



CARE # FUN # PLAY # LEARNING

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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WELCOME TO BAIRNSDALE CHILDCARE AND KINDER

On behalf of all staff we would like to welcome you to Bairnsdale Childcare and Kinder. This handbook is a resource for families to refer to throughout the time your child is in care at Bairnsdale. It outlines how the centre operates and provides helpful information as your child moves through the various rooms at the centre

Bairnsdale Childcare & Kinder is a Family business and we are committed to providing high quality care in a Child safe environment and aim to meet parent's needs and wishes wherever possible. Parent participation is encouraged. Please feel free to visit the Centre at any time to observe and take part in your child's progress. When your child commences you also become a member of the centre.

We are a privately-owned Centre, operating under the 'Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011' and are part of a 'National Quality Standard System'. The centre operates 52 weeks of the year and closes only for public holidays. The centre is licensed for 162 places. Full and part time care is available from 6.45 am to 6pm Monday to Friday (Except Public Holidays).

The National Quality Standard is the key aspect of the National Quality Framework. It has been developed to ensure centres use best practices that are most appropriate to the children being educated and cared for. This is a very positive process aimed at giving our children the highest quality of care they deserve and have a right to expect. It's about putting children first.

This Family handbook has been prepared for you. We hope that it will assist you and help you understand the running of the centre and its policies. If you have any questions about matters you do not understand please ask.

Please keep this handbook so that you may refer to it from time to time. If you have any concerns please contact Michelle Bennett (Manager) or Kate McDevitte and Tracey Traynor (Assistant Managers).

Parent Participation

We recognise parents as the primary carers and educators of their children. We encourage parents to spend time within the centre as this helps build open and honest communication channels, thereby ensuring each child's needs are met on a daily basis.

- The Centre has a non-discriminatory policy, which provides access to the centre to all persons regardless of sex, race or religion.
- Parents are always welcome in our centre and can be involved by helping educators with the children and activities, for a few minutes or a few hours per day. Educators are happy to explain why activities are designed as they are. The Centre is aiming to provide a home like atmosphere within a caring and stimulating environment for each child.
- Parents of children in the 0-2 rooms are encouraged to complete daily information sheets to assist educators in catering to children's individual needs.
- Parents are encouraged to communicate with educators on a daily basis as to their child's day and progress. Parents can arrange a time convenient to both themselves and educators to meet and discuss their child's development and progress.
- Child information forms for over 3 and under 3's are to be completed by parents prior to commencement, to assist educators in caring for their children.
- A Newsletter will be produced on a regular basis. These will be electronically emailed to you or placed in your correspondence pocket in the foyer.
- Could all parents please check the notice board on a daily basis for important information?

- There will be parent meetings and information nights on occasions, if the need arises or on parent's request. This gives families the opportunity to contribute to the operation of the centre and individual information regarding your child/children.
- Parents with various interests or skills are welcome to share or contribute to the program. Please feel free to discuss this with Michelle, Kate , Tracey or the Team Leaders.

Philosophy and Vision Statement

Our Vision: At Bairnsdale Childcare & Kinder we will work together to provide a Child Safe environment. We aim to deliver high quality care and education for all children and foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness.

Our Mission: To provide each child in our care with the best possible start to an education that they deserve and to view each child as a capable and competent learner.

PHILOSOPHY:

1. To provide a play-based curriculum with the support and guidance of educators, that incorporates and extends on each child's interests, learning and development in relation to the 5 learning outcomes (identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confident learner and effective communicators).

