



handprints

early learning centre

Handprints Early Learning Centre

Parent/Family Handbook

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Welcome to Handprints ELC...

Handprints Early Learning Centre is a privately owned and operated early education and care centre that passionately believes in creating a beautiful environment for young children aged birth to five years to build their lifelong love of learning.

Handprints ELC is committed to providing a high quality program, implemented by a team of qualified and experienced educators. We believe in the principles of early childhood education along with being advocates for the rights of the child, including the right to be educated and cared for with respect, love and positive guidance. We also believe in the benefits of collaboration. Learning for our children is a social experience, and should be for us as well. We welcome the input from families, peers, community members and other educators into our learning environments.

Our centre **Philosophy** is displayed in our centre, and enclosed within this handbook. We also provide a **Policy & Procedure Folder** within the centre for families that has all our policies for your perusal. If you would like to make any comments, we welcome your feedback to our directors, an educator or via email to the centre. Our policies are reviewed every 12 months. When enrolling at Handprints ELC you are agreeing to abide by and be involved in reviewing these policies so please take the time to read them.

As you read through this hand book you will notice that Handprints ELC policies and procedures are guided by the regulations of NSW Department of Education and Care (DECS) and the principles of National Quality Framework (NQF). There is a copy of the Regulations set by DECS and NQF resource kit located in the office for your interest and information.

We hope your family enjoys their time with us at Handprints ELC, and we remind you that we welcome your input always, encouraging daily conversations and involvement in all aspects of our education program and practice.

The Handprint Philosophy:

Handprints ELC has a strong belief in family, community, education and collaboration. This belief guided the development of a philosophy that would impact every aspect of the learning and teaching within our settings. We believe our philosophy will guide thoughtful engagement of adult and children across all the stakeholders involved in children's early years. We believe our philosophy will transition children to school who are competent, capable and have a strong sense of belonging, being and becoming within our world.

Like the five fingers on a Handprint, Handprints has 5 core values within its philosophy on education and care of young children. These are:

Love of Learning: *Handprints ELC believes in lifelong learning. From birth to adulthood, we should be inspired to learn, to grow, to develop ideas, beliefs, values. For our children, we want to inspire a love of the concept of learning, to love the discoveries of new and to commit to wanting to know more. For our educators, we challenge continuous learning, providing opportunities to research, question and learn more in our environment. For our families and community, we encourage a reciprocal relationship of learning, where each of us learns alongside each other and from each other throughout this process. From adult to child, we are all together committed to ongoing learning!*

Connections and Relationships: *Rita Pierson once said "children do not learn from people they do not like". To create an effective learning environment, we must create relationships. Theorists for a long time have valued the connections between educator, child, peer, family and community. All these connections will attribute to positive learning experiences within Handprints ELC, to a sense of belonging for everyone and to creating a home away from home for all.*

Wonder: *Handprints ELC is a wondrous place. It will be a place where children experience the natural world and engage in asking questions to extend ideas. Our learning program will come from the questions and sense of wonder developed by our children, our educators, our families and communities. The phrase "I wonder" will be encouraged and embraced in our environment.*

Growth and Change: *Early childhood is a period of rapid growth and change. By working in smaller numbers and groups of children, our educators will have time to regularly explore and update themselves on the individual process of growth and change. Furthermore, as an industry, Early Childhood Education also goes through a process of rapid growth and change. Handprints ELC will remain open to new ideas, new theories and new information regarding the highest quality of practice it can offer young families.*

Our Experiences: *Each of us brings something unique to a service. This includes educators, children, families, members of the community. Our experiences will be embraced in an inclusive environment that celebrates the uniqueness of each individual. We will learn from each other. Our environment will reflect an open, clean and respectful space where children can bring their own ideas and experiences, where educators can adapt to their own ideas and experiences, and where families will be encouraged and welcomed in with their own experiences. This will be OUR home.*

Handprints ELC developed this philosophy based on the input from many families on enquiry forms, through conversations with other educators and services and through a commitment to some of our own core beliefs in this industry. We would love and seek feedback on this philosophy.

