensland Kindergarten learning Guidelines and the National Quality Framework. We ensure all children within our care can develop to their full potential in an environment of love, care, respect, strong relationships, and learning.

Children's earliest development and learning takes place through relationships; particularly within their families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world. Our educators facilitate learning through play by allowing our children to have variety of spaces to play, access to a range of meaningful resources and reflecting on supervised uninterrupted time to explore through play.

Some of our Kindergarten objectives include encouraging children in cultivating relationships with our guinea pigs and chickens. This enables children to foster a caring approach and a sense of responsibility while learning aspects of sustainability. The natural outdoor landscapes include elements of natural grass, sand, and vegetable gardens to offer sensory experiences for children to explore and bond with nature. We believe that our environment and educational resources will promote curiosity and creativity for our children.

Story Park is a digital platform that documents children's individual learning journeys. Our parents have daily access to it. We encourage parents' input when planning for specific needs of each child and using children's experiences in shaping their day-to-day curriculum.

Additional information about the NQF can be found at [ACECQA/nqf/about](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about)

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was developed to ensure all children in early childhood education and care settings across Australia, experience quality teaching and learning through play-based, holistic learning. The EYLF is made up of learning outcomes, principles, and practices which educators use in their documentation of children's learning and in their reflection and planning. Fundamental to the EYLF is a view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging, being and becoming*.

From before birth children are connected to family, community, culture, and place. Their earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.

BELONGING

Experiencing *belonging* – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood, and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

BEING

Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world. Being recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present.

BECOMING

Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills, and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. Becoming reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

Communication

We work in partnership with you and your family. We support and encourage communication with your child's educators about your child's unique needs and their general enjoyment of their day at our Service. Everybody has a preferred time and method of communication. Sometimes, mornings and afternoons can be a little rushed, and not the best time to discuss your child's progress. You are encouraged to talk to our Nominated Supervisor to arrange to meet your child's educator at a mutually convenient time.

We have many types of communication we use for families, including:

- Newsletters
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Letters
- Face to face
- Story Park
- Mid-year and End of year interviews
- Formal meetings

Family law and access

Our Service will uphold any responsibilities or obligations in relation to Family Law and access to the service. We require certified copies of any court order, parenting orders or parenting plans, relating to your child and request that if situations change, a copy of the Court Order is provided to our Service. We will only allow children to leave the Service with the written permission of the custodial parent/guardian. Without a Court Order we cannot stop a parent collecting a child.

Authorised Nominees

You will be requested to provide information about authorised nominees on your child's enrolment form. These are persons that you provide permission to:

- collect your child from the Service
- provide consent for medical treatment for your child from a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service
- provide consent for the transportation of your child by an ambulance service
- provide consent to go on an excursion.

Please understand that it is essential we have up-to-date information on your child's enrolment record in case of an emergency. It is important that you notify the Nominated Supervisor (or Responsible Person) of any changes to enrolment information including:

- your residential address
- health of your child
- telephone/mobile numbers
- contact details for any parent or authorised nominee
- family changes (parenting orders)
- emergency contact information details etc.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child, please update your child's Medical Management Plan/ Action Plan every 12-18 months or whenever a change in their

medication or treatment occurs. (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy) (ASCIA).

If your child has a diagnosed disability, please speak to our Nominated Supervisor prior to enrolment.

We provide a supportive and inclusive environment that allows each child to fully participate in quality education and care.

Authorisations

The enrolment form will include additional authorisations for our Service to seek medical treatment and emergency transportation for your child if required. Authorisations will also be requested for application of sun cream, permission to administer emergency medication to your child in the case of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency (Ventolin or Epi-pen), permission for an educator with current first aid to administer paracetamol in an emergency and permission to access medical treatment and transport in case of an emergency. Parents must also provide the name, address and contact details of any person authorised to authorise our service to transport your child or arrange transportation for your child. This may be for authorisation for your child to go on an excursion and/or for your child to be transported by our service.

Statement of fees

Each week we will send you a statement via email before your weekly debit. Please check these statements to ensure all details are correct and accurate. If there is any discrepancy, please contact the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Child Care Subsidy aids families to help with the cost of childcare aged 0-12 years. There are 3 factors that will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy, which include:

- Combined annual family income
- Activity test – the activity level of both parents
- Service type – type of childcare service and whether the child attends school

Families who wish to receive Child Care Subsidy as reduced fees must apply through the [myGov](#) website. This includes completing the Child Care Subsidy activity test. Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to our Service to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families will contribute to their childcare fees and pay the difference between the fee charged by our Service and the subsidy amount received. This is called the '*gap fee*'.

On enrolment we will need the Customer Reference Number (CRN) of the person linked with the child, along with the child's CRN so we can confirm the attendance and ensure that you are receiving the appropriate subsidy.

Complying Written Agreement (CWA)

A Complying Written Agreement (CWA) is an agreement between our Service and a parent or guardian to provide childcare in exchange for fees. The CWA includes information about your child's enrolment including your child's full name and date of birth, the date the arrangement is effective from, session details and details of the fees to be charged. Before Child Care Subsidy can be paid, you must approve the enrolment information within the CWA via the [MyGov website](#)

Absences

We encourage families to notify the Service as soon as possible if your child will be absent for any day or session you have booked. It is recommended that absences are notified to the Service by email or through our app [insert details]

Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any absence from an approved childcare service your child attends for up to 42 days per child per financial year. To assist services and families affected by COVID-19, all families have been provided with an additional 10 allowable absence days in the 2021-22 financial year and unlimited absences in January and February 2022. Full fees are payable for absences after the initial 42 days.

