



Rural City of
Wangaratta

Children's Services Centre

Handbook



Welcome

This parent handbook outlines important information you will need to be aware of while you are a part of the WCS Community. Our service has an open door policy. You and your family are welcome to visit at any time (Covid-19 restrictions pending please contact our service for up to date information)

Service policies will be referred to throughout this booklet. If you require further information on these policies a hard copy or email is available and the sign in desk.



Wangaratta Children's Services (WCS) Vision

"Holistic, compassionate and supportive."

Our vision at Wangaratta Children's Services is to aid and support all children in their different learning and development needs, to foster a community that is compassionate and supportive. We understand that no two children are the same and by understanding and getting to know each individual child we can support both their strengths and weaknesses. "All children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life" (The Early Learning Framework for Australia, p7)

As a part of our vision, we understand the importance in providing a wide range of support for our families that reflects the needs of our community. We as educators pride ourselves on having the knowledge and experience needed to offer this to our families. We strive to implement programs and offer resources to all families to support and help them to learn and grow. Regardless of circumstances, it is in the child's best interests for there to be effective, sustained, collaborative partnerships between families and all professionals (VEYLDF p9)

As a council service we see the value of a whole community approach. We utilise our connections with Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre, Library, MCH and supported playgroup to provide experiences that support all aspects of a child's development. We as educators strive to promote healthy relationships of our community, by being active listeners and constructive members of our service and community.

Contents

Our Staff	3
Our Program	3
Our Menu	3
Our Families	3
<hr/>	
Wangaratta Children's Services Centre Philosophy	4
Regulatory Authorities	4
No Jab, No Play	4
<hr/>	
Childcare Subsidy	5
Payment of Fees	5
Cancellation of Care	5
Priority of Access	5
Code of Conduct	5
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	5
<hr/>	
Child Protection / Child Safe standards	6
Arrival and Departure	6
Medication	6
<hr/>	
Medical Conditions including Asthma and Anaphylaxis	7
Those First Weeks	7
<hr/>	
Clothing	8
Sun Protection / Suitable Clothing	8
Belongings	8
<hr/>	
When should I keep my child a home?	9
Early Years Learning Framework	9
<hr/>	
Integrated and Sessional Kindergarten	10
2nd Year of Kinder	10
<hr/>	
Excursions	11
Emergency Drills	11
Concerns and Service Improvements	11



Our Staff:

- Create a warm and relaxed atmosphere
- Have a wealth of experience and expertise providing care within Early Childhood Education & care programs.

Our Program:

- Provides a range of stimulating experiences and activities
- Is provided in a child safe environment
- Is based on individual and developmental needs of each child
- Incorporates special events and visitors to our Service

Our Menu:

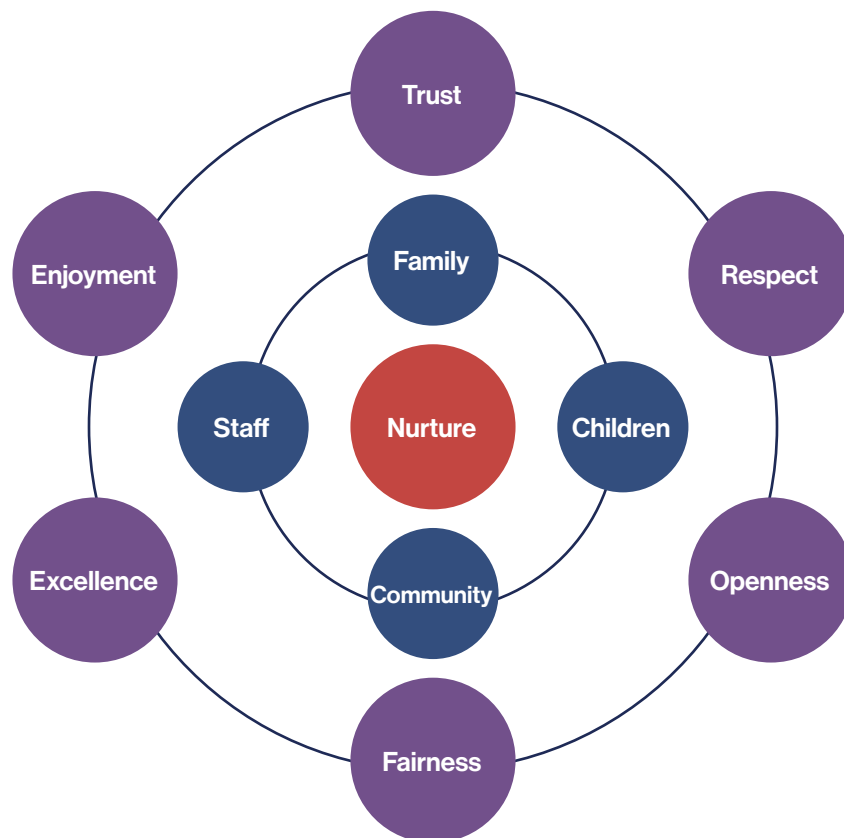
- Is approved by a dietitian
- We have a fully qualified chef
- Follows an accredited program
- Is varied menu according to seasons