A-Z List of Information for Families of Handprints ELC

The following pages will list in alphabetical order the important information you will need to know during your time with us at Handprints ELC. It is a component of enrolment at Handprints ELC that you have read, understood and agreed to the information within this book. Please contact your director if you have any concerns.

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Allowable Absences

Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) are paid for up to a maximum of 42 allowable absence days for each child each financial year across all approved day care centres. Allowable absences can be taken for any reason. These would include absences such as school holidays, and illness or just a day at home. If a child uses more than 42 absent days per financial year additional evidence will be required in order for childcare benefits to be paid.

Attendance

Fees need to be paid for the days your child is booked into the centre, including public holidays as well as absences for sickness or holidays (though not during the two-week period over Christmas when we are closed).

Please note fees are payable from when your child commences at Handprints ELC until written confirmation of the four (4) week notice period that the child is leaving the centre is received by Handprints ELC and you have received written confirmation from us that we have received that notice.

NB. When you give notice to leave our centre you must ensure your child is still present at the centre on the last day of the notice period to receive your CCB and CCR entitlement. They will only receive the CCB and CCR up until the last day the child was present at the centre or full fees will be charged during this period of absence.

A courtesy phone call to the centre by 9:30am to inform educators if your child will be absent that day will alleviate educator concerns and help with catering requirements.

Also please be aware we do not swap days or do 'make-up' days.

Arrival and Departure

On arriving at the centre, it is vital that the person bringing your child signs the attendance register located in the foyer. Please ensure your child arrives by 9:30am to ensure they receive the maximum benefit of our educational program.

We require families to accompany their children into the centre, assist them with placing their belongings away, and then to make sure an educator is aware of their arrival, so that they can spend time welcoming and settling the child for the day.

We also encourage that you say goodbye to your child so that they become familiar with a positive routine and continue to develop a relationship of trust with families and staff.

*All medications must be removed from your children's bags and given to an educator. For this medication to be administered, a medication permission form will need to be completed. Please ask your Doctor when prescribing an antibiotic (or any form of medicine) to prescribe one that is given **twice daily**, this minimises the amount of medication that our educators have to administer. Please note that Handprints ELC has a copy of policies relating to this available in the setting for families to read. These policies will be abided by educators at all times when administering medication.*

A copy of our Medical Conditions policy or Administration of Medication Policy can be emailed to families for their perusal. It will be emailed on review to chosen educators and families yearly.

The attendance register needs to be signed and the time of departure recorded before the authorised person leaves the centre. Please notify a staff member that you have arrived so that they may share

the events of the day or important messages. Ensure all of your child's belongings are taken from their locker along with any precious creations they may have produced throughout their busy day.

NB - If you do not sign the Sign in/out sheet you may not be eligible for your rebates and be marked as absent.

On both your arrival and departure it is in your best interest to read the communication with sign in/out pages and within the room. Important information will be displayed pertaining to the running of the centre. The program is also always available for you to read and evaluate.

Strategies to help children manage early separation

- *Give your child some warning before the separation, but not too long as a young child does not have a sense of time and this may cause more anxiety.*
- *When your child is due to begin attending long day care, arrange times prior to your start date when they will be able to spend time in the company of the familiar carer, until they are comfortable with both the place and the new caregiver.*
- *Become involved in an experience with your child before leaving.*
- *Never leave without telling your child that you are leaving and be clear that you will return to pick him/her up later in the afternoon.*
- *Develop little routines around separations, eg. A special hug and waving good bye.*
- *Make sure that neither the dropping off or picking up times are too hurried, so your child can deal with the transition.*
- *Play peek-a-boo and hide and seek games with the younger children as they mirror the concept of coming and going.*
- *If possible when the parent returns, allow the child to embrace you as long as they need too, so that the child has the chance of making the decision when they have had enough comfort.*

Please understand that if you leave quietly while your child is distracted in play, he/she may distrust being distracted and become more upset and clingy next time. Our educators will ensure that your child settles in each morning and we are happy to discuss any concerns that you may have about your child's settling in period. Let educators know when you are ready to leave so that they can assist with

separation management. If there is a problem, families and educators will come up with a plan of action to help manage easy separation.

