



Parent Handbook

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After School Care 3.00pm-6.00pm

Vacation Care 8.00am-6.00pm

Fees:

Day: \$77.00

Weekly \$365.00

ASC Session \$23.00

BSC Session \$17.00

Vacation Care \$55.00

- *Please note these prices do not include Child Care Benefit or Child Care Rebate.*

Centre Closure

The Centre closes for approximately 3 weeks between the Christmas and New Year period, no fees are charged to Parents during this time

Occasions when the Centre will close are as follows:

- a) All public Holidays
- b) Australia Day (January)
- c) Labour Day (March)
- d) Good Friday and Easter Monday
- e) Anzac Day (April 25th)
- f) Queens Birthday (June)
- g) Grand Final Friday
- h) Melbourne Cup Day
- i) or any other date as advised

Please Note: Fees will be charged for all public holidays unless indicated.

In fairness to all families public holidays and normal care arrangements will not be ‘swapped’ for other days free of charge. If casual days are needed for a child the parents will be charged accordingly.

Philosophy

The practices of Gumnuts Early Learning Centre are based on this philosophy which was developed in consultation with parents and staff. Our Philosophy is reviewed annually.

Being, Belonging and Becoming are made visible through our pedagogy as:

- We believe in the recognition of the uniqueness of each individual and the need for children to develop an understanding and respect for self and others and the environment they live in (NQS 5.1.3)
- We acknowledge the importance of children, parents and educators as partners in a learning community that promotes the wellbeing, education and development of all children (NQS 6.2.1)
- We believe that interaction, sensitivity and attachment are fundamental elements in providing opportunities for children to realise their potential and develop a sense agency. (NQS 1.1.6)

Gumnuts recognises the importance of play in children's learning and this value is strongly emphasised within our program, opportunities will be provided for children to:

- Imagine and create
- Solve problems
- Imitate and Model
- Discover and explore
- Experiment
- Express thoughts and ideas
- Reflect on experiences
- Propose theories and reasons
- Build friendships
- Master skills
- Have meaningful experiences

We believe that the role of educators is to provide a stimulating and responsive learning environment that is focused on the child's interests and abilities as well as providing challenging opportunities to strengthen their skills and knowledge (NQS 3.2)

The environment will be welcoming and safe where educators understand their responsibilities in relation to child protection, offering a sense of belonging to all children (NQS 2.3.4)

We acknowledge, incorporate, value and embrace the culture and diversity of people within our community and the world around us (NQS 6.3.4)

We recognise and value the knowledge and commitment of our educators and fully support their continuing professional development (NQS 4.2.2)

We believe that a statement of the centre's philosophy changes as new insights are gained and practice is evaluated and this is reflected through the Centre Quality Improvement Plan (NQS 7.2.3)

Reviewed 2/03/2015

Child Care Benefit:

Families may be eligible for Child Care Benefit and/or Child Care Rebate. Parents can apply for these rebates through Centrelink. Child Care Benefit is income tested and Child Care Rebate applies to working, studying or training families. After registering for the benefit and rebate, families and children will each be allocated a 'CRN'. When the CRN and dates of birth of the enrolled child and registered parent are entered into our fees program, the benefit and rebate will then be deducted from fees. Families will then only need to pay the amount due after rebates.

Absences:

- When claiming rebates, children are eligible for up to 42 allowable absent days per financial year (this includes when they are away sick or on holidays). If the child exceeds this number, parents will be required to pay the full cost for any other absent days.

PLEASE NOTE: If your child is sick and you can give the Director a medical certificate from the doctor for the absent day(s), it will not be regarded as an allowable absence.

Parents that receive 24 hours of Child Care Benefit (the equivalent of 2 days care) will pay full fees after care exceeds these hours.

Please ask the Director for more information on Child Care Benefit.

Centre Layout:

Wombats Room	8 places
Possum's room:	16 places
Wallabies room:	16 places
Koala's room:	22 places
Emu's room:	22 places
After School Care:	45 places
Vacation Care	45 places
Before School Care	15 places

Emu's room and Kindergarten

From 2015 Gumnuts will be operating a funded kindergarten program for 4 year old children on Tuesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 9am to 4.30pm. Children that are enrolled into the Gumnuts Kindergarten will also be enrolled into before and after kinder care and the kinder holiday program.