Ways we can achieve this:

- for all educators to work together to have a written program or documentation that is play based and extends on children's interests
- document children's interests, abilities, learning and development and relate learning to the 5 outcomes
- including all children in the program
- For educators to follow the planning cycle
- Parent partnership/input

2. To protect children by providing a safe environment where they feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Child Safety is embedded throughout the service and is a part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. We recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Ways we can achieve this:

- to spend quality time with each child
- Regular discussion/communication with parents
- Acknowledge and celebrate Gunai Kurnai culture in the service
- Asking children for input and giving choices

3. To allow children to learn through play and encourage them to become enthusiastic learners in a safe, secure and trusting environment and to encourage them to have input into a flexible program

Ways we can achieve this:

- Using intentional teaching strategies
- encouraging children to explore their environment
- providing a safe environment to play in that is stimulating, inviting and challenging
- offering age appropriate choices

4. To develop trusting and caring relationships with families and support their uniqueness in relation to culture, lifestyle, customs and beliefs wherever possible

Ways we can achieve this:

- by getting to know the families and inviting them into conversation about their child and their goals
- to listen to and value family concerns and give feedback
- consistency with staff

5. To listen to and respect each child's ideas and assist them to feel a sense of belonging and happiness in their environment.

Ways we can achieve this:

- to acknowledge what children say and respond to this in a positive way and to encourage their independence and sense of agency.
- Follow children's interests to give them a sense of accomplishment and to scaffold their learning to help develop their skills.
- Acknowledge and display children's work to give them a sense of belonging

6. To listen to families, respect and support them in their role of parenting

Ways we can achieve this:

- to listen to what families have to say and respect their feedback, ideas and suggestions and to give support when needed.
- To talk to children about their families

7. For educators to acknowledge and support each other and work together to support children's individual learning and programs, in a work place which supports on going professional development and skills.

Ways we can achieve this:

- open communication between educators
- for all educators to have input into the program
- to provide educators with ongoing professional support such as staff meeting, workshops and open communication with management
- for educators to work together towards the same goal

8. To create learning areas with elements from the natural environment (garden, sandpit, worm farm) etc that reflects a sense of belonging and allows children to explore and provides opportunity for learning, creativeness and expression.

Ways we can achieve this:

- look at the environments around our community and try and introduce these into our outdoor environment
- bring the outside environment to inside
to continue to build on our sustainability practices.



Programs

We have 7 rooms at Bairnsdale.



There are two infant rooms catering for children aged 6wks to two years.

The infant's room is often the start of your child's journey. The educators will meet with you on enrolment to go through your child's routine to ensure they understand and closely follow what would happen at home. This familiarity between home and care will allow your child to bond with the educators in their room and will result in greater emotional stability and better intellectual and language development.

The educators will provide a rich multi-sensory experience to intrigue and excite your child in a calm, ordered and caring presence.

There are two toddler rooms catering for children aged 2 years to 3 years. At this stage the children are beginning to become more independent in their routines and are exploring the environment and beginning to work in conjunction with other children. The children are offered a variety of independent and small group activities. They begin to develop math and social science skills and express themselves through creative activities like painting, singing and drama.

For these children the transition into the next room is a major milestone as they will move from a smaller environment to a larger one. We like to make this move a smooth and gradual process for both the parent and the child. Educators will meet with parents a month before their child's third birthday to discuss the process and to ensure we are meeting all the child's needs.





Junior-Kinder Room (3-4 Years)

This is a big step for the children as they make their way across the hall way into a bigger room with the program evolving from the children's interest that is generated through involvement, discussion, play and enjoyment. The children are beginning to explore relationships and make new friends. The children will be given more opportunities to play alone, in pairs, in small groups and large groups to promote their confidence.

Pre-Kinder Room (4 years)

The educators in this room will focus on setting appropriate, realistic yet challenging goals for the children so they can explore and develop school readiness skills in a caring, stimulating environment.

Educators will build on children's ideas as they help them to see new possibilities in their play and give children time to explore and develop their initiatives, encouraging them to discuss what they are doing and what they want to achieve.

The children will be educator on sustainability practices such as

recycling, composting and cooking with items grown in the vegetable garden.



Kinder Room (4-5 years)

The educators in this room are Bachelor trained or working towards their Bachelor. The Kindergarten programs are informed and influenced by a number of philosophical theorists and world renowned educational settings.

The Italian city of Reggio Emilia is the world-renowned leader in early childhood education. The educators at Bairnsdale have incorporated many elements of this philosophy into the Early Learning programs to provide our students with the best educational opportunities available. Our students are viewed as competent capable co contributors in the learning process. The children are encouraged to follow their interests, investigate their queries and represent their thoughts. The educators work alongside the children to encourage and support them in the learning process. They provide guidance, provocation and stimulation to inspire children in their quest for learning.