Authority to Collect

It is also extremely important that educators are informed when another person will be collecting your child, even if this person is 'authorised' to pick up your child. There is an 'Authorisation to collect' form available from your director, for you to add authorised people in addition to those outlined on your enrolment form, though again, we still require you to inform an educator prior to an authorised person picking up.

Behaviour Management

Handprints ELC aims to foster positive behaviour based on a belief that each child is entitled to the same rights, respect and empathy we would expect in an adult world. Through our behaviour management policy, we have very clear guidelines as to what is appropriate behaviour and what is inappropriate behaviour. The children are made aware of these guidelines at an age appropriate level. The policy also outlines the steps educators will undertake in responding to challenging behaviour.

Please speak to the management or educators with any questions regarding Behaviour Management. It may seem like a negative aspect of a child's development, but when learning to co-operate and function within a group challenging behaviour is often an outcome. We believe the negatives can be turned into a positive as we educate and guide children to develop the ability to make positive choices in their behaviour, and to have a sense of empathy for others. It is important as a new parent to the centre that you are aware of our philosophies and policies.

Child Care Benefit (Daily Rebate)

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is the system of Government funded fee assistance for parents with children enrolled in approved centre such as ours. The CCB is income tested and the rules about this test can be found at;

<http://www.familyassist.gov.au/payments/family-assistance-payments/child-care-benefit/>

This rebate is estimated in advance and subtracted from your daily fees. It is imperative to call the Families Assistance Office (FAO) on 13 61 50 to inform them that you have enrolled at Handprints ELC. They will give one parent/guardian a Customer Reference Number (CRN) and your child a CRN. You must inform Handprints of these numbers in order to be eligible for any government rebates. If Handprints ELC is not provided with the CRN's within one month of starting our service, and FAO request to update your details an administration fee of \$100 will be charged to your account.

NB. When you give notice to leave our centre you must ensure your child is still present at the centre to the last day of the notice period to receive your CCB entitlement. The government will pay the CCB up until the last day the child was present at the centre or full fees will be charged during this period of absence.

Child Care Rebate (50% rebate)

*In addition to the CCB you may also be eligible to receive a rebate of 50% on your out-of-pocket child care expenses to a maximum of \$7,500 per financial year. The Child Care Rebate (CCR) is **not** income tested. This rebate is paid in arrears.*

There are a number of ways the CCR 50% rebate can be paid to you

- 1. A lump sum annually at the end of the financial year into your bank account*
- 2. Quarterly into your bank account*
- 3. Weekly or Fortnightly into your bank account*
- 4. Weekly directly into Handprint's account which would offset the fees and therefore decrease the amount of money direct debited from your bank account on a fortnightly basis.*

Handprints ELC has no preference on how you decide to collect your CCR.

NB. When you give notice to leave our centre you must ensure your child is still present at the centre on the last day of the notice period to receive your CCR entitlement. The government will only pay the CCR up until the last day the child was present at the centre or full fees will be charged during this period of absence.

All families where both parents are working, training or studying are

entitled to the 50% rebate. You must pass the work, train and study test to be eligible. Please visit www.familyassist.gov.au to determine if you are eligible to receive the 50% CCR and for more information on payment methods.

Clothing

As we believe in 'hands-on' learning for the children, we do ask that you dress your child in comfortable play clothes appropriate for both indoor and outdoor activities. As we are a Sun Safe centre we follow the 'sun smart guidelines' required by The Cancer Council NSW. Appropriate clothing includes; covered shoulders, wide brimmed hat & sunscreen (provided). Please see our **Sun Protection Policy** for further information. This applies to excursions as well.

Aprons for 'messy' play or water activities are provided, however your child may still get paint, glue or water on their clothing, so please dress them in practical everyday clothing. We will use paints that are washable, but please understand that sensory learning is a big aspect of young children exploring their world, and therefore have an expectation that clothes worn to child care will come home dirty. During wet weather please provide your child with gumboots as we don't believe in bad weather in early education and care, it's just another opportunity to vary and extend play! We provide splashsuits for children to keep their clothing dry from rain.