The Koala's room will offer a 3-5 years program on Tuesdays and Thursdays for any non-kinder children.

The Emu's room is a far more structured room than the other 4 rooms in the Centre, due to the age range of the children. Children of this age need more challenging and stimulating activities. The program remains child centred, which means children are able to explore at their own pace and create their own play experiences, being a far more beneficial way for children to learn. The Centre is involved in the Best

Start Program along with other Kindergartens and Primary Schools in the community. We will aim to provide the children of this room with all of the essential skills needed before school.

Structure of Staff

Please see staff photo board in the foyer

Number of Staff Required

As per Children's Services Act the Director must ensure that at all times when children are present there is:

- a) 1 educator for every 4 children, or part thereof, under 3 years of age
- b) 1 educator for 11 children, or part thereof, 3 years or over

Director

The Director of the Centre is responsible for the day to day management of the Centre.

What You Need To Bring:

Please do not send toys from home to the Centre unless for "Show and Tell". Security items however are acceptable

Please Note: Nutritious foods are strongly encouraged and preferred. Foods such as lollies, chips, roll-ups and food containing chocolate products etc. will be sent home so we can maintain a consistent nutritious practice. Pop corn and jelly cups are not accepted as they are a choking hazard.

Some suggestions are:

- sandwiches
- soup
- sausage rolls
- baked beans
- left-over's from home meals
- fruit/vegetables
- yoghurt
- custard
- cheese
- fruit/muesli bars

Food can be heated in our microwave.

Breakfast:

All items required for breakfast are to be clearly labelled and brought in a container ie: bread, cereal, spreads etc.

It is parents/guardians responsibility to **provide all food** for their child's breakfast.

Breakfast can be prepared and served prior to 8am.

For all children, please bring:

A separate named container with food for morning tea.

Separate named lunch box with child's lunch and afternoon tea

Named drink bottle with water

A hat in summer months (terms 1+2) (legionnaires or broad brimmed), coat in winter and an appropriate hat for winter such as a beanie (terms 2+3).

Nappies for the day (if required)

Prepared named bottles (if required)

At least one change of clothes

Extra pairs of pants if toilet training

A fitted and flat sheet set (if your child requires a sleep).

Comforters (teddy, dummy)

Drinks: We encourage children over the age of two years to drink water only throughout the day. Cordial, juices and other sweet drinks add to unnecessary sugar consumption which could lead to obesity and other health problems and may affect children's behaviour.

Clothing:

Parents will be required to dress their child in appropriate clothing whilst at the Centre.

We only accept the following attire:

- Closed toed shoes
- T-shirts and dresses with sleeves to protect the child from the sun.
- Comfortable loose fitting clothes that do not restrict the child in any way.
- Appropriate sun hat (legionnaires or broad brimmed hat) in terms 1 and 4.

Important Reminder:

Please label all clothing, drinks and lunch items;

No responsibility will be taken for lost possessions. Although we provide protective clothing for the messier activities, children may get dirty / wet. Please send children in "play" clothes.

The Centre would like to encourage healthy eating habits so parents are asked to give consideration to the foods put in the lunch box. Parents can obtain information on healthy eating at the Centre.

What to expect on your first day:

Please Note: Families are encouraged to visit and become familiar with the Centre, staff and setting before commencing care.

Arrival

- An Educator will welcome you and your child (ren) to the Centre, showing you where to hang their bags, where to put their lunch, drinks, fruit and other personal items.
- You will be asked to sign your child into the attendance book located on the bench in your room.
- If you have not yet returned your child's enrolment form, this is the time to do so; staff will then go through the induction procedure with you.
- Payment can also be made at this time.
- You are welcome to stay and play with your child for as long as you feel necessary, this can assist some children to feel more secure with their new environment and can reassure them to help settle in.
- When you feel it is a good time to leave, let staff know, then inform your child.
- If your child becomes upset by the thought of separation, staff are close by to offer assistance and comfort. We suggest that once you have said you are leaving, you try to do so straight away; prolonged departures can only upset your child more.
- Parents are welcome to visit or phone throughout the day to see how their child is going. Often enough, a child who became upset when they first arrived at the Centre is playing happily ten minutes later.

