

EKIDNA



DEE WHY SCHOOL OF EARLY LEARNING

PARENT HAND BOOK



Welcome to Ekidna

Our center is a privately owned family business where children, families and educators come together to learn, grow and most importantly have fun!

It is our aim to make every child feel secure in their environment. We endeavor to develop their sense of self-esteem and allow each individual to develop their abilities at their own pace. We aim to develop the children socially and emotionally by making them aware of their emotions and how to handle these emotions in an acceptable way. We will develop your child's creativity and self expression through art, language and music with the emphasis on the doing not the end result. We will also develop your child's confidence in their physical abilities by providing them with activities to encourage both their fine and gross motor skills.

Our handbook is designed to navigate you through the early days of child care outlining how we operate, what to bring, and helpful information about your child's day to day activities.

We look forward to having you join our family and watch your child grow and develop into a confident individual ready to take on the world.

Philosophy

E: Excellence in Education.

Ekidna strives to be a centre that feels like a home away from home. We provide a high-quality curriculum that is based on the fundamentals of the Early Learning Framework allowing children to flourish by providing enriching experiences that maximise opportunities for each child's learning. We also interconnect our "school readiness program" together with our Early Years Learning Framework curriculum to provide children with a successful program transition to school.

Environmentally Friendly

We pride ourselves in being sustainable as a centre. We are always looking for ways in which we can improve how we can reduce, reuse and recycle in being sustainable as a centre. We are teaching our children to understand the importance of what it means to be green and look after the world we live in as they will be the care takers for our future.

K: Kindness

Kindness is our key strength as a service. Ekidna is proud to be a strong team of highly qualified and professional educators, who create a warm and inviting environment for our children and families. We are continually updating our knowledge and skills to provide our children with high quality care and education.

I: Inclusive

We are an inclusive centre, friendly and welcome families and staff from all cultures and backgrounds. We are also inclusive for children with additional needs, ensuring they are included into our learning curriculum and educational environment that will assist them in developing their skills and learning.

Philosophy

D: Diversity

Theorist Vygotsky created the sociocultural theory of development, which refers to the impact of culture and society in the way we learn. Understanding that children will learn differently in varying cultures is an important part of respect for diversity in education. At Ekidna we acknowledge this and we ensure the cultural diversity of our community is recognised, valued and respected. We actively encourage community participation within our centre. Our curriculum has an anti-bias and non-sexist focus that allows for children to learn various cultures, traditions and values that are respected in our society and community today, including Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

N: Nurturing environment

Our centre supports and nurtures each child individually, fostering their holistic development and allowing each child to reach their maximum potential.

Nourishment

We educate and encourage healthy and nutritious eating habits for our children and we provide healthy meals daily, our menu being informed by the Australian Healthy Eating Guidelines.

A: Achievement

We strive to support each child in developing their milestones, by providing an array of different educating resources, activities and learning experiences. As a service, we continually reflect upon our practices, policies and procedures, which allow us to improve and continually extend on our goals, aspirations, beliefs and commitments.

Child Emergent Learning

All staff at the centre have had training and experience in all areas of long day care and early childhood education. Due to the high standard of staff, we are able to provide development 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 a non-structured play experiences.

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 Outcomes 2 - Children are connected and contribute to their world

Learning Outcomes 3 - Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Learning Outcomes 4 - Children are confident and involved leaders

Learning Outcomes 5 - Children are effective communicators



Rooms

Danny Room (6 weeks to 18 months)

The Danny room is our nursery room where your baby will feel secure and comfortable in a nurturing environment. We take only 8 children per day in this room so that your baby does not feel overwhelmed and anxious. We adopt the children's home routine where possible to promote consistency between home life and centre life.

Charlie Room (12 months to 2.5 years)

As your child begins to grow and develop they will transition into the Charlie room. We like your child to be confident of their feet before we transition to the next room so that they feel confident in a room full of 12 other children. The Charlie room is where your child will be eager to learn, become more active in their environment and keen to begin to follow a more structured routine. Here they will also learn to be more independent learning self help skills such as to feed themselves and sit at a table to eat.

Ella Room (2 - 3.5 years)

Ella is a smaller 12 place room where the children form a closer bond with the Educators. In Ella we begin to focus on a more structured learning. Your child will develop more self help skills and contribute to their independent learning through news, group time and craft. We will also help them to toilet train giving them further independence.