We ask that families do not send children dressed in overalls or belts etc. as these take time to undo in an emergency and make it difficult for the older children to show any independence, especially when toileting. If your child is under two and/or is toilet training please provide an appropriate amount of underwear and spare clothing.

Please ensure your child wears properly fitted shoes – **no thongs/crocs please**, as this inhibits their gross motor play and can also be dangerous when climbing on outdoor equipment or running.

It is essential that all clothing be labelled. This will help prevent loss and confusion. Please understand that it is impossible for educators to

Collection of your Child - Persons Authorised

It is our policy that we do not release your child into the care of a person who is:

- *Not authorised on your child's enrolment form. Changes/additions must be submitted in writing to Management.*
- *Not been recorded in the communication book indicating they will be collecting your child on that day or if a member of staff has not been notified.*
- *If the person cannot produce appropriate identification.*
- *If the person is under 16 years.*

*Restricted access by any parent **must** be supported by a Court Order, to which we are legally obliged to comply.*

PLEASE NOTE: *Any person collecting a child will be asked for photo ID if unknown to educator on duty.*

Please ensure to add any people you think may at some time collect your child. If educators are not informed that a person other than yourself will be collecting your child, and we are unable to contact you, it is our policy that your child remains on the premises until the appropriate notification procedure has taken place.

Communication

This is the key to a successful partnership in the care and education of your child. Our educators are always available to discuss any aspect of your child's care or development and meetings can be arranged to suit if more time is needed.

We aim to provide a positive two-way communication through the following channels:

<i>Formal and informal conversations</i>	<i>Newsletters</i>
<i>Email and telephone calls</i>	<i>Notices, signs and policies in the foyer</i>
<i>Comfortable areas in the room to encourage you to stay, watch and play!</i>	<i>Family/Teacher nights</i>
<i>Parent/Teacher Interviews</i>	<i>Surveys & questionnaires</i>
<i>Interactive program displayed in each room or foyer</i>	<i>Children's Portfolio's and Development Records</i>
<i>Seesaw app</i>	<i>Child or family based events</i>

Please be reminded that when dropping off or picking up your child, that we would appreciate minimum conversation with the staff on the floor, as they are still responsible for the supervision of the other children in the room. If you feel you need to talk at length with your child's educator regarding their welfare, please make an appointment.

For convenience and to help the environment, E-mail is our preferred form of communication with families for newsletters, updates, surveys etc.

Confidentiality of Records

To comply with our Confidentiality Policy all records concerning families & children are secured in the office, with contact details only stored confidentially in the rooms. If families wish to access their children's records, this can be done anytime by request.

Daily Routine and Program

The children are provided with a safe and stimulating environment. Our educators are aware of the unique needs of children in an early education and care setting and continually evaluate the environment and program to ensure these needs are met. Our routines are flexible, according to the children's individual developmental needs. Each room's daily routine caters for individual activities as well as small and whole groups in both the indoor and outdoor environment.

Handprints ELC plans and evaluates learning according the principles, practices and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework, the National Quality Standards, theories on development and research into development.

The EYLF document has been developed to carry out the Australian Government's vision where "All children have the best start in life, to create a better future for themselves and the nation."

Belonging - knowing where and with whom you belong.

Being - recognises the importance of the here and now in children's lives.

Becoming - reflects the process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years, as young children learn and grow.

The EYLF document, the NQS standards, and other relevant literature on Early Years Learning are available for you at the centre.

At Handprints ELC we value your input into our learning program. We would welcome your input into our programming and planning pages and on our documentation, as well as through our 'Wonder Walls' where we invite you to wonder alongside us, and to share with us the wonderings on your children.

School Readiness is always a big concern of families. We would first like to assure you our educational program is run by a university qualified teacher, and meets the same requirements of any preschool in Australia. There is no difference in the education provided at Handprints, to a formal preschool setting, apart from our education being offered over longer hours.

We begin school readiness in our nursery room as we build towards foundational skills. In addition to the outcomes of the EYLF, we have formed 5 goals we would like to see children develop prior to starting school. (These goals were developed in collaboration with families in the community, children in the community, educators from two local schools and our director as a university qualified early childhood teacher and are in conjunction with our philosophy). We do provide time for children in the year before

school to separate from their younger peers through our prep room, and spend time delving deeper into focused learning.