Departure

- On collection of your child (ren), you will be asked to sign your child out in the attendance book; the educators will assist you in finding your child's belongings to take home. **Please note that if the person collecting the child is not listed on the enrolment form to collect the child, they must bring written authorisation from the parent with them and photographic identification such as a licence. A phone call from the parent will also be required if the person listed to pick up the child in the attendance book changes.**
- Nappy changes are recorded in the bathroom.
- Sleep times are also recorded in a book next to the sign in book.
- Staff can tell you about your child's day, please feel free to ask questions
- Families will be given an information pocket which is where you can find your newsletters, fees and other relevant information.

Late Pick Up:

Whenever possible, please ring the Centre to advise that you will be late.

Where a parent is 10 minutes late to collect the child (after 6pm), staff will ring the parents' home and/or work number and each emergency number until there is a positive response. If no person can be contacted after a period of 20 minutes, staff will contact the police.

A late collection fee is payable for each child not collected by 6pm, (please see late collection fee).

Our Daily Program:

Please observe the room routine displayed in your child's room. Routines as a guide only, the room routine may change depending on weather, groups, sizes and children's needs and interests.

'Family Grouping' is when the children combine in one room during times when there are low numbers of children i.e. 6:30am – 8:30am and 5:00pm – 6:00pm. Activities that may occur during this time are: playdough, textiles, building, construction, puzzles, music etc.

'Programmed Activities' are the activities that are specifically 'planned' for the children. These planned activities can be seen on the room's program, which is displayed up on the wall, Parents are always welcome to contribute their ideas to the program by making suggestions to staff or writing ideas down on our 'parent suggestions sheet' located in each children's room.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency contacts, as per enrolment form, will be contacted in the event of an emergency, an illness or late collection when the parent/guardian contacts have not responded.

Excursions

Written permission is required prior to any child leaving the Centre with an Educator. This authorisation can only be given by the parents. A form detailing the following must be completed and authorised.

- The reason why the child is to be taken outside the premises
- The date when the child is to be taken outside the premises
- The proposed destination
- The method of transport
- The proposed activities
- The period when the child will be away from the premises
- The number of staff members and any other responsible person who will accompany and supervise the child

Please note; during any excursion the staff member accompanying the children will carry a first aid kit, a mobile phone and the children's emergency contacts.

Family Contact

Gumnuts Early Learning Centre will not be used for contact visits to children.

The Centre operates within the guidelines of the Children's Services Regulations 2011, which ensures that parents/guardians have access to their children anytime during operational hours.

Centre Newsletter:

Gumnuts Early Learning Centre devises a monthly newsletter which is distributed to parents via email or can be viewed online on our website. We appreciate any articles, information or suggestions that you would like to see in the newsletter, they can be forwarded to the staff or Director.

Parents are advised to read the Newsletter as it will inform you of up-coming events. We also like to provide families with information on child care and health issues. (Extra copies can be found on the shelf in the main entrance)

From time to time you may also find notices/reminders on the front door.

Communicating with Parents and Parent Involvement

We endeavour to communicate with our families in a variety of ways to encourage their input and involvement at our Centre.

Parents can communicate in the following ways;

- Verbally
- In writing - through communication books, parent suggestion sheets, feedback forms and enrolment forms.
- Joining our Management Committee
- Making an appointment for a Parent/Teacher Interview (held in November/December each year)
- Telephone
- Internet – gumnutselc@netspace.net.au

If our parents have any concerns or difficulties communicating with our staff, we will attempt to provide the resources and materials necessary to offer an effective form of communication. This may be achieved through providing information in a language other than English, sign language or gestures, or using an interpreter. The Centre will contact Translating and Interpreting Services on 131450 for assistance if needed.

