

E K I D N A



DEE WHY SCHOOL OF EARLY LEARNING

Parent Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to **Ekidna**. Our centre is a privately owned family business.

A family subsidy (Child Care Benefit) is available from the Family Assistance Office (FAO). The Family Assistance Office will assess parents' taxable income and a scale will be used to determine the amount of assistance the family will receive. The assistance can be claimed at a reduced centre fee or at the end of the financial year. For further details please speak to our Director or contact FAO on 13 6150.

The centre is open from 7.00am to 6.00pm per day, 52 weeks per year and caters for children 0-6 years.

Our aim is to provide a secure and happy environment where children can develop their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, aesthetic skills to become competent and confident individuals.

Parents if you feel anxious about leaving your child at the centre, the staff are sympathetic to your feelings. You are welcome to drop in or telephone the centre at any time to enquire about your child. Please feel free to talk with staff about any problems your child may have, as this influences their behaviour at the Centre. Staff are willing to discuss any aspect of your child's progress with you.

Aims for Children

- To make every child feel secure in the child care environment.
- To develop each child's sense of self-esteem.
- To allow each individual to develop their intellectual abilities at their own pace.
- To help develop children socially and emotionally by making them aware of the emotions which may be experienced, and teaching them to deal with those emotions in an acceptable way.
- To develop children's creativity and self-expression through art, language and music with the emphasis being placed on the doing, not the end result.
- To help children develop confidence in their physical abilities by providing activities to encourage both fine and gross motor skills.

Philosophy

Ekidna- Dee Why School of Early Learning will ensure children's social and educational needs are enhanced using a variety of experiences with incorporation of the National Early Years Learning Framework.

Our centre will offer a safe, secure environment where the children's happiness is paramount.

Ekidna- Dee Why School of Early Learning will provide an environment where the family's needs are valued; these include basic needs, social development, cultural development, communication and security. The centre will provide quality trained staff who are continually participating in professional development.

Staff will provide open feedback on child development, encouraging a trusting environment for both children and parents. Our centre strives to integrate with the community through a two-way relationship.

Center Rooms

- Ella Room-Toddlers (10 children maximum)
- Charlie Room- Senior Nursery (12 children maximum)
- Danny Room- Nursery (8 children maximum)
- Benji Room- Toddlers (22 children maximum)
- Abby Junior and Abby Senior- Pre-schoolers (30 children maximum)

Staff Qualifications

Our centre will have highly qualified staff with extensive experience and specialised skills.

We aim for our centre to be unique in that all our staff will have had training and experience in the child care profession. For further details on the qualifications of the staff, please see our Director. We value and implement further training and development.

The Daily Routine

Although the routines of each room and age group will vary, the same aspects are contained in each. We endeavour to provide a home and family environment at the centre where the children feel comfortable and secure at all times and our daily routines reflect this.

Throughout the day the children will experience a number of different activities which are part of the educational and developmental programs operated by all of our staff.

Each room displays the routine for that room and is available for parents to read and questions regarding this can be answered by the appropriate staff members. In place are both summer and winter routines, which adapt to weather conditions.

The Program

All of the staff at our centre will have had training and experience in areas of long day care and early childhood education. Because of the high standard of our staff, we are able to provide developmental and educational programs for each group of children.

The staff develops a daily program, observe the children in their care and plan their programs around the needs and interests of the children in child free time.

The centre implements the National Early Years Learning Framework as part of the National Quality Reform.

Learning Areas of development include:

Learning Outcome 1- Children have a strong sense of identity

Learning Outcome 2- Children are connected and contribute to their world

Learning Outcome 3- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Learning Outcome 4- Children are confident and involved learners

Learning Outcome 5- Children are effective communicators

If your teacher feels there is an area of concern, she/he will inform you and advise where help may be sought, e.g. speech therapist. It is always your decision to follow this up. The staff are willing to discuss any aspect of development with parents.