Rooms

Benji Room (2.5 years to 4 years)

The Benji room is where your child becomes more independent in their self help skills from eating to toileting. The Educators have a more structured day planned for your child while keeping within our children's interest based learning philosophy. The children will also become more aware of the community around them with excursions in our local area. The children will also become aware of their environment introducing them to sustainability in a fun and interactive experience. Your child will share their experiences through news, group time and craft.

Abby Room (3.5 years to 6 years)

Abby room is where your child develops all their skills to get ready for school. Our school readiness program is delivered by our Educators making links to all NSW Board of Studies Key Learning Areas to help prepare children for their transition to school. We aim to support the children in the development of skills in confidence and independence and their ability to understand their emotions and cope with the changes that they face transitioning to their new schools. We endeavor to make your child's transition to school as smooth as possible working with both the families, the children and the local schools. Abby room is not all about learning we also encourage the children to have fun and learn to build healthy relationships with their peers.



Rooms

Transitioning Between Rooms

We aim to make transitioning between rooms as stress free as possible. We will advise the parent when we believe that your child is developmentally ready to change rooms. Together with the parent we decide on a date and for 2 weeks prior we slowly introduce your child to the room, new routines and their new educators.

Orientation

Once a child has been offered a position we strongly believe in your child coming in a couple of times for an hour or more before you start so that both you and your child feel comfortable in the new environment. It also introduces your child to new people in a safe and relaxing way while a parent is still in the room. This is also a great opportunity to share any information you feel the Educator needs to know about your child before they start.



Staff

Our staff are our greatest asset. We employ the highest quality of staff and more importantly we pride ourselves on retaining high quality staff.

Our staff have various qualifications Certificate III, Diploma or Early Childhood Teacher university trained. We also offer an in house traineeship to guide the next generation of Educators.

Most of our staff hold current First Aid Certificates including Asthma and Anaphylaxis and all staff over the age of 18 hold a current Working With Children's check.

Casuals

We have a pool of regular casual teachers ensuring that the children are comfortable even if their regular educator is not in the room.

First few weeks

Starting at child care or a new child care can be an unsettling time for both the child and the family. We try to make this change as stress free as we possibly can. A good idea is to start your child a week before you go back to work just to give the child shorter days and also allows you enough time to settle into the new routine of drop off and pick ups.

Changes can occur in your child such as a change in behaviour, regression of toilet training, become more dependent even a change in their eating habits and a few tears from both you and your child and we understand this can be distressing. This is all a normal stage in your child's development and can be very frustrating but if you have concerns please discuss these with your child's Educator and we will have a few strategies to make your life easier. Some children settle quickly into a new environment while others can take awhile to become familiar but persevere it will get better.

We encourage you to take the time to talk to the Educators about your child's likes and dislikes. Any strategies you use to when your child is unsure or upset.

Over the first few months of care your child may pick up some germs this is totally normal as your child's immune system becomes resistant to the new bugs they may come up against. Even with our strict hygiene policy children can pick up germs.

Feel free to call the centre and check on your child as many times as you need to throughout the day.

What to Pack

Parents are advised to bring an appropriate sized bag to carry ALL your child's equipment for their day.

All items that your child brings with them should be clearly labelled so that they are easily recognisable and not accidentally lost.

Children must bring

A sun safe hat as we have a "no hat no play policy" as we are a Cancer Council Sun Smart centre .

A clearly labelled water bottle

A few changes of clothes that include a change of weather outfit including spare underwear.

If toilet training please supply a few changes of undies just in case of an accident.

Any sleep toys, dummies, sleeping bag required for sleep times.

Bottle and formula if required for your child.

Please do not bring items of value or toys as Staff take no responsibility for items brought to the centre and these items can also cause a problem within the classroom.

If an item is required for news or your child would like to share a special book please hand this to the teacher and if possible label the item.



Centre Procedures

Arrival and Departure

Our hours of operation are 7am to 6pm, 52 weeks per year. We are closed weekends and public holidays only.

Upon arrival and departure you **MUST** digitally sign your child into their room and out of their room using QK Kiosk at the reception. This is an essential requirement for parents to receive the Child Care Subsidy. Children or siblings must not sign in as a legal requirement you must be 18 years or over to sign a child in.