We always welcome parents to become involved in the program. This may be through sharing their skills with the children and staff such as music, cooking, singing, dancing, demonstrating a baby bath or sharing some information or suggestions they may have to help improve our current practices.

Cancellation of Care

Parents are required to give two weeks notice of cancellation of permanent care arrangements and must follow the exit policy below. If care is cancelled it will include all future care placements and subsequently your child will be placed on the waiting list if future care is required.

If the child is absent from the Centre for more than two weeks without the Director being notified, the position will be cancelled.

Exit Policy

If a Parent/Guardian decides to cancel their child's permanent care arrangements, they must give two weeks notice of cancellation. Parents will be required to fill out and 'exit form' which is located in the family resource room of the Centre. The form should be given to the Director no later than two weeks prior to the cancellation date.

Fees will be charged to parents if the exit form is not received at least two weeks before the cancellation date.

Payment of Fees:

- Fees are printed on a weekly basis (usually on Fridays).
- Your weekly fees can be found in your information pocket.
- It is the Centre's policy that parents pay fees '**one week in advance**'.

- You will see at the bottom of your fees 'Amount Due', this amount includes your week in advance.
- Fees can be paid by cheque, cash, direct debit or eftpos.

How to pay fees:

You will find a receipt book on the bench outside the office. If you are paying with cash or cheque, please fill out details on the receipt and tear off two copies, one copy you keep, the other is put in the plastic money bag located next to the receipt book. Put the cash or cheque in with the receipt and place it in the fees box which is located in the wall above the bench, please remember to seal the bag.

The Director will be able to assist you when making a payment by eftpos in the office, if the Director is not available please ask a staff member. Families can also choose to pay via internet transfer. Gumnuts bank details are on the bottom of the child care invoice. Please pay your fees into the Gumnuts bank account and identify the payment in your name.

Overdue Fees:

Parents/guardians with overdue fees will be encouraged by the Director to discuss any difficulties they may have in meeting payments and make suitable arrangements to pay. If parents/guardians do not pay in accordance with our fee policy or fail to make a 'fee repayments' plan as agreed to, then the following policy will apply:

- One week in arrears – a stamp with "*overdue payment would be appreciated*" will be stamped on their invoice.
- Two weeks in arrears – a letter advising them of our policy and advising them of the amount outstanding and a date payment is due by. This letter will also give them an option for fee repayment if they are experiencing difficulty.
- More than two weeks or no arrangement has been made – a letter advising them if their outstanding fees are not paid by a certain date then their place will be cancelled and given to another family on the waiting list. The required information will be then forwarded to the Centre's Debt collection agency.

Late Collection Fee

Wherever possible the parent/guardian should ring the Centre to advise they will be late to collect their child. Parents/Guardians are to call the centre within half an hour of the estimated pick up time to help staff and children follow daily routine. Estimated pick up times are to be no more than one hour eg: (4pm-5pm)

A late collection fee of \$5.00 per minute will be charged to parents/guardians for each child not collected by 6pm.

Please note: Child Care Benefit does not apply to any late fees charged.

Waiting List

Each room at the Centre is limited to a maximum number of places. On occasions where parents/guardians require ongoing extra child care days the child's details will be added to the Centre waiting list. The waiting list is maintained in order of application and in accordance with the Priority Of Access list. Any queries about the list should be referred to the Centre Director.

Occasional/Casual Bookings

Occasional/casual bookings may be made if spaces are available. Fees for such bookings are payable on the day. Occasional bookings cannot be guaranteed on a regular basis and must be arranged with the Director before the required booking day.

Casual bookings must be cancelled 24 hours before booked position if not required, failure to do so will result in fees payable for that position.

Illness

As a general principle, children should not be brought into the Centre unless they are able to cope adequately with the normal daily routines and activities.

In General

If a child is so sick that he/she:

- Sleeps at unusual times.
- Has a fever of 38.5°C.
- Is crying constantly as a result of discomfort due to illness.
- Is reacting badly to medications.
- Has a green runny nose- indicates infection
- In need of constant one to one care.
- Has two loose bowel motions
- Has an unknown skin rash
- Is vomiting
- Requires Panadol

The parent will be asked to take their child home as the Centre unfortunately does not have the staff resources to adequately care for the children in these conditions.

