



Family Handbook





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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we walk, play and learn, and recognise that these have always been places of teaching and learning. We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging – and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within our community.

Welcome

On behalf of our Teaching Practitioners, Educators and Management, welcome to our community. We trust that the time spent with our Service will provide rewarding experiences for your children and your family: magical moments, new friendships, and connections that deepen the learning journey of your child through their head, heart and hands.

Please read this handbook thoroughly - and keep it somewhere safe as a quick-reference guide. Detailed policies are available for your reference upon request, and our Service Manager is available to answer any questions you might have.

When completing your child's enrolment form, you will be asked to sign that you agree to the policies contained in this handbook. That way we can be sure that your orientation process has been informative and thorough.

Ethos and Philosophy

Busy Bees Australia provides quality early education and childcare programs across Australia. We are devoted to creating a safe and stimulating environment where children can laugh and learn together.

We nurture the minds of young children during their early social experiences beyond the home, and recognise the importance of building trusting and supportive relationships with families.

Our mission is to give the children in our care the best start in life for a happy and rewarding future.

Our Offerings

How We Educate Your Child

At Busy Bees Australia, we are committed to a holistic approach to learning, set in environments that promote and support all aspects of a child's development.

We know our children learn best through play, so our Teaching Practitioners, Educators and programs foster safe spaces for fun, creativity, and positive social connections.

Quality children's education and care is where children are happy, engaged and learning with qualified Teaching Practitioners and Educators who are nurturing and caring.

Outline of Offerings

Our offerings comply with the National Quality Framework (NQF), including the National Quality Standard (NQS), the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Regulations.

Our offerings are overseen by the National body for Early Education and Care, the Australian Children's Education Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), as well as the licensing department in your state/territory.

As specified in the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, there are National minimum staffing levels for each group of children; The Service Manager at your Service can advise you of the Educator-to-child ratios. Our Teaching Practitioners and Educators are all qualified and trained to meet legislative requirements.



Teaching Methods and the Value of Play

Busy Bees Australia Services believe in child-directed, play-based learning. We know it's important for children to be active participants in their learning. This means our Teaching Practitioners and Educators carefully observe the children, allowing individual learning to be guided by their interests and reactions to the environment. This is known as an emergent curriculum. When Teaching Practitioners and Educators plan for and follow this type of curriculum, children are invited to learn and create in an inspiring environment that engages them in meaningful, rich experiences.

Research has shown the many benefits of play-based learning:

Some benefits include:

- Enhanced dexterity
- Improved social skills
- Sharpened cognitive and language skills
- Fortified spatial understanding
- Developed knowledge of cause-and-effect reasoning
- Ability to identify pretend and real concepts
- Enriched sensory and aesthetic appreciation
- Extended attention span, play persistence and self-mastery
- Assistance in the release of emotions.

The most influential gift we will present to your child is the healthy concept of play, including how to be successful at play with peers. At our Service, your child will participate in creative learning experiences:

- Creative expression - dance, movement, visual art, and story-telling
- Healthy minds and bodies - building positive relationships with peers, Educators and others (e.g. other parents, visitors), and physical activities such as climbing, running, digging
- Language development - two-way conversation, stories and rhymes, and deeply responsive interactions with adults and other children
- Cognitive (intellectual) development - creative problem-solving, science and technology experiences, and a rich numeracy and literacy interactions
- Building growth mindsets with an attitude for gratitude.

All Busy Bees Australia Services are guided by the Early Years Learning Framework's ideals of Being, Belonging and Becoming. Each Service also follows the guidelines of its state regulatory body along with Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Busy Bees Australia Services employ qualified early childhood teachers to deliver our educational programs. Our aim is to transition your child to school by ensuring the development of emotional and social skills necessary for independent and self-directed learning in a school setting.

With thoughtful planning, Teaching Practitioners and Educators choose the best strategy to support children's progress towards a particular learning outcome. They are informed by their knowledge of child development and by their keen observation of children at the Service. This approach to teaching is called intentional teaching and we welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge with students and volunteers.

A quality program relies upon Teaching Practitioners and Educators having a thorough knowledge of current theory and practices in early childhood education and care. We strive to develop and implement rigorous and relevant programs for team member induction and training, including external and in-house professional development.

Educators attend various seminars and workshops relevant to our Service philosophy, aiding their professional development, which Management supports through monthly team meetings.

Please speak with your Service Manager to confirm their contact and non-contact teaching time.