Our Families:

- Are always welcome
- Are encouraged to participate
- Have "a voice"

Wangaratta Children's Services Centre Philosophy

We will strive to demonstrate the following:



Regulatory Authorities

Our Service complies with the National Quality Framework (NQF) including the National Quality Standard (NQS), the Early Years Learning Framework (or other Approved Framework) and the National Regulations (Education and Care Services National Regulations).

Our Service is regulated by the new national body for early education and care – the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as well as the state licensing department in our State/Territory. To contact our Regulatory Authority, please refer to the contact details below –

Department of Education and Training

education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation

Email: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 307 415

Mail: GPO BOX 4367, MELBOURNE VIC 3001

No Jab, No Play

From January 1st 2016 children who are not fully immunised according to the Immunisation Schedule will be unable to attend Early Child Learning Services in Victoria, until they have completed a catch-up program or a medical exemption is supplied by a Medical Doctor.





Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Child Care Subsidy is available to all families who are Australian Residents if their child meets immunisation requirements and parents meet eligibility requirements. Entitlement is determined by an activity test which determines the number of hours of subsidised care to which families are entitled. The percentage of subsidy a family receives is based on their estimated combined annual income.

Please see our Fees Policy for further detail about CCS.

All families wishing to access Child Care Subsidy need to complete an online Child Care Subsidy assessment through their MyGov account. If eligible, the Subsidy will be paid directly to the service on families' behalf, and we will reduce the fees owed. This can occur after our service enters families' enrolment information online, and families confirm their enrolment information through their MyGov account. Until Child Care Subsidy details are available, families will need to pay full fees.

Payment of Fees

Kindergarten Fees are invoiced each term and are payable before the commencement of the upcoming term.

Long Day Care fees are charged for each enrolled day, including sick days, personal holidays, public holidays, or any other reason the child may not be able to attend.

All Families can access their statements via the Xplor App. Our preferred payment is via Electronic Automatic deduction. This needs to be set up prior to enrolment.

(More information- please contact our Office staff or refer to our Fees and Payments policy)

Cancellation of Care

Two weeks written notice must be given when a child is ceasing care at our service or Families wishing to receive the Holiday discount (1st week of absence families will pay, 2nd week absence will be no charge).

(Refer to enrolment and termination of enrolment policy)

Priority of Access

Please refer to our Enrolment Policy for more information about the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' (DEEWR) requirements for Priority of Access.

Code of Conduct

Staff and families are required to deal with each other with respect, courtesy and adhere to confidentiality procedures.

In order to maintain a professional relationship, staff and families should not share their personal phone numbers, contact details including social media details with each other. Sharing of this information can place staff and the service in a compromised position. (Refer to privacy and confidentiality policy)

Court Orders

Parents must notify the Service if there are any court orders affecting residency of their children and a copy is required for the Service. Without a Court Order we cannot stop a parent collecting a child.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Wangaratta Children's Services proudly displays signage within our facility that acknowledges all Traditional Land Owners of the Wangaratta region.

