



PARENT HANDBOOK

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WELCOME TO BRIGHT HORIZONS

Dear Family,

Welcome to Bright Horizons Australia Childcare. We are excited to have you join our centre and look forward to sharing many wonderful years together.

The first five years of a child's life are a time of amazing learning and growth. The role of our centre is to work alongside families – taking the time to learn what makes your child special, understanding your child's cultural background, and listening to what you want from the early education and care experience.

As family members, you play the central role in your child's learning journey. Your involvement in our centre activities and in the development of our programs is always encouraged.

We have created this Parent Handbook as an introduction to our centre. It provides information on some of the things we believe to be important. We have a complete set of policies and procedures which are available at our centre. If you have any questions about the information contained in either this handbook or in any of the policies and procedures, please don't hesitate to speak with one of our friendly members of staff.

As a centre, we recognise that you are entrusting us with the care and education of your child. Every child is special, and we thank you for allowing us the privilege of investing into their lives during their early years.

Kind regards,

Tamir Tukino

National Operations Manager

Centre Values

In relation to **children**, we:

- Create a warm, friendly and inviting atmosphere, where children can feel secure and are happy.
- Show genuine love and concern for the children in our care.
- Cater for the needs of each child. We promote the healthy development of physical, emotional, intellectual and social skills in every child.
- Facilitate their involvement in small group, whole group and individual learning experiences throughout the day. Planned and spontaneous experiences are based on the needs and interests of individual children and the group.
- Provide opportunities to explore language, music and movement, science and the arts – all of which help children to make sense of their world.
- Encourage children to value and respect each other's differences while promoting the development of a positive sense of self.
- Create a learning environment that encourages children to interact, take on roles and to develop relationships with peers and teachers through play.
- Provide each child with the time they need for meals, rest and relaxation.

In relation to the **program**, we:

- Capture and integrate the complex learning development of all children by ensuring:
- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators

In relation to **families and the broader community**, we:

- Respect the rights and opinions of parents and the community. Parent participation and the involvement of the local community is encouraged.
- Respect the cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices, values and beliefs of individual families and communities.

In relation to the **centre environment**, we:

- Provide a safe and well supervised learning environment.
- Take an active role in caring for the environment and promote sustainable practices that develop a sense of respect and care for the environment within the centre environment and beyond.

OUR QUALITY SYSTEMS

Support Structure

Bright Horizons Australia Childcare employs a team of Managers to work alongside our educational team. Our Managers are able to support educators and monitor the level of service at our centre, ensuring that we consistently provide a high level of care for every child.

Staffing Arrangements

It is the team of dedicated Educators and Early Childhood Teachers at our centre that makes the early learning experience for your child so special.

Each member of the educational team is carefully screened before they start working at our centre. All of our Educators are early childhood professionals who have a genuine desire to help each child reach their full potential.

As a team we continually strive for excellence. We regularly participate in professional development to continue our learning journey and welcome constructive feedback.

We have a pool of regular relief Educators to ensure that your child continues to enjoy the same standard of care while permanent Educators are absent.

The National Quality Standard

We operate our centres according to the National Quality Framework, which includes a National Quality Standard, as agreed for all early childhood services by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The Framework is designed to help services to provide the best level of early childhood education and care.

The National Quality Standard is divided into seven areas that contribute to the quality of early childhood education and care:

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. Leadership and service management.

Detailed information about the National Quality Framework and National Quality Standards can be accessed through the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website www.acecqa.gov.au.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Age Groups

Classrooms vary depending on the centre's design and its current configuration. Our Centre Director can provide information on the current age groupings for each of the classrooms.

Our classrooms are typically divided into the following groups:

- Babies / Nursery / Infants
- Toddlers
- Pre-Kindy
- Kindy
- Preschool / Kinder
- Kindergarten
- Before and After School Care
- Vacation Care

Each class has a dedicated educational team – generally a Primary Educator / Teacher and an Educator

Our Curriculum

Our Curriculum is based on the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The framework describes the principles, practices and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. It has a strong emphasis on play-based learning, and recognises the importance of communication and language and social and emotional development.