Services Offered

- Long Day Care
- One of a Kind Pre-school Program that has been based around the NSW Government school syllabus school documents
- Special Needs Catered For

Guidance and Discipline

Our centre has a positive approach to child guidance and discipline. All staff will encourage confidence and individuality of children through their discipline and guidance. We encourage the children to resolve conflict in non-violent ways. Negotiating skills are promoted rather than staff simply fixing the problem. Conflict resolution allows children to become confident learners and responsible caring human beings.

NO staff will ever administer physical or corporal punishment. Staff discipline strategies are always consistent and fair with every child.

Those First Weeks

When a child first starts at a new centre their behaviour may change. Do not worry as this is a natural stage in child development. Changes that may occur are regression in toilet training, becoming more dependent, or eating habits change.

These are a few examples, so if you notice any change in your child's behaviour and you are concerned, please discuss it with a staff member.

You would appreciate that children settle into day care in different ways. Staff are sensitive and aware of the anxieties and fears children have about starting child care.

We understand how distressing it can be to leave your child especially if they are upset. Be assured that if the staff are unable to settle your child, we will ring you.

Remember the settling period may take some children longer than others. Feel free to discuss any problems about your child's settling period with staff.

Clothing

Parents are advised to send their children to the centre in comfortable, inexpensive clothing. The children need to be able to move around during their play period and should be unimpaired by clothing. While paints, etc will come out in the wash, accidents do happen so it is best to send the children along in their "less than good clothes". Young children enjoy and need "messy" play with paint, clay, sand, water and mud. The centre will only have a limited supply of spare clothing. Please supply at least two-four change of clothing and underclothing in case of accidents, for 2-5 year olds.

Please mark your child's clothing and replace name tags if they fade in the wash.

Please ensure that toddlers and babies have about three complete changes of clothing and plenty of training pants.

In summer our policy is "no hat, no play". This policy will be enforced. Parents are asked to provide a wide brim hat to wear during outside activities. These must be named. A hat is needed for children to ride the bikes, as they must be worn under the helmets to prevent cross infection. The most suitable hat is one, which shades the ears and neck, as research is showing a high incidence of skin cancer on people's ears.

Belongings

Please ensure all belongings are clearly labelled such as dummies, clothes etc. Lost property will be displayed for parent collection in your child's room. The centre discourages toys from home and we will not hold any responsibility for any personal belongings. Please be reassured security items are acceptable.

Notice Boards

These are placed in areas convenient for you. Please read all notices to keep up to date with everything that is happening- there is sure to be something of interest to you.

Lockers

Each child is allocated a locker. Please place bags etc. in their locker. If your child attends less than five days per week, they will share their locker with another child and will need to take their bag home each day.

Birthdays

Your child's birthday is a special event in his/her life. To celebrate your child's birthday, you are welcome to bring in a cake. Please check with your child's teacher prior to birthday, in case of other children having special dietary requirements.

Fire Drills

Throughout the year the Centre holds fire drills which occur at any given time throughout the day. These are carried out in an organised and orderly manner. Also staff will be trained in using the fire extinguishers that are in the centre. A fire escape plan will be in every room.

Possessions

A soft toy or security item is acceptable for rest time. It is appreciated if their possessions are not brought to the centre e.g. guns, toys etc. Any possessions brought must come entirely at the parent's own risk with regards to breakage or loss.

Health

The centre provides a healthy and safe environment for children to grow and develop in – as such the centre has a health policy regarding illnesses and medications. Children with contagious illnesses are required to be kept at home and a doctor's certificate must be presented to show that the infection cannot be passed when the child returns to the centre. NO CHILD will be admitted with obvious signs of any highly contagious infection or illness. Our policy states the incubation period, symptoms and exclusion periods of such diseases. Children who are not immunised will be required to be exempt from the centre.

Medication

Staff will be able to administer medication to children who are recovering from illness.

A medication form must be completed and signed by parents before any medication will be given. All prescription medication must be prescribed For your child/ren and not another family member - unless stated otherwise by a doctor's certificate. Medication must be in date and in original packaging.

The medication must be handed to a staff member to store in a locked cupboard or lockable container in fridge. Please DO NOT leave medication in your child's bag.

The staff member who gives medication requires a medication form to be completed by the parent, i.e. tablets, mixture, creams, lotions, doctors and non-prescribed medication.