Our service is working on a Reconciliation Action Plan, and we aim to create a welcoming environment by incorporating learning activities including books, songs, dance, craft and puzzles.

We ensure Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) is available to children who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Staff participate in professional development and training to learn about Indigenous themes and culture.

Child Protection/ Child Safe standards

We take child protection matters very seriously and are committed to the Child Risk Management Strategy in our Child Protection Policy.

If you know or suspect a child could be suffering child abuse in the form of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or domestic violence refer to our Child Protection Policy, procedures and Strategy and please report to the approved provider or nominated supervisor.

(Refer to Child protection/Child Safe policy)

Arrival and Departure

Children's Services Regulations require the person delivering and collecting the children to childcare to complete the sign-in and sign-out register.

Only people authorised to collect the child will be allowed to collect your child

If an unauthorised person arrives to collect a child and no prior notice is given by parent/guardian staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian. If this is unsuccessful then the child will not be allowed to leave the service. A child will not be given into the care of any persons who are not listed on the child's enrolment form and/or are under the age of 16 years unless said person is the legal guardian. **Families will need to purchase one security swipe upon commencement, extra swipes may be purchased.**

Medication

Educators will be able to administer medication to children who are recovering from illness if a medication form has been completed and signed by parents before the medication is given. The nominated supervisor or an educator can assist you to complete the form.

Medication must be in date, in its original container with the original label, have the child's name on the label, and have any instructions about the medication (including those from a GP) attached to the medication.

Medication must be handed to an Educator for appropriate storage. **Please DO NOT leave medication in your child's bag.**

Medical Conditions including Asthma and Anaphylaxis

We are an allergy aware Service.

Please inform the nominated supervisor if your child has any allergy or anaphylaxis.

Parents are responsible for updating their child's Medical Management Plan or providing a new Plan when necessary.

The Service aims to provide a safe environment for children who have identified medical conditions. It is Service policy that a Medical Management Plan be completed by parents/guardians in consultation with the family doctor. The Plan should include a photo of your child, state what triggers the medical condition, what first aid is needed, contact details for the doctor who signed the plan and state when the Plan should be reviewed. This must be completed and returned before enrolment commences.

Our service will develop a Risk Minimisation Plan in consultation with families which is based on information in the Medical Management Plan.



Those First Weeks

The introduction into long day care can be difficult for children and parents. Children's welfare and happiness are the priority for educators when welcoming new children to the Service and when assisting the family to settle into the Service environment. It is recognised that families' needs will vary greatly in the orientation process and individual needs will be addressed.

The following outlines some helpful hints for parents on settling their child into care:



Make sure you familiarise your child with the environment and the people in the environment (children and adults) by coming in for visits before commencing care.



Try to talk at home about childcare. Mention the names of the Educators and other children. Talk about the things the child will be able to do at childcare that are fun and enjoyable.

Ease your child into care with short stays to begin with.



Talk to the Educators about your child, for example, what they like to do; successful ways of settling them to sleep; foods they like and dislike and so on. This helps Educators to get to know your child.



Provide a favourite toy, blanket or comforter to support your child when they are separating from you or settling to sleep. This can help your child feel more secure.



When leaving your child it is best to make sure you say goodbye and then leave. Hesitating after you have said your goodbyes only confuses them, especially if they are upset. Reassure your child that everything is alright and you will return later. This can help them to settle.

If your child is unsettled, short visits with you will help your child to gain trust with an unfamiliar environment. These visits can be made on a day when your child is not booked to attend.



It sometimes helps to establish a routine when leaving. For example, giving your child a cuddle and then passing them to an Educator, or sitting down with them to read a book or for a short play before leaving.



Your child will be reassured when they see positive interactions between Educators and parents or Educators and other children, and this will help them to establish trust in an unfamiliar setting.