Our educational environments are devised to motivate individual learning, encourage small group collaboration and celebrate peer achievement in a climate of mutual respect within the class group.

The motivation of following one's own interests ensures the egocentric child will strive to learn from their experience. As the Kindergarten children set the areas of research themselves, the educators monitor and predict the stages of learning so as to enable purposeful experiences. In this way the teachers and the children construct and negotiate the curriculum together.

Grievance and Complaints Procedures

The partnership between educators and families is one of the key components in developing of a sense of belonging and caring. In order to enhance and preserve this relationship any complaints, concerns or differences of opinion need to be dealt with.

The centre encourages parents to discuss room/child related issues with the room leader in the first instance. Other issues i.e management should be discussed with the manager.

An appropriate meeting time can then be arranged. Complaints will not be discussed in an informal setting. Complaints will be kept confidential and appropriate action will be taken.

If the complaint is not acted upon satisfactorily then the parent can contact the Directors or Health and Community Services;

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development PH: 5150 4500 (Bairnsdale).

Fees and Payment

We aim to minimise the cost of administration, in particular the collection of child care fees, while ensuring families know what is expected of them.

It is our experience that parents do not always read and understand the terms under which their children have been enrolled and this causes problems later on. We are a small business and the provision of our childcare service is reliant on prompt payment of fees. Therefore, to avoid any misunderstandings in our future relationships we take this opportunity to highlight some of the most important items in the terms and conditions of enrolment.

Payment of Fees

- Fees are payable by a direct debit system (no cash is kept on the premise) in which the service debits families account or by credit card.
- Direct debit request agreement is required to be completed prior to enrolment.
- All direct debit information will remain confidential.
- All fees are automatically debited on a weekly basis (Friday). Families will be notified prior of the weekly amount.
- Just like any other school, fees are still payable on public holidays or when your child is absent for any reason.

Daily Fee \$96.00 per day

Late Fee

By regulation we are required to ensure 2 educators are in attendance at all times that a child remains at the centre. If you are late (after 6pm), at least 2 educators must be paid additional wages. If you are going to be late, please ring the centre before 6pm. The late fee is \$5.00 for every minute after 6pm.

Withdrawal of Children from the Centre

Families must provide two weeks' notice in writing when withdrawing their child from the centre.

What to Bring

Children need comfortable and washable clothing, which is appropriate for the weather and allows for movement, is easy for them to get in and out of (toilet training) and which they feel free to get dirty.

No sleeveless tops or singlets are to be worn.

Footwear should be worn to and from the centre. If possible, ensure they are named. Please, no thongs or backless shoes as they can be dangerous.

Please note – All items brought into the centre must be labelled.

The following provides a guide as to what you should bring for your child. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask the educators in your child's room.

Infants –

- A labelled bag
- 2 changes of clothing, allowing for changes in weather
- Any special comforters eg dummies, blanket
- Legionaries style sun hat
- Warm hat, waterproof clothing and warm coat for winter

Food

- Older babies need to bring morning & afternoon tea, lunch and drinks (Water bottle, milk bottle)
- Younger babies need to bring their bottles and solids

Breast-feeding mothers are encouraged to make arrangements with staff to enable breastfeeding to continue.

Nappy supply – Nappies are supplied by the centre

Toddlers –

- A labelled bag
- 2 changes of clothing, allowing for changes in weather
- Legionaries style sun hat
- Warm hat, waterproof clothing and warm coat for winter
- Morning and afternoon tea, lunch and a water bottle

Pre-kinder & Pre-school –

- A labelled bag
- 2 changes of clothes, allowing for changes in weather
- Legionnaires style sun hat
- Warm hat, waterproof clothing and warm coat for winter
- Lunch, snacks and a water bottle (morning & afternoon tea provided)

Food

Although the centre does not provide food for children we actively encourage and promote healthy eating habits for all children. Parents will periodically be given information and advice about good nutrition, including recommendations about the sort of food to send with their child.