Drop your child's bag into their named locker, removing their water bottle and hat from the bag and enter the room.

Children settle better into their rooms if they have a quick good-bye routine and a carer will be on hand in case support or distraction is required.

Collection

On enrolment please advise a list of adults that will be collecting your child they need to be over the age of 18 years. If you have arranged for someone not on your list to pick up your child please email the centre and let us know and also ask your adult to bring their identification with them.

The centre closes at 6pm and your child must be collected before this time. We ask that you arrive 10 minutes before this time allowing the children to collect their belongings, the staff to share any information and the children to say good-bye.

If you arrive after 6pm a fee of \$2.00 per minute will apply and is to be paid on arrival in cash to the staff member as we are not licensed to operate after 6pm. If you know you are to be late please call the centre and advise the staff as some children can get distressed when they see other children leaving prior to them.

Parent Communication



At Ekidna we use an App based form of communication called KinderM8. We will send you a link once enrolled and you will need to accept the link to see your child's daily information, centre information and general communication from either your child's Educator or the Director.

Mobile app: allowing parents to be connected from anywhere, at any time. The incredibly user friendly Kinder m8 mobile app lets parents see what is happening in their child's day in real time. With instant access to their child's information, updates and reports, parents stay current with their child's progress and are better able to contribute to their learning and development.

Daily Chart: giving you every detail. With the eat/sleep/nappy change chart parents can see a detailed picture of their child's meals, rest times and toileting during the day, allowing them to enjoy the security that comes from knowing all the information that is relevant to their child's health and wellbeing.

Journals and Observations: keeping track of progress every step of the way. Parents no longer need to wonder how their child during an activity or wait for a monthly report to see their learning journey. With our beautifully presented Journals and Observations, including photos and notes, they can enjoy seeing their children progress towards milestones.

News Feed: a snapshot of activities and events. Parents can scroll through the news feed to get a quick look of all upcoming events and other updates posted by teachers, 'liking' or commenting as they go. Posts tagged with their child's name will only appear on their feed.

Health and Nutrition

All meals are prepared on site in our kitchen with fresh ingredients. We supply morning tea, a hot lunch and an afternoon tea on a rotating 4 week menu which is changed seasonally. We display the menu outside each room and in the foyer to help parents to plan meals at home. Our menus are approved by Munch and Move a NSW health initiative.

All allergies, intolerances and religious beliefs are considered by our chef when preparing the meals and an alternative meal will be provided.

Allergies and Intolerances

Eکیدنا is a nut aware centre and as such we do not allow outside food to be brought into the centre. If your child has an allergy or intolerances please advise the centre on enrollment. We will also require a "Child Health Management Plan" prepared by your GP or specialist which we will display in the classroom, kitchen, trolleys and office so that staff are aware. If your child requires special medication to manage their allergy such as an Epi-pen or puffers we will require a long term medication form to be completed and the medication to be supplied and clearly labelled and stored classroom.

Fees

Danny and Charlie

\$141 per day

Included in the daily fee:

Nappies

Wipes

Linen

3 nutritious age appropriate meals.

Sunscreen

Ella and Benji Room

\$126 per day

Included in the daily fee:

Nappies

Wipes

Linen

3 nutritious meals

Sunscreen

Abby Room

\$123 per day

Included in daily fee:

3 nutritious meals

Sunscreen

School Readiness (Transition to School Programme)

Health

Immunisation

Eکیدنا adheres to the Australian Government "no jab no play" policy. Parents are required to provide a current immunisation schedule upon enrolment and as your child reaches the immunisation age requirements parents are to update their records at the centre. If your immunisations are not up to date Centrelink will cut your rebate off until these are given.

Infectious diseases

Eکیدنا staff members follow the policy "Staying Healthy In Childcare". Parents will be notified of any infectious diseases identified in the centre and a sign with the number of cases will be displayed in the foyer. We will also supply you with a fact sheet from NSW Health with current and relevant information. All staff follow our current policies on "Cleaning" "Nappy changing", "Toileting", "Hand Washing" and "Hygiene" to reduce the risk of infection.

If a child has been vomiting, diarrhea or high temperatures they MUST not attend care for a minimum of 24 hours after the last episode as per the NSW government health guidelines.

