



**Little stars**  
**Child care**  
& Early Education Centre

# Family Handbook

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# Organisation of Governance

Approved Provider – Debbie Loreggian  
Nominated Supervisor – Leanne Corfield  
Early Childhood Teacher – Reema Pandit  
Educational Leader – Leanne Corfield

Welcome to Little Stars Childcare and Early Education Centre.

We sincerely hope that your stay will be a happy one.

We believe in providing each child with an environment that encourages and nurtures individual ability and potential.

The Reggio Emilia approach has inspired us in our journey of understanding how young children learn best using the hundred languages.

The basis of this approach is the understanding that children are competent and capable learners and our role as educators is to provide rich, meaningful learning experiences while also recognising the environment as the third teacher.

## Educational Program

We have implemented an exceptional educational structure which is driven by our Educational Leader who provides the expertise and leadership required.

One Early Childhood teacher delivers the curriculum in the Preschool room – 3-5 yr. age group while the second Early Childhood teacher guides and supports the program, planning, documenting and assessment for the Nursery and Toddler rooms. We are very aware of the environment as the third teacher ensuring that is organised in such a way that is rich in possibilities for children to explore, discover and create.

Our recently introduced `Atelier`- the art studio, is a place where the children have the freedom to experiment, create and learn. The process is the main focus and not the finished `masterpiece`. Children are able to revisit their art and continue with it until they are happy with the completed product.

## Early Years Learning Framework

The vision of the new national early learning framework for children from birth to five years is for all children to experience play based learning that is engaging and builds success for life. It will be used in partnership with families, children's first and most influential educators, to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities and recognise that children learn through play. The framework describes childhood as a time of belonging, being & 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.

### Watching your child progress

Using the Early Years Learning Framework as a guide the educators will observe your child's learning, so they can build on it and plan the next steps. They will do this by listening, observing and talking to your child.

Educators will keep in touch with you regularly to discuss your child's progress. Your child will have a portfolio which will be available for you to look at any time online through our **Storypark** documentation system. This is a wonderfully versatile software as it is available to view online at any time, when you wish to see how your child is developing and what learning interests them.

Before your child starts attending the centre, the educators will provide you with an opportunity to prepare information about your child's learning and development. This will help ensure that your child's new class & Educators are well prepared to continue your child's learning.

### The EYLF

Your child's learning is based on **5 Learning Outcomes, Principles and practices** as shown below:

## **Belonging, Being & Becoming: Learning Outcomes**

**Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity

Children feel safe, secure, and supported

Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency

Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities

Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

**Outcome 2:** Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation

Children respond to diversity with respect

Children become aware of fairness

Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

**Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

**Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners

Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity

Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating

Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another

Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

**Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes

Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts

Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media

Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work

Children use information and communication technologies

## Principles

Principles relates to our beliefs and values. The Early Years Learning Framework provides us with Principles to guide us in our work with children and focuses on assisting each individual child to make progress towards the Learning Outcomes. The five principles are the following –

- **Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships** – having an understanding and being aware of children’s thoughts and feelings. Positively interacting with each individual child in their learning and support the development of a child’s sense of wellbeing.
- **Partnerships** – working in partnerships with families within the early childhood setting. Creating a warm and welcoming environment for all children and their families. Collaborating with childcare professionals, parents, people within the community to ensure learning experiences are meaningful for the children.
- **High Expectations and equity** – believing that all children are able to succeed, regardless of cultural diversity and abilities. Having high expectations for all children in their achievement in learning. Ensure that all children have opportunities to achieve learning outcomes.
- **Respect for diversity** – respecting, valuing and reflecting the values and beliefs of families. Show consideration and respect of cultures, languages, histories, traditions, family lifestyle practices of all families. Promote a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

### *Reflections of Diversity through the curriculum:*

The curriculum should recognise and incorporate the diverse cultures, languages, beliefs and values of families, the community and children.

Educators who are knowledgeable about the culture and languages that children bring to school are then able to provide resources, experiences and interactions that reflect children’s everyday lives. However, a multicultural approach is relevant regardless of whether the children are from diverse cultural backgrounds or not. Educators need to work consciously to assist children to recognise their own worldview and to build their competence to interact within cultures of larger society.