GOAL 1:

Build each child's sense of identity, their confidence, their self-esteem and their emotional resilience.

GOAL 2:

Build a lifelong love of learning.

GOAL 3:

Encourage children to wonder, question, think and build understandings of their world.

GOAL 4:

Encourage Self Help Skills

GOAL 5:

Consider the transition from the EYLF to Australian curriculums for English, Maths, Science etc.

For more detail on school readiness, we encourage you to go to our website and explore our blog on the creation of these goals. Our blog can be accessed at www.handprintselc.com.au under the heading of "Educator's Blog".

Another strength within the Handprints ELC educational program will be commitment to ongoing learning from the educators. Through action based research, educators will constantly be encouraged to reflect and build on their practices through asking questions, again building that sense of wonder we so passionately believe in within our centre philosophy. This will be evident throughout the documentation within the setting, and by the involvement of our educators within the wider early childhood sector.

Family Involvement

Handprints ELC welcomes you at any time to visit with your children. There are many ways in which you may become involved in the centre should you wish to do so. We realise however, that as working parents your time through the day is limited, for this reason throughout the year we will have

functions such as Parent Information nights, Family/Teacher nights, Special Guest Speakers, and so on outside of work hours to allow you to connect together and with us.

Fees

Upon commencement, a direct debit form will need to be completed as all fees are paid via this method either from your nominated bank account or credit card. You will pay a two week full fee refundable bond as a deposit plus a one off administration fee of \$50 which will be payable before your child's first day.

Fees will be charged fortnightly in advance from your selected account on a schedule of Mondays. The money will be taken from your account 2 to 5 days after that date. If the payment fails due to insufficient funds, changed bank account details or any other reason that is not Handprints ELC's fault a \$25 admin fee will be charged. Should this reoccur again in a calendar year your child's placement at Handprints ELC may be terminated at management's discretion.

Invoices will be issued fortnightly before payments will be charged to ensure enough funds are in your account. Please keep these for your own records.

Please Note: *You must give us four (4) weeks notice to drop days or to terminate your position at the centre. If this notice is not given, your bond will not be refunded.*

Please note: *The fee you are charged per day is based on your child's age at the beginning of the year and does NOT change at the time of your child birthday, unless they move rooms (this is decided based on the individual needs of the child and IF space permits). Handprints ELC avoids moving children mid-year as their sense of belonging is within their peer group, and our preference is to move children collectively.*

Incursions/Excursions

At different times of the year the centre may organise excursions and incursions. The details of these will be communicated to you along with risk analysis and permission forms.

Grievance and Complaint Register

We take all grievances seriously and value your input on all aspects of our provision. To discuss any concerns please make an appointment with your director. A plan of action will be discussed, implemented and evaluated to address the issues raised. All steps throughout this process will be documented in partnership with the relevant parties.

Hats

We are a Sun Smart Centre and have a Sun Safety Policy to ensure the welfare of our children. It is essential that children wear their sun safe hats whilst outdoors in accordance with our policy. Staff will model sun safety with appropriate sun safe hats as well. Please ensure your child has their hat in their bag EVERYDAY.

Head lice

If children are found to have lice or 'nits', their families will be called to collect them. Children will be allowed to return once they have been treated. We ask all families to remain vigilant with ensuring that their children's hair is treated regularly and that girl's hair is pulled back into ponytails or plaits. Please be aware that those who are most commonly affected are children who have older school age siblings.

Hours

Our centre is open between the hours of 7.30am and 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. Please do not bring your child any earlier than 7.30am or collect them any later than 6.00pm, as we are not licensed nor legally responsible for children's care other than between the hours of operation.

We are closed on all public holidays and for a two-week period over Christmas and New Year. Please be aware that on the last day before our Christmas closure we will require you to pick up your child by 2:00pm, to allow our staff thorough cleaning and preparation time for the New Year.

Illness

Handprints ELC is unable to provide care for children suffering from infectious disease, diarrhoea, vomiting or high temperature (i.e. 38 °C or above). For high temperatures, with your permission Panadol will be administered to allow time for your child's collection. Due to a higher number of children being prone to convulsing during early childhood an ambulance will be called if your child temperature is 40°C or above.