If the Director or staff are uncertain if the child has a contagious disease the parent is required to provide a doctors certificate stating the child does not have a contagious disease to be able to return to the centre.

Accidents/Incidents

In case of an accident occurring at the centre the Director will contact the parent if deemed necessary. Parents must ensure that their emergency contact details are up to date. An incident report will be filled out outlining the accident and signed off by the staff that observed and administered first aid if required and any staff that may have witnessed the incident. The Director and parents signature will also be required.

Health

.Medication

If your child is well enough to attend childcare we will require a "Medication Authorisation" form to be completed by the parent. All medication must be prescribed by a doctor. All medication must be in original packaging and in date. Please do not leave ANY medication in your child's bag.

Where your child is being treated for a long term condition such as Asthma and epilepsy parents are required to fill out an "Ongoing Medical Condition" form.

Asthma

Ekidna provides a safe environment for children with Asthma. It is centre policy that an "Asthma Record Card" to be completed by parents in consultation with the family doctor and an Asthma management plan be given to the centre.

If medication is required by your child please provide this to the Educators to be locked away in the medical cupboard in the room.

Anaphylaxis

All staff are trained in senior first aid including Anaphylaxis. If an epi-pen is required please provide in original prescribed packaging to the Educator in the room for it to be locked away with your child's name on the box.



Health

Child Illness

As a general principle children should not be brought into the centre if unwell and are unable to cope with the general routine and activities throughout the day. A child that requires extra attention due to illness would be best to stay at home.

Educators monitor your child's health and well being throughout the day whilst they are in our centre. If a child is out of character or showing signs/symptoms of illness an Educator will contact the parent. If the Educator and the Director deem the child is too unwell to stay at the centre we will ask you to come and collect them as quickly as possible.

If your child develops and maintains a temperature of 38+ degrees whilst at the centre the appropriate care will be given to reduce their temperature naturally but sometimes fever is only reduced with the administration of paracetamol.

Upon enrolment the parent is to agree/disagree to allowing Educators to administer the appropriate dose of Paracetamol (1 only dose) if your child's temperature reaches 38 degrees and the service is unable to contact the parent. Once we have made contact a parent must come to collect their child as soon as if possible.

Sun Protection

Eکیدنا is a sun smart centre and follows the practices of Cancer Council in relation to sun protection for staff and children. We ask parents to apply sunscreen before arriving at the centre and ensure your child has a hat in their bag. Staff members will apply 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen to children's skin where necessary. The centre has a NO HAT NO PLAY policy where children without a hat will remain in covered and shaded areas whilst outside.

Rest and Sleep

We ensure we meet each child's basic need to sleep and/or rest. We adapt routines to meet the individual needs of children ensuring sleep time is safe and supervised. Children can not be forced to sleep we can only encourage.

We provide linen for children's sleep times and each child is supplied their own sheets and these are washed at the end of every week. Children can bring their own comforters for sleep time.

We follow Pediatric and Child Health Division guidelines to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Sleep time for Babies and Toddlers

Babies in our nursery classroom sleep according to their home routines which are provided by the parent.

Toddlers

Slowly toddlers transition from a cot to a stretcher bed and rest along side other children and generally one sleep per day. We encourage rest time in the middle of the day this can be either in the form of quiet time or a sleep. An educator must allow your child to sleep if they fall asleep even if a parent has specified that the child does not need a sleep.

Rest time for Preschoolers

Preschoolers can choose to rest or sleep depending on their own needs. If a child does not sleep, books and quiet activities are provided. If a child is attending school the following year we encourage quiet time rather than a sleep to make transition to school easier.



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 more confident learners and responsible caring human beings.

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



Extra Curricular

Ekidna arranges several companies to come in to the centre during the week to offer a variety of activities for the children. These are extra to your fees. You would sign your child up and deal directly with the company providing the activity.



Ekidna Management



Director - Laura Lawrence



*Second In Charge -
Rhiannon Lavis-Moore*



Administration - Gabby Cramp



WHS Supervisor - Kayla Ritchie



Educational Leader - Mariah Gajardo

Administration

Enrolment

Once you have accepted a position at Ekidna we ask you to complete our Child Enrolment package. The enrolment package includes Child Enrolment forms, communication form which gives detailed information about your child to the Educators, permission to photograph forms and a direct debit form.