At first some children protest strongly while others may take a day or two to realise that you are leaving them and begin to protest after several days. Children soon learn that you do return and in the meantime they are well cared for.



Clothing

Parents are advised to send their children to the Service in comfortable, inexpensive clothing. The children need to be able to move around during play and should be unimpaired by clothing. While paints etc will come out in the wash, accidents do happen so please don't send your child in expensive or designer clothing. Young children enjoy and need "messy" play with paint, clay, sand, water, and mud.

The Service only has a limited supply of spare clothing. Please supply at least one change of clothing and underwear (for those children out of nappies) in case of accidents. Toddlers should have about three complete changes of clothing and plenty of training pants.

Please label your child's clothing and replace name tags if they fade in the wash. Ensure clothing is suitable for the weather.

Please do not bring your children to the centre wearing thongs, crocs or other footwear that could be a trip hazard.

We encourage and support all children to play outside in all weather conditions (unless heat or wind/storms make it unsafe)

In winter children (and adults) are encouraged to wear warm hats, rubber boots and coats when outside.

Staff will always watch out for coughing/unwell children but if your child is suffering from a cold or recent asthma attack and should not be outside, it is safer to keep them at home. Children can become distressed if they are not allowed to play outside when their friends are out there, and it can make for a very long day.

Sun Protection/ Suitable Clothing

Our Service's policy is "no hat, no play" where UV levels are 3 or higher. This policy will be enforced. Our service will provide a wide brim hat to wear during outside activities.

Children are required wear sun safe clothing that covers as much of the skin as possible when outdoors. Please dress your child in clothing that will protect them from the sun.

Belongings

Please ensure all belongings are clearly labelled including dummies, clothes etc. Lost property will be displayed for parent collection in your child's room. Parent co-operation in labelling assists the Service in keeping your child's belongings together.

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



When should I keep my child a home?

A child may sometimes complain of feeling unwell without giving you a clear idea of what exactly the matter is. At other times, you may suspect that your child is unwell if he or she seems quieter or more irritable than usual.

If a child exhibit any of the following signs and symptoms they are to be excluded:

- sleeps at unusual times (family will be notified to enquire about previous night's sleep pattern before being sent home)
- has a raised temperature that remains above 37.5 C orally or 37 C axillary (under arm) or continues to rise
- Discharge from eyes and or eye redness
- is crying constantly because of discomfort due to suspected illness
- is reacting badly to medications
- needs constant one to one care due to feeling unwell
- Discharge from nose, clear or green with signs of general malaise (feeling of being unwell)
- Has very loose bowel motions with acrid smell (diarrhoea)
- Vomits
- Head lice
- Experiences severe breathing difficulties
- Persistent coughing (not asthma related)
- Severe Asthma requiring constant attention
- Develops a rash
- Has an adverse reaction to an immunisation received in the last 24 hours
- Sore throat
- Blood in urine or faeces
- Headache or sore neck
- Any symptoms relating to COVID 19.

Early Years Learning Framework

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.

The Framework focuses on your child's learning. Educators will work with you in order to get to know your child well. They will create a learning program that builds on your child's interests and abilities and keep you in touch with your child's progress. Through the Framework's five learning goals educators will assist your child to develop:

- a strong sense of identity
- connected with and contribute to their world
- a strong sense of wellbeing
- confident and involved learners
- effective communicators

We encourage children to be responsible for their own learning through choices in experiences, interests, and routine. We use conversations, actions and play as the basis for teaching which involves the children being partners in teaching by seeking out ideas, opinions, thoughts, and questions. We encourage children in promoting their independence and self-help skills by assisting within the routine and involving the children in interest-based projects to further enhance their learning and knowledge. We value children and family input and encourage family involvement to gather a comprehensive and holistic view of the child.



Integrated and Sessional Kindergarten

It is expected that children attending any of our Kindergarten programs bring their own healthy lunch. Your Kindergarten teacher or our catering coordinator can give tips for healthy lunchboxes.

Lunchbox suggestions:

Morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack is to be provided for each session. Some foods are not recommended due to high sugar/low fibre content and low nutritional value.