We ask that parents provide nutritious lunches and snacks for their children. i.e. sandwiches, baked beans, spaghetti, salads, yoghurt, cheese, dried fruits etc. We encourage healthy eating.

Please do not send cordial drinks/ sweet drinks, chocolates, lollies, chips, twisties, cheezels, rollups, peanuts and any other junk foods etc

Fresh fruit platters will be provided for morning and afternoon tea in the Junior Kinder ,Pre-Kinder and kinder rooms. This may vary sometimes with the provision of fruit loaf, rice cakes and sandwiches.

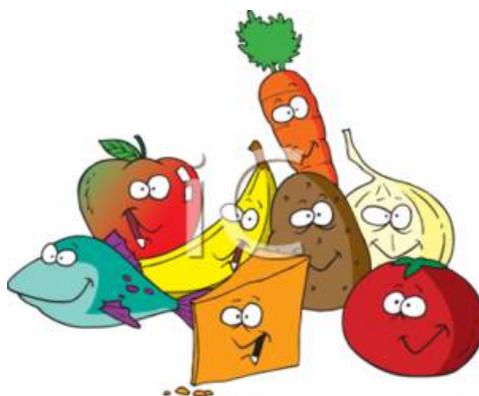
Children are provided with water at all meal times and children can bring their own drink bottle (preferably water) with them if they wish.

Cold food products are to be placed directly in the 'fridge basket' in the fridge. We have a fully equipped kitchen for heating food (microwave) or toasting sandwiches etc. Please speak to your team leader on the day.

Please label all containers clearly.

If your child requires a bottle please bring these clearly labelled with your child's name and enough formula or cow's milk for the day.

Bairnsdale Childcare & Kinder is a **Nut and Nut Product Aware Centre**. We encourage all families not to provide foods containing nuts. For example; peanut butter or Nutella



Dental Care

Bairnsdale Childcare & Kinder believes that educators have an important role along with families, to establish good dental care practices at an early age. Educators in conjunction with parents will work together to provide an appropriate dental hygiene program. Educators at Bairnsdale believe the focus needs to be on reducing the incidence of dental carries and to facilitate the prevention and management of dental trauma in children. Educators at Bairnsdale Childcare will encourage all children to practice correct Dental hygiene by:

- giving children water as the main drink throughout the day which provides fluoride for teeth and helps prevent early childhood tooth decay.
- providing families with information on dental hygiene based on information from the *Dental Health Service Victoria*

Child Portfolios/Group Plans

As a part of the care and education program the centre uses **Child Portfolios & Group Plans** to document evidence of each child's learning and development. Each child regardless of whether they are 6 weeks or 6 years old will have an individual portfolio & group plan. Educators will assist children to create a visual tool to track their **journal of learning**.

Child Portfolios & Group Plans become a story of your child's time at Bairnsdale, telling stories of play situations and highlighting interactions and friendships being made, a record of your child's interests, likes, dislikes and other events or activities while in care.

'Learning through Play' – Play provides children with the opportunity to learn as they discover, create, socialise, improvise, solve problems and engage in critical thinking.

Educators at Bairnsdale Childcare & Kinder base their curriculum on the 'Early Years Learning Framework'. This curriculum encompasses all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occurs in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development. (adapted from Te Whariki)

Educators will work in partnership with families and use the 5 Learning Outcomes to guide their planning for children's learning.

A program is designed to meet the individual needs of each child and to provide a variety of experiences in which the children develop their own interests and competencies. It provides the children with the opportunity to mix with other age groups, as well as peers, and allows freedom for each child to move from one group activity to another. e.g. From solitary activities to group play or from vigorous activities to quiet and passive play.

The daily routine and Learning Outcomes are displayed in the children's individual rooms for parental perusal.

Parents are encouraged to view, discuss, comment on or add to their child's portfolio at any time in consultation with your child's room leader & educators.

Children with additional needs are included in our program. After consulting with parents and specialists we can focus on integrating the child into daily activities at the Centre.

If you do not wish to have your child/ren's names or photographs displayed in the Child Portfolios/Group plan please indicate on the enrolment forms.