To ensure your position we ask for a non-refundable admin fee of \$100.00. This can be direct deposited into our bank account.

Rigate Pty Ltd
BSB 332-018
AC 55 29 78 007

We will require a copy of your child's birth certificate and a current immunisation schedule which can be printed off the mygov website.

Fees

Fees are to be paid by Direct Debit either using your bank account or credit card there is a fee payable to Debit Success per transaction and a credit card incurs a fee of 1.87%.

Fees MUST be pay on time within the fee cycle which are charged every fortnight 2 weeks in advance. Your fees are per day including public holidays and payable when your child is sick or on holidays.

Parents who's fees continue to be dishonored will have your child's position terminated and your bond will not be returned to cover any outstanding funds due.

Administration

Absences

In the event that your child will be away due to illness or holidays parents are asked to call or email the centre to inform the carers. Centrelink allows 42 days absent days before this effects your rebate. If you go over the allowable limit Centrelink will cut your rebate. You will need to contact them directly regarding this.

Additional Casual Days

Additional casual days are often available for children already enrolled within the centre. If you would like an extra casual day please email or call the centre and we can let you know if there is a day available. If the centre is full we often do not know if there is a day available until that morning.

Holiday Credit

Ekidna offers families a 2 week holiday credit. This credit is 50% off your fees for a total of 2 weeks per year. Please advise the Director or Admin of your holidays prior to your taking them so that we can apply the credit to your account while you are away.

Updating Information

It is the parents responsibility to update Ekidna on any changes that may alter the service we provide.

Any changes to phone numbers, address, authorised collection persons or emergency contacts, banking details are to be provided in writing to deewhyekidna@bigpond.com



Administration

Contacting the Centre

Centre staff are available throughout the day for parents to check on their children. Sometimes the Educators are unable to talk during busy times of the day such as meal time but if you leave a message we will call you back.

Birthdays

We understand parents would like to celebrate their children's birthday by sending in something such as cake for afternoon tea and this is a nice idea but we ask that you remember some children have allergens and therefore we require a list of the ingredients and at no times can we accept cakes with nuts or eggs.

Fire Drills and Lockdowns

The whole centre holds fire drills and lock downs quarterly and these can occur at any given time during the day. These are carried out in an organised and orderly manner. Staff are trained in using the fire extinguishers that are located in the centre. A fire escape plan will be in every room.

Parent feedback or grievances

To help us ensure that Ekidna meets all our parents needs and expectations we rely on constructive parent feedback. Centre staff are available to discuss day to day care and education of your child. If you are unhappy or have concerns regarding your child's educator please either ring or email the Director to make an appointment to discuss your concerns. We need to hear if a parent has a complaint or concern so that we can resolve any issues you may have.

We also like to hear positive feedback and welcome a chance to hear how well we are doing. You can verbally do this or please leave a review on our facebook page or tell your friends.

FAQ'S

Who do we call regarding issues with our rebate?

If you are having billing issues please call the centre or email admin@bigpond.com and we can look into your account and advise if you need to call Centrelink.

What do I do if I want to change my child care days?

If you wish to change or increase days please call the centre or email and we can do our best to accommodate your request. If you would like to decrease days we will require 4 weeks notice in writing.

What do I do if I need to cancel my child's care?

It is a condition of enrolment that you provide the centre with 4 weeks notice in writing to cancel your care. Once we receive your request we will transfer the security deposit that you paid onto your account to be used for your final weeks of care. If there is any monies remaining we will refund this amount onto a bank account within 8 weeks of your last day of care.

Do you close on Public Holidays and Christmas?

We are only closed on NSW public holidays. We only close on the Christmas public holidays and we are open at all other times. Yes you are still required to pay for public holidays.

Helpful Contacts

Ekidna Main Office

Phone 9981 2377

Email: deewhyekidna@bigpond.com

Email Admin: ekidna-admin@bigpond.com

Danny Room Email

ekidna.danny@gmail.com

Charlie Room Email

ekidna.charlie@gmail.com

Ella Room Email

ekidna.ella@gmail.com

Benji Room Email

ekidna.benji@gmail.com

Abby Red Email

ekidna.abbyred@gmail.com

Abby Blue Email

ekidna.abbyblue@gmail.com

Family Assistance Office

Phone: 13 6150