Staff members are required to be qualified in line with legislation applicable to their employment status. All Teaching Practitioners, Educators and other staff, including volunteers, must hold a valid Working with Children check and Educators must hold First Aid (including CPR and asthma/anaphylaxis) qualifications and undertake annual child protection training. All students and volunteers are supervised by an allocated mentor and will not be left alone to care for children.







Our Community

Family Participation and Conduct

Supporting a developing child is a collaborative partnership and we encourage families to actively participate in the education and care of their children at the Service.

Families are welcome to share special occasions with their child, spend time participating in the room, read a book to the class, play an instrument, share a creative skill or just join in; we value families' input and feedback and encourage regular check-ins with Teaching Practitioners and Educators.

Communication

Open conversations and effective communication between families, Teaching Practitioners and Educators is something we champion at our Services and something we feel has multiple benefits for the whole community, including:

- Building trust and respect
- Fostering positive relationships built on cooperation
- Helping to involve families and making them feel included in their child's Early Learning experiences
- Deepening our mutual understanding of the children's needs
- Helping Teaching Practitioners and Educators feel valued and appreciated
- Promoting the understanding of the needs of diverse families and children

During the year we provide newsletters and other regular, written communication and we also offer formal parent-Educator interviews.

For the most part we use Storypark to communicate in line with our sustainable practices. Busy Bees Australia has partnered with Storypark. Storypark documents and supports children's development by sharing photos, videos and audio, allowing responsive and meaningful interactions with parents and families, no matter where you are.

Our Teaching Practitioners and Educators and Management endeavour to provide the children in our care with positive behaviour role models and so it is expected that our families and associated visitors will also be patient and courteous at all times.

Creating an Inclusive Community

Our Service has non-discriminatory policies that ensure children of different needs, diverse families, and different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds are treated equally. Children of all ability levels, family structures, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds have the same intrinsic value - they are entitled to the same respect and opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare.

Children playing and learning together are able to participate in the typical experiences of childhood, while developing their social skills with new friends from all walks of life. This also presents children with opportunities to gain the skills and confidence to pursue inclusion in other settings.

Getting Started

Settling In

We all know new experiences can be overwhelming for young children. The transition to an Early Learning environment or changing to a new Service – can be emotional for both children and their families.

Our Teaching Practitioners and Educators want your child to look forward to coming in each day. To ease this transition, we're happy to facilitate visits that can help children familiarise themselves to their new peers and surroundings, with the safety blanket of parents/families still being present.

We recommend you plan extra time to settle your child on their first day. You're welcome to sit with your child as they become comfortable, joining them in the first activity of the day. Communicate with staff and your child about what time you will return – this way, your child can begin to connect your regular pick-up time to their daily routine. Please don't hesitate to call to see how your child has settled.

What to Bring for the Day

Your child's Educator will confirm what you should bring to the Service each day. As a minimum guide we recommend the following, clearly labelled:

- Broad-brimmed hat – the Service will provide a bucket or legionnaires-style hat, as recommended by the Cancer Council. Please leave this at the Service each day
- Bag or backpack (must be able to fit inside the child's locker)
- A water bottle
- At least two (2) spare changes of season-appropriate clothes, including underwear, training pants and socks (if toilet training, we recommend additional spare clothes are packed)
- For rest time, appropriate bed sheets designed for beds at the Service (if required)
- Bottle/s with milk (if required)
- Dummy or comforter (if required).



Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety - when a child becomes upset if separated from a parent/guardian - is normal during early childhood. It reflects the child's attempts to hold on tight to what feels safe, and will settle as the child gains confidence. It's important you always return when you say you will or - if you are running late - you let the Service know so that Teaching Practitioners and Educators can reassure your child.

Quiet Time

Quiet time and rest are essential. Children in our care will be offered rest - whether sleep or simply a space to relax and recharge.

Goodbye Ritual

Each time you leave your child at the Service, be sure to say goodbye and state what time you will return. This helps build trust between you and your child, as well as the Teaching Practitioners and Educators who will provide consistent emotional support through the day.

Children's Toys

We have lots of wonderful, fun and educational toys for children to enjoy at our Service. We encourage children to leave their own toys at home so special items are not lost or broken. We understand that some children may need 'comfort' items. If your child has a comfort item, please ensure it is clearly labelled with your child's name and that their Educator is aware of it. Our Service will not be able to accept responsibility for the care of any personal items.



Everyday Best Practice

Providing exceptional care is at the heart of our Service. To guide your child towards independence, our Service is staffed by teams of qualified, capable Teaching Practitioners and Educators for whom children's wellbeing is paramount. Busy Bees Australia Services have consistent Child Safety standards in place to ensure safety comes first each day.