You can access your child's absence record on your online statement by selecting '[View Child Care Details and Payments](#)' on your [Centrelink online account](#).

Public holidays will be counted as an absence if your child would normally have attended the Service on that weekday, and fees have been charged for that day for your child.

If your child has not attended our Service for 14 continuous weeks, your child's enrolment will be cancelled, and Centrelink will stop paying your CCS subsidy. CCS is also generally not payable for absences on the first and last days of enrolment.

We require 2 weeks written notice to withdraw and/or reduce enrolment days for your child/ren from any permanent booking.

Service Closing Time and Late Collection Fees

Please be aware our Service and program closes at 6:30pm. In accordance with National Regulations and licensing, we are not permitted to have children in the service after 6:00pm. A late fee is incurred for children collected after 6.30pm.

The fee is \$15 per child for every 15 minutes or part thereof and will be added to your next account. The late fee is strictly adhered to, as two staff members are required to remain at the Service until all children are collected.

If we are unable to contact either the parent or a person nominated by the parent on the enrolment form to arrange collection of the child/children within an hour of the Service closing, we may need to contact the Police or other authorities to take responsibility of your child.

Permanent and Casual Bookings

Permanent bookings are an ongoing booking that:

- remains the same from one week to the next
- must remain unchanged for a minimum of 2 weeks
- are chargeable regardless of attendance (unless you have provided the adequate notice to take up a make-up day)

Casual bookings are one off bookings that:

- can be booked at the last minute for emergency care. This is if we have vacancies. If there is no vacancy, we will put your child on a casual waiting list and will contact you if a vacancy becomes available
- are designed to support families taking on casual work and shift work
- can be cancelled at no cost, provided 24-hour notice via email or phone is given

Service Policies and Procedures

You will find a copy of our Service policies and procedures in the Foyer. We expect our staff and families to always adhere to our policies and procedures to ensure we maintain compliance and abide by the National Law and National Regulations. We are constantly reviewing our policies and procedures and ask for staff and family participation to ensure our policies and procedures adhere to the needs of our families and meet required regulations. Your involvement helps us to improve our Service and may lead us to change our policies and procedures.

Orientation-Preparing for your child's first day

Orientation is an important start for your child and family to connect to our Service. We encourage each child to attend our Service in the company of a family member before they start their first day with us. This gives you and your child the opportunity to gain an understanding of our program, the lay out of the room, where to put your child's belongings, provide educators with additional information about your child and how we can best support their transition and settling in period. The Nominated Supervisor will contact you to arrange suitable times and days for visits.

If your child is reluctant to attend, please discuss this with their assigned educator so that they can develop strategies with you to support the transition from home to the Service. You are welcome to take photos of your child in our environment to show and discuss at home with them. Some children like to take a book from our library to read at home and return on the next visit.

Arrival and Departure

Each day, you must sign your child in upon arrival and sign out upon departure and note the date and times. We are required by legislation to always maintain our attendance record. This record may be used in the event of an emergency at the Service.

Our staff have a duty of care to your child and will only allow your child to be released into the care of either a parent, guardian or an authorised nominee as listed on your child's enrolment record. If your child needs to be collected by another person for some reason, an authority to collect form must be

provided in writing to the Nominated Supervisor. Our staff may ask to view photo identification of the adult collecting your child from care to confirm their identity.

The first day/week

The first day in a new service is a big step for you and your child. Please don't be alarmed if your child experiences some separation anxiety. This is normal and our experienced educators will assist you and your child through this transition period. There may be tears and extra tight hugs when saying goodbye for the first few weeks but there are always cuddles, reassurance and genuine care from educators for both the children and their families. Sometimes this experience is upsetting more so for the family, not the child. We understand this and offer support through phone calls during the day, photos and open communication.

What to bring to the Centre?

- A school bag which fits into a cube locker
- 1-2 complete changes of clothes
- Cot size sheet in a bag (blanket for cooler months)
- Bottles for feeding, drink bottle, sipping cup if used at home (named)

Please do not bring from home – toys, toy weapons, unnamed clothing or hat.

Please do not bring any lollies, nuts (we are a nut free service), chewing gum or packet chips. We ask that children attend the Centre with covered shoes on, particularly in winter.

The Centre provides:

- All nutritious meals prepared on the premises
- Bucket hat
- Nappies and wipes

Sun Safety

Children should arrive dressed ready for play. Clothing that washes and wears easily for messy activities such as painting, and sandpit play are highly recommended.

We also encourage parents to pack a spare set of clothes just in case. During outdoor play, to avoid unnecessary sun exposure we encourage parents not to dress their children in singlets, but to provide clothing that has a back and sleeves to ensure protection.

We recommend that you apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen 30+ before arrival. Staff apply 30+ sunscreen 20 minutes before outdoor play and this is reapplied regularly throughout the day. Older children are encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under supervision.

At Parklands Drive Early Education & Kindergarten we have a 'no hat no play' policy in place. The Centre does provide individualised bucket hats for children's personal use, and we do have additional spare bucket for children to borrow whilst here on an occasion where their own hat is forgotten. The Centre displays safe sun smart information in the foyer.