*Any diarrhoea, vomiting or high temperature must be **CLEARED from symptoms** for at least 24 hours before returning to the centre to prevent the passing of infection to other children and staff.*

Children are also considered to be suffering from illness if they are out of character, requiring one to one care and not engaging with the content of the educational program. In this scenario we would also require the child to be collected from the service.

It is not acceptable for a child to be given fever-reducing medications and brought into the centre. If a child has a high temperature then he/she will not be allowed back until their temperature has returned to normal.

If your child does contract an infectious disease, please advise the centre so that the families of other children in contact with your child can be notified. If your child has been excluded from Handprints ELC with symptoms of infectious disease a doctor's clearance through a medical certificate is required on returning to the centre.

If your child falls ill at the centre, you will be notified immediately and will be required to collect your child or make arrangements for your child's collection as soon as possible. Failure to collect your child may result in the loss of the placement. As you can appreciate, when caring for so many young children a day, it is important to exclude unwell children so that the illness does not spread and allows healing time for your child.

If you choose not to immunise your child, when there is an outbreak of a disease that is preventable through immunisation, the non-immunised child will be excluded from the centre.

PLEASE NOTE: During this time, fee payments are still to be paid.

Illness Exclusion Guidelines

Your child must be kept at home if he/she has:

* Vomiting/Diarrhoea	* Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease	* Ringworm
* Conjunctivitis	* Giardia	* Thrush
* Chicken Pox	* Impetigo	* Viral Hepatitis

Exclusions guidelines are followed based on the information provided by NSW Health, or the information contained within *Staying Health in Child Care 5th Ed.* At times of outbreak, NSW Health may advise us to increase exclusion periods for children.

Children will be excluded if they present at the centre with:

- **Respiratory Symptoms** - If breathing is rapid, difficult, or with severe coughing.
- **Fever** – If temperature is 38 degrees or more, or occurs with other symptoms.
- **Diarrhoea** - If there have been two loose stools, or one during outbreak of gastroenteritis.
- **Vomiting** - If there is any vomiting at all or two instances for Babies.
- **Eye/Nose Drainage**- If there is thick mucus or any discharge draining from the eye or nose.
- **Sore Throat** - If there are swollen glands or other symptoms as well.
- **Skin Problems** - If there is undiagnosed rash, or infected or undiagnosed sores.
- **Itching** - If there is persistent itching of body or scalp.
- **Behaviour** - If the child looks or acts differently.

Immunisation

In order to comply with DECS all original immunisation records will need to be kept at the service. These need to be obtained from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Record (ACIR) in the form of a history statement. These are sent to families after immunisation but can also be obtained by contacting 188653809 or acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au or www.medicareaustralia.gov.au or in

medicare/Centrelink offices. In the event of contagious conditions, children who have not been immunised will need to refrain from attending our centre (daily fees will still be charged).

Recommended Immunisation Schedule

The following immunisation schedule is recommended for infants and children who are being immunised for the first time. This schedule shows all the immunisations that a child should receive, beginning at the age of two months.

Age	Disease immunised against	Age	Disease immunised against
Birth	Hepatitis B		Pneumococcal Rotavirus
2 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Polio Hib Hepatitis B Pneumococcal Rotavirus	12 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Hib Meningococcal C
4 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Polio Hib Hepatitis B Pneumococcal Rotavirus	18 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella
6 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Polio Hib Hepatitis B	4 years	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Polio Measles (part of the MMR vaccine) Mumps (part of the MMR vaccine) Rubella (part of the MMR vaccine)

The MMR vaccine is only required at 4 years if the MMRV vaccine was not given at 18 months.

Source: National Immunisation Program (NIP) retrieved from website www.medicareaustralia.gov.au
20th June 2014

Injury and Accidents

Although we take all care possible, from time to time our lively little ones do have minor accidents. Any child who sustains an injury or is involved in any incident whilst at our centre will be treated by an educator with a first aid qualification and an Incident, Injury, Illness & Trauma form will be completed for parent viewing and signature. Any serious accident or injury will be treated by emergency care, and parents will be notified immediately.