Queensland and Victorian centres also offered Fund Kindergarten Programs, delivered by an Early Childhood Teacher, for children in the year before they attend formal schooling. Please speak to your Centre Director for further information.

The Curriculum offered in our services that operate School Age Care is based on My Time, Our Place (MTOPI) the Framework for School Age Care in Australia

Belonging, Being and Becoming

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming.

- Belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.

- Being is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be' – time to play, try new things and have fun.
- Becoming is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

Learning Goals

Through the curriculum our Educators assist your child to develop:

- A strong sense of identity;
- Connections with their world;
- A strong sense of wellbeing;
- Confidence and involvement in their learning; and
- Effective communication skills.

Play Based Learning

Play is fun – and is one of the foundations of the Early Years Learning Framework. Children explore, learn, communicate, discover, engage, imagine and create – all through play. Our Educators create experiences and cultivate environments to guide your child's play and learning journey.

Collaboration with Families

Parents are the most important people in a child's life, and by sharing information about your child – their interests and their learning journey, you can make a valuable contribution to the development of the curriculum. Our Educators look forward to working closely with you.

Learning Environments

Children's learning is fostered in environments that are stimulating, interesting and visually appealing. Our environments are constantly changing to reflect children's interests, their learning journeys and the curriculum.

Our learning environments encourage children and Educators to work together to learn about the sustainable use of resources and to implement sustainable practices such as recycling, water and energy conservation.

Much of the information and resources displayed in the classroom environments is designed to engage children and to encourage them to question and make sense of their world. Careful attention is given to creating a space that is appropriate for the age and interests of the children in the group.

Children love seeing the artwork that they have created on display. They have pride in their eyes as they share their creations with family, friends and visitors to our centre.

Some of the learning environments and experiences that you will see in our Centre include:

- Painting easels
- Home corner
- Nature tables
- Large block/construction area
- Play dough/sensory play
- Box construction
- Writing area
- Science display/interaction table
- Manipulative play/resources
- Puzzle area
- Book corner
- Collage and pasting area
- Computer area
- Group time – with display board/wall

Positive Behaviour Guidance

Our behaviour guidance policy is based on respecting each child, taking the time to acknowledge their emotions, and working with them to explore socially acceptable expressions of those feelings/frustrations. Key to the success of positive behaviour guidance are:

- Setting and consistently reinforcing appropriate behaviours at our centre;
- Explaining that rules and limits allow everyone to enjoy their day at our centre;
- Rewarding positive behaviours with praise and peer recognition;
- Providing choices, encouraging decision making and setting realistic expectations for the child as an individual.

At no time will any child at our centre ever be physically disciplined.

PARENTS AND CARERS

Communication

As a centre, we continually strive to work collaboratively with and communicate openly to our parent body. Together we create a 'learning community', where parents and families can share their unique insights into your child's development, background, interests and needs – adding a layer of richness to the programs and experiences that we create and implement.

We understand that life can be busy and drop off and pick up time is not always the best time to speak with your child's teachers. We are happy to arrange a more suitable time for a meeting, or alternatively you can leave a message for our Educators – either in the Communication Book or by sending an email directly to our centre.

Information relating to each child's experiences is maintained on a daily basis. For children in our younger age groups, this information will include details of toileting, sleep patterns and food intake. Your child's carers can provide more information on the type of records that are maintained and show you where these records can be found.

We produce a newsletter on a regular basis as a way of sharing upcoming events and other important centre information. We also have parent noticeboards displayed throughout our centre – and have the ability to send group reminders by email.

Your child will be given a pocket when they start at our centre. Please remember to check your pocket regularly as they are another way we communicate with our centre community.

Visitors

From time to time our centre hosts students and volunteers. These visitors are screened before they can interact with the children – and at no time are they left unsupervised. If you have any questions about these visitors please speak with one of our staff.

Enrolment/Admission

Becoming part of our centre community begins on your first visit. During that initial visit you will be invited to take a tour of our classrooms and meet our educational team.