Policy

Our Service policies are compliant with National Law and Regulations. We expect our staff and families to adhere to our policies and procedures ensuring our compliance is met at all times. We are constantly reviewing our policies and procedures and we welcome all feedback and value your input. Your involvement is vital to our continual improvement.

Sun Safety

The Cancer Council Australia advises that skin can burn in as little as 15 minutes in the summer sun and the main cause of skin cancer in Australia is overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight.

As skin damage can never be repaired, prevention is the best cure. For this reason, we protect our children and Educators from direct exposure to the sun. Planned outdoor play and activities will be set up in shady areas, with areas of focused play (such as fixed play equipment) provided with shade throughout the year.

Teaching Practitioners and Educators will use age-appropriate teaching tools to ensure children develop sun-safe habits. Parents and guardians can support this learning at home by ensuring children have sunscreen applied to all exposed skin before leaving home in the morning or upon arrival at their Service. Loose, comfortable clothing and sun-safe hats will also help to protect children from sun exposure.

Children under 12 months of age should not be exposed to direct sunlight. For more information, visit www.cancer.org.au or call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.



Food: Hygiene and Nutrition

Healthy eating habits should be fostered at an early age. It is important that we meet the nutritional, social, cultural and educational needs of the children in our care. For this reason, we ask that no food is brought into the Service (if food is provided), unless prior arrangement is made with the Service Manager. An exception is birthday cakes, which must be accompanied by a complete list of ingredients. This is so that we can ensure children with allergies are safe.

The meals we provide follow strict nutritional guidelines, set out by Nutrition Australia, that ensure children receive all the vital nutrients they require to grow. Our Service is also governed by Food Safety programs overseen by Food Safety Supervisors.

If any child or Educator is diagnosed with a food allergy that can cause anaphylaxis, this will be displayed to alert community members, visitors, volunteers, students, Teaching Practitioners and Educators of the dangers of bringing these foods into the Service.

COVID-19

To sustain a healthy and safe environment Busy Bess has a COVID-19 Safe Plan and follows all State and Federal COVID-19 instructions, guidelines and recommendations. It's important that all personnel respond responsibly and transparently to COVID-19 health precautions.

Managing Illness

A child who is unwell cannot participate fully in their day. We encourage families to keep unwell children at home to ensure their comfort and rest, as well as to protect other children from contagious illness. If your child does become unwell while in our care, we will follow these steps:

- The Service Manager or responsible person in charge will contact the child's parent/guardian to collect them as soon as possible
- If we are unable to make contact, our Service Manager will use their discretion in deciding whether to seek medical attention
- Staff will complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record that can be provided to the child's medical practitioner
- In the case of a suspected or confirmed infectious condition, we require a medical clearance prior to your child's return to the Service.

If a child has a suspected infectious condition, families will be contacted and asked to collect their child as soon as possible. If families and emergency contacts cannot be contacted, we will endeavour to contact other individuals listed on your child's enrolment form.

To minimise the risk of infection at our Services we follow the current guidelines for exclusion periods. Please ask for specific details at your Service.

Families are encouraged to seek medical advice and inform the Service of the outcome, for the purpose of keeping an accurate illness register. Our Service will maintain clear and concise records of both team member and child illnesses as they occur at our Service.

As per the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, each team member will observe good health and hygiene practices and ensure the Early Learning facilities are kept clean and in good repair.



Medical Conditions

We ask that if your child has a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition, you disclose details and provide a current Medical Management Action Plan upon enrolment to ensure we are able to appropriately manage their needs. A Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan will be prepared with you, and in consultation with your child's medical practitioner, prior to your child commencing care. You will need to inform the Service immediately of any changes to your child's needs or medical plan, and update their plan annually. Please note, your child cannot attend the Service without a completed and current plan, or without their required medication.

Immunisation

Immunisation benefits communities by not only protecting immunised individuals, but by building immunity around vulnerable people, e.g. very young babies, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.

Under state **No Jab, No Play** laws, unvaccinated children in NSW, WA and VIC are unable to be enrolled in Education and Care services. There are no such restrictions in all other states, however immunisation is a requirement to claim Child Care Subsidy. The Service will require your child's up-to-date Immunisation History Statement. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, a child who isn't fully immunised will be excluded from the Service for the duration of the outbreak (with fees ongoing through this period).

Medication

For children with a temperature, our policy is that they should go home regardless as their body is indicating an illness of some sort.