If a child becomes ill at the Centre parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to come and collect, or make other arrangements for collection of the child.

If parents cannot be contacted the EMERGENCY CONTACTS listed on the enrolment form will be called.

Children must be taking antibiotics for at least 24hrs before returning to the Centre.

If children have been sent home due to diarrhea they must have had a 'normal' bowel motion before returning to the Centre.

All child illnesses will be recorded in the illness book in your child's room.

Head lice

If educators have located live head lice in a child's hair the parents will be telephoned to collect the child. (Information about head lice is available to parents at the Centre).

The parents will be asked to treat the child with an appropriate treatment. The child may return to the Centre when there are no visible live lice in the child's hair.

A note will be placed on the door when we have had 3 cases of lice.

Infectious Diseases

The Centre has adopted the Department of Health's recommendations regarding the exclusion of children from the Centre because of illness (please see Centre exclusion policy).

All parents will be notified of any infectious Diseases at the Centre by a notice posted on the front door.

If your child contracts any of these infectious diseases whilst at the Centre, the exclusion periods listed in the table will prevail. See Appendix 2 of General Policy Handbook.

Medication

If your child requires medication while at Gumnuts, it must be recorded in the Medication book located in your child's room.

- No medication other than that with the original label will be given.
- Parents must inform a staff member in their child's room that their child requires medication during the day.
- Medication will be administered strictly in accordance with the instructions on the label.
- All medication must be prescribed by a doctor or it will not be given to your child.
- If children require medication regularly such as asthma pumps, parents will be required to have a completed 'Asthma Management Plan' from their doctor.

If parents wish a larger dosage to be administered, doctor's written approval must be given.

On collecting your child (ren) a signature is required in the medication book if medication was administered.

Sun Smart

Gumnuts Early Learning Centre is an Accredited Sun Smart Centre.

The Sun Smart policy has been adopted by the Centre to ensure that all children and staff of the Centre are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. It will be implemented throughout the year during all outdoor activities. Parents will be required to place sunscreen on their child before going outside on arrival (the Centre supplies sunscreen). Children are required to wear a legionnaire or broad brimmed hat during outside play, beanies are acceptable over the Winter months (Terms 2+3).

Please see General Policy Handbook for procedure.

The Centre will supply 30+ sun cream to children and it will be applied when required before going outside. Centre staff will reapply the sunscreen throughout the day.

Parents are required to apply 30+ sunscreen to their child before arriving at the Centre

Please see **'What To Bring'** for appropriate clothing for your child to wear while at Gumnuts.

Emergency Management Policy

Parents of children with allergies, asthma or any other condition that requires regular treatment or prevention, must complete a plan of action/emergency form on enrolment.

Allergies

Parents of children with an allergy must provide the Centre a written letter from the child's Doctor stating the allergy and the prevention or treatment for it. Parents will then be required to fill out an Emergency Management Form.

Anaphylaxis

Parents of children with risk of Anaphylaxis **must provide** the centre with a written medical action plan from their child's doctor stating the allergy and the prevention or treatment for it. Parents will then be required to fill out an Emergency Management Plan and written consent for staff to use the Epipen/Anapen in line with this action plan. Also parents must comply with the Centre's policy that no child who has been prescribed an Epipen/Anapen is permitted to attend service or its programs without their Epipen/Anapen.

Accidents

Qualified First Aiders will tend to all severe accidents.

All accidents/incidents requiring first aid will be written in the accident book. On collecting your child (ren) you will be notified and asked to sign the accident book as confirmation that you have been notified.

Incidents/Accidents that require medical advice are forwarded to DHS as per regulations.

In the case of an accident or emergency resulting in the need for immediate medical attention parents will be contacted and the child will be taken to the appropriate Medical Service.

Absences

We would appreciate notice from parents if your child is going to be absent from the Centre.