Chips / lollies / chocolate products / cordials / sweet biscuits and cakes are best left for special occasions not kinder.

Some lunchbox suggestions include:

Fruit: fresh/tinned or dried. (Fruit straps not recommended)

Vegetables: fresh or cooked-vegie sticks / salads.

Dairy food: cheese / milk / yoghurt / custard (not jelly or chocolate)

Starches- breads / pits / flat / roll / crackers / fruit-veg muffins-slices / muesli.

Proteins: meat-cooked-sliced / eggs / tuna.

Water: Water is recommended or UHT unflavoured milk. No cordial.

2nd Year of Kinder

In most cases it is appropriate for a child to transition to school after their kindergarten year. Schools are responsible for ensuring all students have access to a quality education that meets their diverse needs and are obligated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 to adjust to accommodate students with a disability.

In exceptional circumstances where a child is observed to display delays in key outcome areas of learning and development, the possibility of a second year of funded kindergarten may be considered.

However, a second year should only be considered where the kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning program and environment for that individual child, and that the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.

Eligibility criteria

The early childhood teacher can declare that a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded

kindergarten if:

- the child is observed as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and there is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes if he/she attends a second year of kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

We will ensure that we have regular communication with families to achieve the best outcome.

Excursions

Excursions/incursions are valuable experiences for children. All excursions require a risk assessment to be completed.

Routine Outings

At the commencement of care, you will be required to fill out a routine excursion permission form. Routine excursions include walks around the block, park visits. All optional visit sites will be recorded on this form.

Non-Routine Outings

These need a separate risk assessment and individual permission form pertaining to the visit that is occurring. Potential sites may include Bush Kinder, visit to the Fire Station etc.

Incursions

At times we will invite services to come into our service. These may include Dental services, pet safety etc. Families will be notified of these visits and appropriate forms fill out when applicable.

(Refer to transportation, excursion policy)

Emergency Drills

Throughout the year the Service will hold emergency drills which occur at any given time throughout the day. These are carried out in a well-organised and orderly manner. Educators will be trained in using the fire extinguishers that are in the Service. A emergency escape plan will be displayed in every room.

Our service also practices Lockdowns- in the case of potential threats including, hostage or siege situations. Children will practice staying grouped together distractions such as reading books, puppets quite activities.

Lock ins- where the doors will be closed, blinds pulled down- children will be able to play comfortably due to dangerous animals, Local disaster including weather

(refer to emergency management and evacuation policy)



Concerns and Service Improvements

Strategies:

Where a parent has a concern or complaint regarding the care and education of their child, they are encouraged to:

Concerns or suggestions may be addressed in the following manner: -

- Discuss with Room Leader (Wangaratta Children's Services Centre) Telephone (03) 57212635 or Family Day Care Educator (Wangaratta Family Day Care) Telephone (03) 57217879.
- Follow-up with Long Day Care Co-ordinator (Wangaratta Children's Services Centre) Telephone (03) 57212635 or Family Day Care Resource and Development Officer (Wangaratta Family Day Care) Telephone (03) 57217879.
- Meeting with Team Leader Family & Early Childhood Services, Rural City of Wangaratta: (03) 57217879.
- Manager Community Services, Rural City of Wangaratta: (03) 57220888
- Regulatory Authority: Department of Education and Training, Quality Assessment and Regulation Division, P.O. Box 403, Benalla 3671. Telephone (03) 83929500.

(Refer to Grievance and complaints policy)

Wangaratta Children's Services Centre

1 Handley St Wangaratta, Victoria 3677

Opening Hours	Mon-Fri (excl. public holidays)	6.45am-6.15pm
Sessional Kinder	Kookaburra (Mon/Tues)	8.45am-4.15pm
	Platypus (Thurs/Fri)	8.45am-4.15pm
3yr old Kinder	Bilby (Wed)	9.00am-2.00pm

Call: 03 5721 2635 **Email:** ldc@wangaratta.vic.gov.au

wangaratta.vic.gov.au