Asthma

The centre aims to provide a safe environment for children who have asthma. It is centre policy that an "Asthma Record Card" be completed by parents/guardians in consultation with family doctor. It is also a requirement that the record card be reviewed by your family doctor annually or as circumstances change. This must be completed and returned before enrolment commences. These forms will be available with the enrolment pack.

Allergies

Our Centre is a **NUT FREE** Centre, if your child has any allergies you are required to fill the details out the Enrolment form. If your child/ren has a severe allergy we require an Anaphylaxis Plan filled in by your doctor. If an Epi Pen or other medication is required, it will be need to be brought with the child when they attend the centre on a day to day basis.

Accidents

In case of an accident or illness occurring at the centre, the Director will contact parents if deemed necessary. As a matter of extreme importance parents must ensure that the Centre has up to date emergency contact numbers. An incident report will be filled out, outlining the accident and signed by the staff that observed and administered first aid, as well as any witnesses. The Director's and parent's signature will also be required.

What to Bring

0-2 years

- A hat
- Bottles, dummies or any comforters
- Two labelled sets of clothing, which are weather appropriate.

2-5 years

- A change of clothing that is weather appropriate (younger children- especially those toilet training- will need extra changes)
- A hat
- A security item for rest time.

Enrolments

Under Australian Government guidelines in respect to Child Care Benefit there are guidelines to Priority of Access to Care, which are:

1. Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect
2. A child of a single parent who satisfies or of parents who both satisfy, the working, training, study test.
3. Children with disabilities
4. Parents at home

Arrival and Departure

For safety and security reasons ALL children must be signed in on arrival, and signed out on departure. The times must be noted. No child will be allowed to leave our centre with a person who is not stated on the enrolment form, unless prior arrangements are made with Director. Signatures and times are important; if signatures or times are not entered your Child Care Benefit may be deducted from your tax return at the end of the financial year.

Hours of Operation

Centre hours are 7.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday, 52 weeks per year.

If your child is collected from the centre after 6.00pm, you will be charged a late fee which is \$2.00 per minute. This will be paid directly to the staff in cash on arrival, to allow for payment of staff overtime.

Fees and Commencement Fees

\$135.00 Danny and Charlie rooms

\$120.00 Ella and Benji rooms

\$117.00 Abby room

Enrolment fee \$50.00 per family. Non-Refundable.

4 Weeks Fees: Per child, to be used for last two weeks cancellation or at the end of year. Fees MUST be paid and stay two weeks in advance.

Bond: A maximum of \$400. To be used for last week's fees until cancellation.

For any bonds that require to be refunded this can take up to 8 weeks after leaving the service. This allows time to ensure that there are no changes made by FAO on Childcare Benefit (CCB), time for the service to process this to the financial department, and time allocated to transfer and clear funds.

NB: Fees are to be paid on commencement 2 weeks in advance as well as payment for the current week.

Accounts

Any change of financial income will alter your fee structure, please advise our centre and FAO (136150) if this occurs. Our centre fee payments are offered via Ezidebit, (excluding **American Express and Diners**).

Notice of Withdrawal

If not commencing at the service:

If you do not commence your enrolment at the service, your bond is then void and non-refundable regardless of the amount of notice given before start date.

Parents must give the service **four weeks written notice** before they withdraw from the Centre. If notice is not given, two weeks of fees will be added onto your account; monies will be retrieved from two weeks fees paid in advance at enrolment.

It is Government (DEEWR) requirements / legislation that a child must attend the **last** day of attendance if not childcare benefit (CCB) is NOT payable, therefore you will be charged FULL fees up until the last day of attendance. If the child does not attend due to illness then a medical certificate must be provided to the centre for the last days of attendance. If monies owing after cessation of care with the centre the amount owing will be automatically taken via ezidebit.

Attendance and Absence

Once a child is enrolled at the centre, payment of fees must be continued during the child's absence for illness, public holidays, holidays, etc. When a child is absent for any reason we must be notified. The centre is open for fifty two weeks per year; the only period during which we are closed is Public Holidays.