You will be provided with an enrolment pack for each child. We are required to collect detailed information on each child – including information on who can collect your child, their immunisation status, and information on their family/cultural background. All of this allows us to provide the best care and education for your child. Please take the time to complete all the information requested in these forms and return them to our centre before your child commences care.

We generally recommend that children attend a minimum of two (2) days per week. Attending multiple days allows your child to build friendships with their peers and teachers – and provides greater opportunities for them to benefit fully from the educational programs we provide.

Where children are placed from a waiting list, they will be allocated a position based on the Commonwealth Government's Priority of Access Guidelines. Our Centre Director is able to provide more information on the waiting list and allocation process.

Please Note: On commencement you will be required to pay an Enrolment Fee and the first instalment of childcare fees.

Orientation

Every child is unique – which means that every child's experience starting at our centre will be different. There is no one right way to start care – we just have to learn what works for your child and your family.

We generally recommend that you visit our centre with your child before they commence care. This way they will come to understand that our centre is a safe and fun place, and will have an opportunity to explore their new environment. Certain times of the day offer greater opportunities for your child to engage with the educators and other children in the group – our Centre Director will be able to suggest the best times for your visits. (Please Note: you will be required to sign in and out of the Visitor's Book for each of these visits.)

Some tips to help during the orientation period:

- Try to schedule at least one visit with your child before they commence.
- Consider starting with a shorter day – gradually building to a full day.
- Speak positively about our Centre and commencing care – your child will mirror your confidence.
- Always say good-bye to your child and let them know you will come back to collect them. For older children you may like to give them a time you that you will be back. Let a staff member know that you are planning to leave so that they can support your child.
- Remember that every child adjusts to being in care in their own way. Consider bringing a favourite toy or comforter as this may help your child to make the transition from home to our centre.
- Be assured that all children do settle – and often before you are even in the car. We welcome families contacting us at any time during the day to see how your child is doing. Where possible we will arrange for you to speak with the staff who are caring for your child.

Parent Involvement

We love having parents involved in our centre – but we understand that the level of participation will vary depending on other commitments. Please speak with our Centre Director or one of our Educators to explore opportunities for you to become involved in centre activities and events.

Parent Grievances/Complaints

Constructive feedback allows us to better understand your expectations for care and fosters our journey of continuous improvement. Concerns should be raised with either a senior member of our staff team, our Centre Director or the centre's Regional Manager. Please be assured that all concerns are treated confidentially and are managed in a positive and respectful manner.

Newsletters

Newsletters are produced on a regular basis – and provide an overview of activities in each age group and upcoming Centre Events. If you would like to receive these communications by email please let our Centre Director know.

Celebrations

Children love sharing birthdays and other special events with their friends. If you would like to celebrate an event for your child, please speak with one of the centre staff. Please be aware that some of our children have special diets – which may restrict some food items for these events.

Toys and Treasures from Home

To avoid the disappointment of special toys becoming lost or damaged, we recommend that these items are not brought to our centre. Comfort or security toys are welcome and we ask that they are clearly labelled to ensure they remain with their owner.

Children in our older age groups are encouraged to bring in items to share for “Show and Tell”. Books, photographs, science or nature items are always well received by the children.

Lost Property

Please clearly label all items brought to our centre so that we can ensure they go home with the right owner. Please speak with one of our staff if any of your child's belongings are misplaced.

Change of Contact Details

It is extremely important that our records are accurate at all times. Please let us know if any of your contact details, including those of your nominated emergency contacts, change so that we can update our files.

Centre Policies and Procedures

We have a complete copy of our Centre's Policies and Procedures available in the foyer. We invite you to read through these policies and procedures at your leisure. If you have any questions, would like more information or would like to provide input into the content of these documents please speak with our Centre Director or a member of our educational team.

Additional Needs

So that we can be confident in the care and education we provide to your child we ask that you provide detailed information about any additional needs prior to commencement. We are committed to working closely with families, medical professionals and local support services to develop tailored inclusion support plans for children with additional needs.