Inclusive Education

Handprints ELC and the educators within Handprints are passionate advocates for inclusive education. Handprints is a place where everyone is welcome. This includes children with varying family structures, from different cultures/religions, children speaking different languages and children with any form of additional needs.

From our educational environment, we want to promote equality to children. As a part of the everyday curriculum, children will be exposed to books and learning experiences that target all of the above areas of inclusion and promote respect, tolerance and mateship. Please speak to the director for further information.

Late Collection of Children

When a child is collected after the licensed hours (6.00pm) the following procedures will be followed:

- 1. A fine of \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes or part thereof, and \$2 per minute for each minute after the initial 15minutes.*
- 2. If a family is late in picking up the child 3 times in a calendar year the child's placement will be reviewed and could be terminated.*
- 3. A written record will be kept of all instances of late collection, stating exact time and signed by person collecting child and staff member.*

Whilst this may appear harsh, please appreciate that staff have worked a long day, and we are not licensed to care for children after 6.00pm, but most importantly this can be upsetting to your child.

Management Structure

Approved Provider: Handprints Early Learning Centre

Company Director: Julia McKean

Operations Manager: Nikki Grossman

Centre Directors

Meals

Handprints ELC provides morning tea, cooked nutritious lunch and afternoon tea provided by Hearty Health. The menu is planned in accordance with the NSW Health Department guidelines and are nutritionally balanced to provide your child with 50% of his/her daily nutritional requirements. Weekly menus are displayed at the centre. Hearty Health provide seasonal 4 week rotational menus. Children with allergies are also catered for and any allergies should be detailed in your child's enrolment form.

If you have a child under the age of two enrolled at either of our centres, we ask that you discuss your child's individual feeding needs with the nursery educators. If your child is on formula milk we ask that you bring bottles with sterile water and a dispenser with pre-measured formula both labelled with name and date.

Handprints ELC supports breast feeding. You are welcome to bring expressed breast milk. Due to OH&S guidelines there is a strict procedure for handling breast milk. All milk must be clearly marked with the child's name, date, and that the contents is breast milk. This should be stored in the back of the fridge or freezer and not in the door of the fridge. Educators will follow procedure guidelines in defrosting and heating breast milk.

Please be aware that due to educator/child ratio's during the early morning & late afternoon shifts, we are unable to give bottles before 8am. A late snack is provided yet dinner will not be given.

As some of our children have allergies we do not allow food to be brought into the centre except for occasions such as children's birthdays. We ask that on the occasion of a child's birthday you bring a cake with ingredients clearly labelled for educator's to protect children will allergies. Alternatively, we can provide an allergy free cake on your child's birthday for an additional cost.

Please feel comfortable to discuss food requirements and needs with your child's educator or Director. Note that we understand there is some special circumstances that may require different nutritional

requirements and our aim is to work with families on meeting children's nutrition, growth and development goals.

**** HANDPRINTS ELC is NUT FREE ****

Please be aware some children have life threatening allergies to nuts, even the presence of touch from a peer can trigger. Please do not bring nuts in, or allow your child to consume nuts on days where they will attend Handprints ELC.

Medication

All medicines required by the children involve the family completing a medication form which needs to be checked by an educator prior to the family leaving.

All medicines must be prescribed by a licensed practitioner and clearly state the child's name, date, expiration date, dosage required and times to be administered.

Without this, we will be unable to administer the medication. Medication needs to be handed to an educator to protect the safety of all our children. All medications must have been given at home first prior to being administered at the setting in case of allergic reaction. If your child is prescribed an antibiotic, they must be kept at home for 24 hours to allow the medicine to take effect.

For further information, please see our Administration of Medication Policy

National Quality Standard QA 2

National Regulation Department of Education & Care (DECS)

Regulations 90 – 96.

Nappies

Handprints ELC provides premium disposable nappies and wipes for children in nappies.

You are required to check your child's nappy upon arrival of the centre, and use our nappy change facilities if need be to assure they are in a clean nappy to start the day. At the end of the day when you pick up your child we aim to ensure your child leaves in a clean nappy.