- **Ongoing learning and reflective practices** – continually improve professional knowledge and learning practices. Value the local knowledge of families and the community. Engage in ongoing

learning of philosophy, ethics and practice. Gather information that supports children's developmental learning.

### **Practices**

Practices relates to how we put our Principles into action by working together with children, their families and within our community. The Early Years Learning Framework promotes children's learning by drawing upon a repertoire of pedagogical practices (using our skills and knowledge that enable us to help children to learn) by –

- **Holistic approaches** – teaching and learning through recognition of the mind, body and spirit. Paying attention to a child's physical, personal, social & emotional, cognitive and spiritual wellbeing aspects of learning. Foster and enhance children's understanding of the natural environment and the connections between the people, plants, animals and the land.
- **Responsiveness to children** – being aware and responding to each individual child's strengths, abilities and emerging interests. Value and further develop children's strengths, interests, skills, abilities and knowledge to further extend their learning.
- **Learning through play** – provides an endless amount of opportunities for children to explore, discover, create and imagine. Play extends children's thinking and promotes a hands on approach to learning. Create a learning environment which encourages children to build on children's learning in positive ways.
- **Intentional teaching** – teaching that is deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful. Actively promote children's learning through challenging experiences and interactions. Use strategies to extend on children's problem solving and thinking such as demonstrating, explaining and questioning.
- **Learning environments** – respond to the interests and needs of the children. Both indoor/outdoor environments offer children and families to contribute ideas, questions, and interests and promote children's understanding about their responsibility to care for their environment. Provide a range of opportunities for individual and shared experiences.
- **Cultural competence** – celebrates the benefits of diversity and has the ability to understand and acknowledge differences. Effectively communicate and interact with children, families and members of the community across cultures. Gain knowledge, understanding and a positive attitude towards cultural differences.

- **Continuity of learning and transitions** – building on each child’s past and present experiences enables them to feel secure, confident and connected to people, events and situations that they are familiar with. Transitions between settings offer opportunities and challenges. Assist children in understanding the traditions, routines and practices of the settings to ease the transition process and to help deal with any changes that may occur.
- **Assessment for learning** – relates to the process of gathering and analysing information as evidence about what children understand and their abilities. An ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating each child’s learning which enables us to support and extend children’s learning. It should include a variety of methods as all children demonstrate their learning in different ways.
- **Learning Outcomes** - Learning Outcomes encourages childcare professionals to focus on what children can do as well as supports and guides individual learning programs for children. It provides goals or achievements which can be used to identify a child’s progression through any experienced they are engaged in.

## Orientation Process

As parents ourselves we understand how difficult leaving your child for the first time can be. Rest assured, that although it may be an extremely emotional time, it is normal to expect some tears. We do however encourage parents to make the goodbyes short to reduce the anxiety the child experiences during this time. As stressful as these first few days may be, rest assured that this too will pass. Our educators are very experienced in distracting children when they are upset and will reassure your child until they become more familiar with their new environment.

We also provide an orientation process to assist with the transition. Once you have booked and paid for your first 2 weeks of care, you are invited to visit the room with your child for as many half hour sessions as you wish. During these visits you will be able to familiarise yourself and your child with the room routine, new environment & the educators who will be responsible for your child. Educators also use these opportunities to learn more about your child and to build relationships; you will be asked to complete ‘A child information’ form so that we can gather additional information. Understanding your child’s needs and providing an environment that meets those needs is vital, not only to

ensure a smooth transition but also to their future learning and development.

The first day, one staff member takes responsibility for the child ensuring they feel secure and are settling well. We also have a buddy system, where one child helps to show your child around and who will play with your child, helping them feel welcome.

Families are welcome to call as many times as they wish during the initial settling in period.

Some tips for a smooth transition:

- Do as many visits as possible.
- Speak about the centre in a positive reassuring manner with your child.
- Read story books about starting `school` or make up your own.
- Children will pick up on your anxiety, show your child that you are confident about this new environment, and excited about the possibilities.
- If possible make the first few days shorter than you would normally, this will allow for a more gradual transition.
- Separation anxiety is a normal stage in a child`s life.