In the case where a child has a temperature, as guided by 5th Edition Staying Healthy - Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services, our staff are able to administer children's paracetamol. A child's enrolment form must give permission for the child to receive paracetamol, and we will seek clarified permission from a family member or authorised person before administering. Teaching Practitioners and Educators will complete the emergency medication form and the parent/guardian/authorised person will be asked to sign upon arrival on the day. In this instance we will continue to monitor your child frequently. An ambulance will be called if the responsible person in charge determines that the child is in immediate danger, as per first aid directions.

In general, if your child requires medication to be administered at the Service, an authorisation form must be completed by a parent/guardian or authorised person. All medication must be in its original container with the dispensing label or doctor's letter confirming the child as the prescribed person and the dosage to be given. This applies to all medications, including those prescribed by a naturopath. All medications, whether prescribed or non-prescribed, require authorisation for application. Under no circumstances may medication be left inside a child's bag.

Asthma and Anaphylaxis

If a child requires a nebuliser or volumatic spacer, families are asked to demonstrate the procedure to Teaching Practitioners and/or Educators with the child before the initial dose.

In the case of a child susceptible to acute asthma attacks, medication may be permanently left at the Service. Families must provide the Service with an asthma management plan developed in consultation with a medical practitioner, which includes regular review and a risk minimisation and communication plan.

Adrenalin pens will be administered in accordance with an anaphylaxis action plan developed in consultation with a medical practitioner, which includes a risk minimisation and communication plan. Adrenalin pens should be kept near where the child is at all times, but out of reach of children and not within a locked area – it must be accessible in an emergency. Families are responsible for ensuring the adrenalin pen is within its expiry date at all times. Children with anaphylaxis or other acute needs are unable to attend without their adrenalin pens or other required medication.

Incidents and Injury

Our Teaching Practitioners and Educators program daily indoor and outdoor activities, allowing for maximum supervision and promotion of safety. If a child is injured while in our care, qualified Teaching Practitioners and Educators will administer first aid.

If an injury requires further medical attention, the child's family will be contacted to arrange a plan of action. If we are unable to make contact, the Service Manager or responsible person in charge will arrange a plan of action to seek the appropriate medical assistance. Where required, we will ensure that a team member the child knows accompanies them at all times until the parent/guardian arrives.

Documentation of all incidents will be made on the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record, which the child's family will be asked to sign this upon collection.

If the child requires external medical treatment, we are obliged to report the incident via the Australian Children's Education and Care Authority (ACECQA) online portal.

Children with Additional Needs

Busy Bees Australia believes children of all abilities and backgrounds deserve equal opportunities to learn, play, socialise, and grow. Please speak with the Service Manager at your local Busy Bees Australia Service to discuss how we can best accommodate the individual needs of your child.

Grievances

We are here to ensure that your child is happy, healthy and safe in our care. If you have any concerns, please let us know. Our grievance procedure and support structure are displayed in the foyer of each of our Services; however, you are encouraged to contact your child's Teaching Practitioner or Educator or, if necessary, the Service Manager to discuss any issues. If an agreement cannot be reached within the Service please contact Busy Bees Australia directly on 1300 851 331 or email info@busybees.edu.au. Following this procedure gives those involved an opportunity to discuss and follow through on your concerns.

Biting

Biting may seem a surprising behaviour, but it's not uncommon in younger children, who may bite when teething, frustrated or struggling to communicate. Biting can be very distressing for children and families alike, but be reassured that our Educators will support both children who are bitten and the biters through this common phase of development. We will work with families to develop appropriate strategies.





Operation

Operating Hours and Holidays

Busy Bees Australia Services are open every day of the year, except public holidays. Your Service Manager can provide details of your Service's operating hours or alternatively, please visit your Service website for this information.

Signing In and Out

Your child must be accurately signed in and out of the Service every day they attend. This is a legal requirement – this information is used for checking general attendance, in emergencies, and for the calculation of Child Care Subsidy.

Please ensure our Teaching Practitioners and Educators are aware that your child is arriving or departing. You will be trained in sign-in/sign-out procedures prior to your first day, but don't hesitate to ask if you have any queries about this essential part of attendance.

If a child is absent for a booked day due to illness, being on holiday, or if their booked day occurs on a public holiday, the corresponding days must be signed for by the family.

Delivery and Collection of Children

If someone unknown arrives to collect a child, they must provide photo ID that proves they are a person listed on the enrolment form (or other approved written confirmation) as authorised. (Please note that any person authorised to collect a child must be over 16 years of age, unless the person is the child's family.)