HEALTH

We strive to maintain a healthy environment for the children in our care. It is important to remember that your child's immune system is still developing – and becoming unwell and learning to fight illness is a normal part of childhood.

If your child is unwell we ask that you keep them away from the centre. This provides your child with the best opportunity to rest and recover quickly – and it also minimises the risk of sickness spreading to other children or staff.

Should your child become unwell or display signs that they have a contagious or infectious illness while at our centre, you will be contacted immediately and asked to make arrangements for your child to go home.

We may require a clearance letter from your child's medical practitioner before returning to care if they have had an infectious illness.

Immunisation

Under the Australian Governments 'No Jab, No Play' policy, which began on 1 January 2016, children must be up to date with their vaccinations, have a valid medical exemption or be on a catch up schedule if their parents want to keep receiving the Child Care Benefit, the Child Care Rebate and the Family Tax Benefit Part A Supplements. These requirements vary for each state. Please refer to the policy for your state for specific details.

As a centre, we are required to maintain up-to-date immunisation records for all children enrolled in our care. Families are required to provide a copy of their child's Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) on enrolment and after each immunisation.

In the unlikely event that a vaccine preventable illness is present within our centre, any child who is not immunised will be required to stay at home for the duration of the exclusion period.

Clothing and Sun Protection

Children's skin is precious and needs to be protected. It is the policy of our centre that all children and staff are required to wear a hat and sunscreen whilst outdoors. We ask that children have sunscreen applied at home so they are ready for play as soon as they arrive.

In the warmer months, we recommend that children wear clothing that provides some sun protection – such as collars and sleeves. In the cooler weather, we suggest dressing children in layers which can be easily removed as the day becomes hotter.

Play is the foundation of our program – and children should be dressed in clothing which allows them to interact fully with the daily activities. We understand that children's clothing can be expensive and suggest that your child wear play clothes and appropriate footwear to our centre.

Please include a spare change of clothing in your child's bag.

Please note: Clothing and Sun Protection recommendations vary from state to state. Please refer to the policy that is relevant to your state for specific requirements.

Administration of Medication

If your child needs medication while in our care we need you to provide written permission by completing the "Medication Administration Consent Form".

Medication must be in the original container and must be clearly labelled by a pharmacist with your child's name – detailing the administration dosage and frequency. Over the counter medication, including Panadol and nappy cream, must also be clearly labelled by a pharmacist. Medication must be appropriate for the age of your child and must be within the nominated expiry date.

If your child requires a higher dosage than that specified on the label, we will require written confirmation from your child's medical practitioner.

Child Illness

If your child is unable to attend due to illness, we ask that you let us know as soon as possible. On return to our centre we will require you to sign the attendance register to ensure that your family can claim government funding for these absences.

Please be aware that fees are charged for all absences – including absences if your child is excluded from care due to an illness or infectious disease. Makeup days are not available for absences.

If the centre is not notified of absences for more than one week, we cannot guarantee that your child's position will be held.

Hand Washing

Good hygiene is one of the most effective ways to maintain a healthy centre environment. Hand-washing when toileting, before and after meals and after messy activities is part of our everyday routine. We encourage all families to practice hand-washing as part of their arrival and departure routine.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Fire Drills/Evacuation Procedures

As a centre, we practice our evacuation procedures and lock down procedures each month to ensure that all children and staff are familiar with what to do in the unlikely event of an emergency. We also have fire evacuation plans displayed in each classroom – close to the emergency exit.

If you are visiting our centre during an evacuation or lock down drill please follow directions from our staff. Please Note: all persons present during a drill are legally required to participate in the evacuation.

Accidents and Emergencies

Our centre ensures first aid qualified staff are rostered on at all times. In the event that your child has an accident or becomes injured we will act immediately to provide care and treatment.

Our Centre Director / Nominated Supervisor will contact you or your nominated emergency contacts to notify of the accident as soon as possible. If we cannot make contact and it is our reasonable belief that your child requires immediate medical treatment, we will take steps necessary for your child's health and well-being. Please Note: our centre is not responsible for any medical, ambulance fees or other costs incurred.