### **What financial assistance is available to me?**

You will need to contact the family assistance office on 136150 in order to determine if you can receive Childcare Subsidy (CCS).

CCS is a payment from the government towards the cost of your child`s care, provided you meet certain criteria. You will be required to pay full fees until your CCS has been approved.

Parents need to inform the family assistance office of any changes to hours of care.

CCS can cover up to 80% of your out of pocket cost for approved childcare. To find out more please visit the website at [www.familyassist.gov.au](http://www.familyassist.gov.au)

### **Our Fees**

It is our policy that all families pay an administration fee of \$75 and the first two weeks advance payment on enrolment before the first day of care. All subsequent payments are made using, ezidebit on a Thursday of every fortnight. Payments will always be 2 weeks in advance. All booked days, including public holidays and absent days will be charged at the normal rate. Payments that dishonour will incur a dishonour fee by ezidebit.

We do offer a discounted rate for a 4-week period as per your weekly booking, if you go away on holiday provided, we have been informed in writing 2 weeks prior.

If you wish to change or cancel your child's booking we also require 4 weeks written notice, failure to do so will result in full fees being charged. Any child that receives benefit or rebate and terminates care must attend on their last booked day, if the child does not attend the government will not pay the last weeks benefit portion and the parents will be liable for the outstanding amount.

All outstanding accounts need to be finalized by the last day of care or the account will be forwarded to our debt collection agency. We require you to notify the centre if your child will not be attending a session for any reason. Families who receive CCS are allowed 42 absent days for each financial year. Please refer to our fees policy which is displayed in the Policy File in the foyer for further information.

## **Why is it compulsory to sign your child in & out of the centre?**

You are required to sign your child in and out of care each day of attendance as it is a legal requirement. These records are also used for the calculation of the childcare subsidy (CCS).

## **Collection of Children**

If a person other than the parent/legal guardian comes to collect a child but is not listed on the enrolment form as an authorised person, the child will not be released into this person's care. If the person is an authorised person, as stated on the enrolment form, they will be asked to produce identification, if they are unknown to the educators. A child cannot be collected by anybody under the age of 18 years.

Collection of your child by 6:00pm is a legal requirement as we are only licensed to care for children between 7:00am and 6:00pm. If a child has not been collected 5 minutes after closing time, and the parent/guardian is not contactable the emergency contacts will be called. If a child has not been collected 30 minutes after closing time then staff will follow the Department of Communities Abandoned Child procedure which includes contacting child protection and crisis centre 24hr service. Additional fees will be charged for every minute the child remains at the centre after closing time.

## **Room Routines & transitions**

Each room has their own tailor-made routine which is carefully thought out and planned around the different interests, ages and capabilities of the children in each room. All routines do include time for literacy, numeracy, drama, music, movement, creative, social, emotional and cognitive development.

A combination of quiet and active experiences, as well as indoor and outdoor experiences are offered on a daily basis. Educators support all children in their decisions and assist in their extensions of learning. As your child grows and develops they will transition into the next room, but only after careful assessment and discussions with the parent/guardian. A letter of notification of transition visits will be given for your authorisation prior to the visits commencing. If all parties are in agreement, short transition visits to the next room will be organised a month or two prior to the child's birthday. In consultation with the families and educators a date will be set for the formal transition to the next room. Families will be asked to fill in a new 'Child Information' form to update information and set new goals.

## **Policies and Procedures**

Our centre has a policy and procedure file which is located in the foyer for you to view at any time. As we are aware that this is a large amount of information to read through, we have highlighted some important ones for your convenience.

### **- Accidents & Incidents**

Management and educators ensure supervision of all children is of the highest standard at all times. Display charts for optimum supervision have been designed for each area and Supervision Risk Management is conducted daily. Educators are aware of the requirements for safety when setting up any additional equipment. All educators are trained in first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis and are able to attend to any emergencies efficiently and appropriately. In the event of an accident or sudden illness, First Aid will be administered immediately, and you will be contacted to collect your child. In the event of an emergency situation, you will be advised of the plan of action regarding further medical attention. If you or your authorised nominee cannot be contacted the nominated supervisor at the centre will provide the ambulance or medical personnel with the required information. A staff member will accompany your child to seek medical assistance at Waratah Medical Centre or in the ambulance if it is necessary for your child to be transported to hospital and will remain with your child until

you arrive. Documentation detailing the incident and action taken will be filled out which you will be required to sign.