For parents claiming Child Care Benefit, a maximum of 42 days absence per financial year applies. Full fees will be charged to parents if they exceed the allowable absence limit. If your child is away sick, parents will be required to bring in a Doctors/Medical certificate so the absence can be recorded as approved.

Please see the Director for more information.

Transition between rooms

Educators will discuss with parents the appropriate time for the child to begin transition to the next room. Parents will have the opportunity to meet the educators in the next room and discuss their child's routine with them.

When this has been decided the child will begin transitioning into the next room, educators will observe the child's behaviour so behaviour patterns can be monitored.

When educators and parents feel the child is ready they will then move up to the room permanently. (This is subject to availability of space)

Aggressive Behaviour

In a child care setting we experience a range of behaviours, some of which are what we call 'challenging behaviours'.

Wherever inappropriate behaviour is demonstrated and appears to be on going, we will work closely with the child's family so we can try to work through why the behaviour is occurring and how to respond to ensure consistent strategies between home and the Centre are implemented. If appropriate we will consult external professional advice (with parent permission).

If you are concerned about your child's behaviour or the strategies being implemented at the Centre to manage behaviour, please feel free to discuss this with the Director.

Rest Time

All Children at the Centre will be given the opportunity to rest or sleep when required.

The Centre respects the needs of all children and will allow them to sleep at any time through the day according to their individual requirements.

All sleep equipment at the Centre is within Australian and New Zealand Safety Standards and is inspected annually.

During this period quiet activities will be set up for the non sleeping children to explore at their own leisure.

Toilet Training

Toilet training will be discussed with parents when the child appears ready.

A routine that is consistent with both the Centre and at home will be implemented for the child. During this time toileting will be recorded in the bathroom.

Healthy Eating Policy

Gumnuts promotes healthy eating to children and parents of the Centre. We ask parents to pack a healthy nutritious lunch for their child, examples of this can be found in the **'What to Bring'** section of this book or resources available at the Centre.

We do not accept 'JUNK FOOD', all items such as lollies, chips, chocolate etc will be sent home.

Please note some foods can also be a danger to children. We do not accept; popcorn, roll-ups and mini-cup jelly lollies that contain the food additive konjac.

Children are encouraged to drink plain milk and water only while at Gumnuts.

The Centre will provide resources for parents and staff in relation to nutrition and healthy eating and encourage families to provide healthy food choices at home.

TV/Video Watching

The TV and video are only used for short periods of time when in use i.e. 30 minutes.

If you do not wish your child to watch TV or videos, please inform the staff who care for your child/ren.

Reminders to Parents:

- Please remember use the correct 'entry' and 'exits' in the driveway. Please ensure to exit from the soccer end.

Privacy and Protection of other children and families

It is a responsibility to all of us to adhere to the Privacy Act 1988 and respect the privacy of the children and families that use the Centre

Under **no** circumstances are parents to approach other parents of the Centre in regards to their child's behaviour, or any other issues that occur at Gumnuts. Under the same circumstances, parents are also not to approach other children of the Centre.

If you have any concerns, please speak to the staff or Director and the matter will be dealt with appropriately.

Birthday Cakes

Parents are more than welcome to bring in a birthday cake for their child. We require parents to complete a birthday cake form listing the ingredients of the cake. Birthday Cake forms can be found in the Family room in the Centre (on the left of the foyer) and must be returned the day before the cake is brought into the centre. We recommend families bring in cup cakes for their child's birthday as they are more convenient and hygienic as the child can blow out the candle on their own cupcake and not contaminate others. *Please refer to 'Centre layout' for number of children to cater for in your child's room.*

Grievances

Please refer to the Centre Grievance Policy in the General Policy Handbook

The following grievance procedures apply:

Day-to-day care issues of your child/ren - please refer to staff caring for your child and/or the Director.

Policies/Fees/Child Care Benefit/Bookings etc. - please refer to the Director.

Management issues - please refer to the Director

It is important to resolve issues as they arise.

**If you feel the need to take the matter further, contact the Department of Education and Training
Moe Office**

03 51 27 0400

Ask to speak to an Authorised Officer