In the event that a child has not been collected by closing time, the responsible person in charge will begin to contact the family on the numbers provided – so its essential these are up-to-date at all times. If the family is unable to be contacted, the responsible person in charge will then begin to contact the individuals listed on the authorised contacts list. If, after 30 minutes, we are still unable to make contact, then Busy Bees Australia will follow Department of Communities Abandoned Child procedures, including contacting the Child Protection and Crisis Centre 24-hour Service.

We ask for your vigilance in regard to other children attending the Service, ensuring no child gains access through doors and gates to unsupervised environments or car parks. Please ensure children are not left unattended.

Your Service's car park is for delivering or collecting children. Please be thoughtful, especially during peak times, and adhere to signed directions and speed limits. We advise that children should never be left unattended in cars.

Smoking is not permitted on any Busy Bees Australia Service car park.

Absences and Cancellations

Families are requested to notify the Service if their child is unable to attend for the day (this can be done through the KindyNow App).

Please note notification is urgently required in the instance of an infectious or contagious illness by contacting the Service.

Families receiving Child Care Subsidy (CCS) are allocated 42 allowable absent days per child per financial year. When the 42 absent days have been used, CCS will not be paid for any further absences unless they are for the following reasons:

- Illness with a medical certificate
- Non-immunisation
- Parent with a scheduled day off and a Statutory Declaration signed by a JP
- Parent with a rotating shift and a Statutory Declaration signed by a JP
- Periods of local emergency
- Court-ordered shared parenting
- Attendance at preschool (where applicable)
- Temporary closure of a school or pupil free days (OSHC)
- Exceptional circumstances (please ask at your individual Service).

Transferring - Local or Interstate

Busy Bees Australia have Early Learning Services throughout Australia, we can support families with local and interstate transfers. Speak with your Service Manager to support you with a transfer.

Should you wish to cancel your child's care, two weeks' written notice is required. If notice is not given, full fees will be charged to finalise your child's enrolment, with CCS unable to be claimed. Any unpaid fees will be passed onto a debt collection agency, which may affect your credit rating and incur further fees.

Payments and Rebates

Ongoing fees are to be paid two weeks in advance and prior to commencement of care. Fees are calculated and billed fortnightly. All fees are to be paid weekly via Direct Debit and families are required to complete all forms required for Direct Debit prior to commencement of care. A dishonour fee is charged to the account if payments fail.



Weekly statements outlining child attendances and fees paid, are available to all our families and families will be notified in advance (at least 14 days) of any changes relating to fees.

Please note fees are subject to change at any time, and note the following in relation to calculation of fees. Refer to the Services Fee Payment Policy for additional information.

Public Holidays and Absent Days

Fees still apply for public holidays and absent days.

Cancellation of Child's Care

Two full weeks (14 days) written notice is required to be received by the Service, advising of cancellation of childcare. (The same notice is also required for reducing or changing days of care).

The Child Care Subsidy is only paid to the last day of attendance. Where children are absent during their notice period they will be charged full fees.

Non-Attendance Upon Commencement

Child Care Subsidy will only commence after the child has attended the Service for the first time. Families are responsible for full fees for non-attendance on any booked days prior to the child's first day of attendance.



Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment made by the Australian Government directly to the Service to assist with the cost of quality childcare. Your family's eligibility for CCS is assessed by information provided by you to Centrelink through your MyGov account. It is your responsibility to complete CCS registration. Please note: Busy Bees Australia is unable to change any of this information on site - this can only be performed by contacting Centrelink or accessing your myGov account online. Full fees must be paid until CCS has been approved. Further information can be accessed by calling 13 61 50 or visiting www.centrelink.gov.au.



Working Together

From the team at Busy Bees Australia, we look forward to beginning this journey with your family.

You're already raising amazing children – thank you for entrusting us with these next steps towards success and creativity for school readiness and beyond. We are excited to share our core values:

- To educate the next generation by growing emotionally intelligent and resilient children
- To engage our practitioners in current research that guides pedagogy and practice
- Be committed to children becoming lifelong learners
- To see children as capable and competent, and promote independence
- To strive for exceptional standards through constant Quality Improvement.

Quality Early Learning does more than just prepare children to become eager lifelong learners – it builds resilience, vital social skills, and independence. Choosing the right Early Learning Service provider gives children a structured headstart with the verbal, literacy and problem-solving skills essential for them to thrive as lifelong learners. Welcome to our Busy Bees family.



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