## - **Health & Hygiene**

Every effort is made to minimise the instances of illness at the centre, most children will be sick more often in their first year of attending an Early Childhood Centre until their immune systems grow stronger. Germs tend to spread faster in the Nursery as all the children put the toys in their mouths as a natural part of their sensory learning. We do have a mouthed toy container for educators to place toys/objects which children have put into their mouths to try limit the spread of illness. All toys are washed and sterilized at the end of each day. Hand sanitiser is provided at the entrance of all rooms for parents & educators to sanitize their hands before entering. Educators in all rooms are responsible for cleaning and sanitizing at the end of each day and additional cleaners are employed to give the centre a thorough clean on the weekend. Health and hygiene awareness is one of our top priorities, and we endeavour to keep all stakeholders up to date with the latest information. We use the 'Staying Healthy in Childcare' 5<sup>th</sup> edition to guide our policies and practice. It is of utmost importance that ill children are kept at home. If your child is brought to the centre with signs and symptoms of any illness, the accepting educator is authorised to refuse admission and to request a medical clearance. If your child shows any signs of illness, you will be given a courtesy call to advise you in advance that you may be required to collect your child if symptoms persist. You will be required to collect your child after two loose stools, one bout of vomiting or a fever over 38 degrees within half an hour. If a child is sent home with a fever, vomiting or diarrhoea they will be excluded for 24 hours after the last symptom. If your child has been excluded due to a contagious/unknown illness, the exclusion guidelines in 'Staying Healthy in Childcare' will be used to guide practice and you will be required to present a medical clearance from your doctor before returning.

Panadol will only be administered in an emergency situation, if the temperature is above 39 degrees and after verbal authorisation has been given by you or another nominated authorized person. If we are unable to contact you, the Team Leader will be authorized to do so but it will be noted on an incident/illness form which you will be required to sign.

**Please do not bring your child if you have had to administer**

**Paracetamol/similar the night or morning before bringing the child in.** We can usually see when this has been done as the child will spike a fever 4-6 hours later. Educators will only be able to administer medication brought in if it has been prescribed by a doctor and justified with a

reason for the medication. A list of common illnesses and their recommended exclusion period is available upon request.

Educators incorporate learning about staying healthy into the everyday routines to ensure that children can learn to take responsibility for their own health

### - **Emergency evacuation procedure**

Emergency evacuation, lock-down and Asthma & Anaphylaxis drills are practiced on a 3-monthly basis. Signs will be displayed at the entrance when an evacuation drill is in progress. If you arrive during one of these drills it would be appreciated if you wait outside until it is over. Fire blankets and extinguishers are strategically located within the centre. The service has access to the City of Canning's Emergency Management arrangements with regard to procedures and practices to be followed in the event of other local emergencies within our community.

### - **Immunisation**

You are asked to provide details of your child's immunisation status on enrolment. If your child is not up to date with immunisations, you may be asked to provide medical evidence for the reason. It is your responsibility to update the records held by the service as the immunisations occur. Non-immunisation may also affect your childcare support. Further information is available in our Infectious Disease policy.

### - **Medication**

A medication record must be filled in and signed by a parent/guardian if your child requires any medication while in care. The medication must be in the original packaging and must be labelled with the child's name and doctor's prescription dosage. Medication is to be handed to the educator and under no circumstances be left in the child's bag. No medication will be administered if the above procedure has not been followed. Educators will not administer paracetamol without a doctor's prescription unless in an emergency situation. Allergy information will be displayed in rooms for all educators to be aware of. Please refer to the authorised medication policy attached.

### - **Nutrition**

We take our role in providing the correct nutrition for your child very seriously and ensure that they are offered at least 50% of their

recommended daily dietary intake while in care. We offer both a nutritionally balanced winter & a summer menu which rotates every 4 weeks. Children will be given positive encouragement to eat healthily and to try new foods but will ultimately be given the choice of whether they would like to eat or not. Alternative meals are provided in order to accommodate children with allergies or food preferences due to religious or culture reasons.