Priority of Access

There is a 'Priority of Access' guideline, under which the Centre must operate, determined by the Department of Community Services:

When filling vacant places, a service must fill them according to the following priorities:

Priority 1: a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

Priority 2: a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the work, training, study test

Priority 3: any other child.

Within these main Priority categories, priority should also be given to children in:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- families which include a disabled person
- families on lower incomes
- families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- socially isolated families
- single parent families

For more information go to <http://www.deewr.gov.au>/or www.mychild.gov.au

Child Illness



We aim to create a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health and wellbeing of the children

- If your child becomes ill while at the Centre, we will notify you or your contact person, so that arrangements can be made for your child to be collected.
 - Your child will be kept comfortable with a member of staff until you arrive.
 - Children who are ill must remain at home. The Centre must consider all the other children attending the Centre, their parents and staff.
- The Centre must be notified when a child is absent due to ill health. Please ring the Centre as early as possible.

Infectious Disease

Centre educators follow guidelines on health care for children as detailed in Staying Healthy in Childcare.

Parents are notified of any infectious disease identified at the centre. The name of the illness, its signs and symptoms will be displayed.

If a child has been vomiting or has had diarrhoea within 24 hours before arrival, the child is not to be brought to the centre.

Refer to Exclusion Timetable for all childhood infectious diseases.

The Centre must be notified of any child absent due to an infectious disease, so that all attending parents can be notified. Please ring the Centre by 8.00 am.

Medication

If a child is prescribed medication by a Doctor and considered not contagious and is comfortable and interested enough to attend the Centre, medication can be given only under the following provisions:

A letter of instruction from your Doctor or original prescription container stating these points:

- Child's Name
- Name of prescribing Doctor
- Name of Medication
- Dosage required
- Time/s to be administered
- Expiry Date

Medication must be in the original container with child's name and dosage on the label. All medication is to be handed to the staff in the room and placed in the medication cupboard.

These details must be entered in the Medication book and signed. On administration of the medication, the staff member in charge will record dosage of medication administered, who administered the medication and who checked the dosage administered. Parent must sign the Medication Booklet on pick up to acknowledge medication given to your child.

All medication must be collected at the end of the day.

***Parents with children who are **asthmatic / Anaphylactic** are asked to consult with their Doctor and provide the Centre with an Asthma Plan / Anaphylaxis Plan. ***

Immunisation

In relation to the Public Health Act, 1992, childcare centres have a responsibility to ensure parents enrolling their child provide approved evidence of immunisation status.

Parents are required to provide written information regarding the immunisation progress of their child (Immunisation History Statement form is required).

A Department of Human Services form re: Immunisation needs to be completed on enrolment.

In the event of a vaccine-preventable disease occurring in the centre, the public Health Unit and parents will be notified.

If your child has not been immunised, then you are unable to attend the service.

Behaviour Guidance

Educators use a positive approach in guidance and socialisation and follow a Behaviour Management Policy which extends across the whole centre to give consistency of expectations in all rooms. We try to recognise why a child behaves in a certain way and encourage the children to develop self-discipline, a respect for others and for property and respect for self. We encourage the individuality and confidence of and never lower their self-esteem. We will use a combination of indirect and direct guidance, verbal and emotional guidance. (See Positive Guidance Policy for more information).

Centre Closure

The centre is only closed for public holidays.

Full or normal fees are payable for all public holidays. Fees are payable for 52 weeks of the year. Holiday rates for families do not exist.

From the Centre Owners/Directors

We hope you have a clear understanding of the way our Centre is managed. We are here to help, advise and co-operate with all families. The individuality of every child and every family is realised and we are prepared to tailor our program to suit each child's ideas, emotions, interests and needs, including children with Additional Needs and varying backgrounds.

We are approachable, and we encourage you to phone and feel free to speak with us at any time regarding general enquiries, concerns or problems.

We look forward to having the opportunity to care for your child/children and with your support and input we can work towards the highest quality care and education.

We look forward to having you and your family as part of our centre.

Michelle Bennett
Manager