All accidents and injuries that require medical attention (including first aid treatment) are documented on an Incident Report Form. This record will be available when you arrive at our centre and must be signed by our Centre Director, staff who administered treatment and parents.

Leaving/Collecting a Child from the Centre

Ensuring your child's safety is of the utmost importance. It is our centre policy that children are only released into the care of an authorised person. Please let us know if someone unfamiliar will be collecting your child. All visitors will be accompanied whilst in our centre and will be required to produce photo identification so that we can verify that they are authorised to collect your child.

It is a legal requirement that the attendance register is completed each time your child arrives and departs from our centre. Our Centre Director will show you where the sign in and out books are kept and will explain the information to be included.

Please Note: Children can only be released into the care of an adult (person over the age of 18 years).

Custody Arrangements

As a centre, we are required to comply with any legally binding written instructions regarding custody arrangements and to make every effort to ensure the safety and security of all children in our care.

If there are any Custody Orders, Parenting Orders or Supervision Orders relating to your child, please provide us with a complete copy of the Order for our files. If there are any changes to your child's custody arrangements, please let us know as soon as possible.

Excursions

Excursions and performances are an important part of the educational programs and experiences provided throughout the year. Information about upcoming events will be included in our newsletter. If you would like your child to participate in these events, please complete the written permission slip. Parents are encouraged to attend excursions.

FEES AND HOLIDAYS

Late Fees

If you are not able to collect your child before the centre's closing time, please phone ahead to let us know. That way we can reassure your child if they become upset. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute may be applied to your account at our Centre Director's discretion.

Booked Days

On enrolment we will ask you to nominate permanent attendance days for your child. Please speak with our Centre Director if you would like to change your child's booked days.

Ceasing Enrolments

If you wish to cease your child's enrolment at our centre, then you are requested to provide two weeks' written notice and are responsible to pay all outstanding fees. If sufficient notice is not provided, you are responsible for the two weeks' full fees in lieu of notice.

Please Note: CCB cannot be claimed on any absences after your child's last day of attendance at your centre.

Payment of Fees

Our centre is cashless. Childcare fees can be paid by direct debit (via EziDebit), EFTPOS, BPay and Centrepay (via Centrelink). To secure your child's ongoing position at our centre, it is a requirement that all fees are paid in advance (current + one week). You will be given an approximate weekly parent fee when you commence.

Child Care Benefit

Eligible families can apply for the Commonwealth Government's Child Care Benefit to assist with the cost of early education and care. More information about Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate, including eligibility requirements, is available from the Family Assistance Office (FAO).

Full fees will be applied until we receive advice of your current assessment from the FAO.

Priority of Access

As a centre, we are required to comply with the Federal Government's "Priority of Access" guidelines when placing children from the waiting list.

Holidays

Families are eligible for up to 20 days at a reduced rate each financial year, based on their normal weekly attendance pattern (four weeks of normal booked days). If you would like to apply for this reduced rate, please provide written notice at least two weeks before the planned absence. Accounts must be up to date to be eligible for the reduced holiday rate.

Please Note: The reduced rate is calculated as a percentage of your weekly out-of-pocket childcare expense.

Allowable Absences

Child Care Benefit can be claimed for 42 absences each financial year. Please complete the attendance register, specifying the reason for the absence, when you return to care to ensure that Child Care Benefit can be applied.

As a Centre, we are always concerned about the welfare of each of our children, and appreciate knowing how your child is doing when they are absent from our centre.

Please Note: Absent days due to public holidays and days applied for under the holiday rate form a part of the allocated allowable absences.

Public Holidays/Sick Days

Please Note: Fees are payable for all booked days – including public holidays and sick days.

Attendance Register

As a Centre we are legally required to maintain an accurate attendance register at all times. Please ensure you include the time, your full name and signature each time your child arrives or departs our centre.

Please Note: The attendance register must be signed for all absences if you wish to have Child Care Benefit applied.



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