### - **Sun Protection**

We are a sun safe centre, which means that we follow the guidelines set out by the Cancer Council for safe sun exposure. One of the requirements on our part is to provide the correct amount of shaded area. We have the best quality shade sail over our outdoor equipment, undercover patio areas and have also planted numerous trees. We also provide factor 30 sunscreen which our educators ensure is put on at least 20mins before the children go outside to play and reapplied if necessary. It is our recommendation that parents also take sun safety seriously by ensuring their child wears appropriate clothing that will protect children from the sun i.e.; t-shirts with sleeves instead of singlets and loose-fitting clothing which covers all of their body, leaving no exposed midriffs. During the summer, outdoor play occurs from 7:00am so families are required to apply sunscreen 20 minutes before arriving at the service. Educators are responsible for subsequent applications throughout the day. A hat for outdoor play is a must and children will not be playing in the sun without one – NO HAT NO PLAY. We do not keep spare hats for children to use, due to the possible cross contamination. It is preferred that hats return home with the children each day.

### - **Clothing**

Please dress your child in comfortable, appropriate clothing which will not restrict their movement. Clothes your child wears to the centre should be able to get dirty. Learning happens through play and a large part of that play involves `mess`. Please don't tell your child that you don't want them to get dirty, as this limits the learning potential and valuable experience your child might have.

### - **Priority of Access**

The Australian government assists with funding to ensure all Australian families can access childcare. Unfortunately sometimes demand exceeds

supply and therefore services might need to allocate places to those families with the greatest need for childcare support. Guidelines as set by the Australian government with regard to priority of access are as follows:-

Priority 1- A child at risk of abuse/neglect

Priority 2 – A child of a single parent or of parents who both satisfy the work/training/study requirement.

Priority 3 Any other child - Families with low income, Aboriginal & Torres strait islander families , Parents/children with disabilities, Non-English speaking families, Single parent families & Socially isolated families

Due to this policy, families may be requested to give up their place/change days in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child, but only if the family has been told about this policy on enrolment. The service will give the family 2 weeks' notice if they are required to give up their place for a higher priority child.

## - **Family Involvement**

Working together means happy families, happy children and happy educators.

### **“It takes an entire village to raise a child”**

The learning process is enhanced when parents are involved in their child's education.

What you do with your child or children over the weekends and during family holidays is important to us as this serves as a foundation on which to plan and implement future learning opportunities for your child. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in our centre, which means spending time reading/baking/cooking/ playing with the children, contributing to the decision-making process or providing feedback for our Quality Improvement Plan. We would also like to hear about special events and cultural celebrations so that we can provide a learning environment which is rich in possibilities for all our children. It is a very proud moment for children to share their interests and activities with the rest of their peers which is so important when building confidence and a sense of belonging.

## **How do we communicate?**

While email is generally the most effective means of communication, you are most welcome to call or visit at any time. You can also communicate with your child's Educators daily or through the Storypark app. Our monthly newsletter will now be uploaded onto Storypark for your convenience as well as emailed to all families. Information for

families about events at the service and within our local community is displayed in the foyer and on our Family Information board. Our Quality Improvement Plan is available in a file in the foyers and areas of current improvement are displayed for your feedback. We do also ask for suggestions throughout the year using surveys or questions which are usually displayed in the foyer.

### **Ways we document your child`s learning:**

Each child has an individual portfolio online through the Storypark. Parents will be asked to download the app and will receive an email notifying them of their log in details once their child has commenced care. Family/Educator meetings are held twice a year to enable you to have a one on one conversation with the educators in your child`s room about their progress and development. You will be notified about information regarding your child`s basic requirements through Storypark routines and upon request in the pre-school room.

### **Positive behaviour Guidance**

Social skills are very important and therefore children will be encouraged to resolve conflicts without aggressive/destructive behaviours. Children are taught to respect themselves as well as their peers and educators. Your child`s behaviour will be guided in a positive way and given realistic limits to follow. It is also expected that children show respect for resources and equipment. Our educators will ensure that your child is safe, happy and healthy while in our care.

Your opinions and concerns are important to us, so please do not hesitate to discuss any issues which may arise. All grievances will be taken seriously and procedures will be followed in order to deal with each grievance in a professional manner.