Allowable Absences

Each child in care is entitled to 42 days absences: sick, holidays etc. per financial year. Once the 42 days have accumulated, full fees will be charged for any absent days as the government will cancel your childcare benefit and childcare rebate.

Court Orders

Parents must notify the Centre if there are any Court Orders affecting residency of their children and a copy given to the Centre. Without a Court Order we cannot stop a parent collecting your child.

Rest and Sleep

Rest time routine varies according to individual needs. We aim to make rest time a relaxed, pleasant time for all children. We provide cots for the younger babies and stretcher beds for older children. Your child may wish to bring a favourite toy, pillow or blanket to have at rest time. Please feel free to discuss your child's rest needs with staff.

Waiting List

When our rooms have full enrolment, children's names will be put onto a waiting list. Once a position is vacant, parents are then contacted about placement. When parents wish to change days to other days, this can be effective immediately provided the group enrolment is not full. If it is full the child's name will be placed on a waiting list. Once a position is available, days will then be adjusted. Our waiting list does give priority to working parents as per Priority of Access Guidelines.

Staff

Suitable qualified staff are employed in all age groups and the child staff ratios are adhered to according to Licensing requirements. All staff will have their Senior First Aid Certificates, Police checks and regular staff meetings will be held. Our staff are regularly involved in further development and training.

Parent Involvement

This is vital to ensure maintenance of a quality service. Your contribution of ideas, experiences and skills are welcomed and greatly valued. You may be able to share your skills and experiences in Music, Craft, Cooking and Storytelling etc., to enhance your child's program at the Centre. Please fill out what you can offer the Centre on the enrolment form.

Parents are welcome to visit the centre at any time. If you have any talents or hobbies, please share them with the children. If you have any concerns, please see your child's teacher or the Director.

Conclusion

We guarantee your child will have a happy, safe and secure relationship with the Centre and its staff and that the time he or she is in our care will be positive and fulfilling.

Important Contacts for Families

- **Family Assistance Office**
Phone: 13 6150
- **Central Licensing and Regulations
Children's Services Directorate
NSW Department of Community Services**
Locked Bag 4028
ASHFIELD NSW 2131
Phone: (02) 9716 2100
- **Centre Management**
Stephanie Bone
9981 2377
- **NSW Department of Health**
Locked Bag 961
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059
Phone: (02) 9391 9000
Fax: (02) 9391 9101
- **Children's Services Central**
Building 21, 142 Addison Road
Marrickville NSW 2204
Phone: (02) 8922 6444 or 1800 157 818 (toll free)
Fax: (02) 8922 6445
www.cscentral.org.au
info@cscentral.org.au

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DEE WHY SCHOOL OF EARLY LEARNING

Parent Information Booklet and Bond Acknowledgement

Notice for exiting the service:

Parents must give the service 4 weeks written notice before they withdraw from the Centre. If notice is not given, two weeks of fees will be added onto your account; monies will be retrieved from two weeks fees paid in advance at enrolment.

Attendance in last days at the service:

It is Government (DEEWR) requirements / legislation that a child must attend the **last** day of attendance if not childcare benefit (CCB) is NOT payable, therefore you will be charged FULL fees up until the last day of attendance. If the child does not attend due to illness then a medical certificate must be provided to the centre for the last days of attendance.

Bond paid:

Two (2) Weeks Full Fees per child, this is based on your child's attendance at the centre. To be used for last two weeks cancellation or at the end of year.

For any bonds that require to be refunded this can take up to 8 weeks after leaving the service. This allows time to ensure that there are no changes made by FAO on Childcare Benefit (CCB), time for the service to process this to the financial department, and time allocated to transfer and clear funds.

If not commencing at the service:

If you do not commence your enrolment at the service, your bond is then void and non-refundable regardless of the amount of notice given before start date.

I\We have read and understood the parent information booklet containing the terms and conditions of enrolment at Ekidna, Dee Why school of Early Learning. Please sign below.

Parent 1:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Sign: _____

Parent 2:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Sign: _____

Please return this acknowledgment form with enrolment forms and keep the information booklet for our future reference.