Our nappy change times vary across the rooms, but all children will be changed when needed as well as their nappies checked at prescribed times within the routine.

National Quality Framework

On 1 January 2012, the National Quality Framework was established and applies to all long day care, family day care, preschool (or kindergarten) and outside schools hours care services.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

- *a national legislative framework*
- *a National Quality Standard*
- *a national quality rating and assessment process*
- *a new national body called the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.*

The National Quality Framework took effect on 1 January 2012 with key requirements being phased in overtime. Requirements such as qualification, educator-to-child ratios and other key staffing arrangements will be phased in between 2012 and 2020.

National legislative framework

The national legislative framework is established through an applied laws system and consists of:

- *the Education and Care Services National Law*
- *the Education and Care Services National Regulations.*

It creates a jointly governed uniform national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services and replaces existing separate licensing and quality assurance processes. For many services this integrated approach means less red tape.

A Regulatory Authority in each state and territory will be primarily responsible for administering the National Quality Framework, including approving, monitoring and quality assessing services. It will be the first point of contact for services.

A new national body—the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority will oversee the National Quality Framework and ensure the consistent and effective implementation of the new system.

National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard sets a new national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. The National Quality Standard is divided into seven Quality Areas:

1. Educational program and practice	5. Relationships with children
2. Physical environment	6. Leadership and service management.
3. Children’s health and safety	7. Staffing arrangements
4. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	

The National Quality Standard aims to promote:

- the safety, health and wellbeing of children
- a focus on achieving outcomes for children through high-quality educational programs
- families’ understanding of what distinguishes a quality service.

National quality rating and assessment process

Approved Services will be assessed and rated against each of the seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations. They will also be given an overall rating. The rating and assessment process aims to drive continuous quality improvement at services and provide families with better information for making choices about their children’s education and care.

Assessments for existing services commenced in 2012 and is ongoing.

Open Door Policy

What do we mean by Open Door Policy??

Read our Acrostic Poem and find out!

Our centre welcomes in our families at all times we are operating.

Please come to observe, interact and engage with us, our educators and our children.

Encouragement is given by us for your full involvement in your child's learning and development.

Notice our spaces, our environment, and please give us feedback.

Don't hesitate, please come in.

Our centre is proud to show you what we do.

Our educators are eager to share their knowledge and ideas.

Rather than take our word for this, see for yourselves.

At all times that Handprints is operational, we have an open door policy. That means families are welcome to come by, join with us, observe and be involved in our practice. Please come in!

Parking

Handprints ELC provides parking for families to drop off and pick up their children. If you are staying at the centre for an extended period of time, please consider other families and use on-street parking.

Rest Time

The educator's at Handprints ELC understand that each child has individual needs, which includes the amount of rest they require to function effectively. No child at our centre is forced to sleep or asked to lie down for long periods of time. A rest/quiet area is provided for children to utilise if they become tired. A balance of fast and slow paced activities will also be programmed to encourage the children to relax and unwind throughout the day.

There is a planned rest period for all children approximately between 12pm to 2pm. For children who do not sleep, they are encouraged to relax on beds for no longer than 20 minutes until they are ready to participate in quiet activities. Family's requests regarding their child's sleeping routines will be respected and adhered to as much as possible. Feel welcome for your child to bring a dummy, comforting toy which may help them to rest more peacefully. And, please remember to clearly label everything.

For Further information, please refer to our Rest and Sleep Policy

National Quality Standard QA 2

National Regulation Department of Education & Care (DECS)

Regulation 81

Room Organisation

Across our services, decisions are made in the best interest of children relating to group size and room organisation. Consideration is given to children's age, stage of development and also child/staff ratio when room configurations are being decided upon.

Staff Shifts

The educators at Handprints ELC will work a variety of 4 day weeks with longer hours, and 5 day weeks with shorter hours depending on the room. The aim of this is to provide consistency to families of who they are dropping and picking up from each day. We will also roster to assure we have a responsible person and first aid qualified staff member on premises each at all times of day. This is to protect the health, safety and well-being of our children.

National Quality Standard QA 4,

National Regulation Department of Education & Care (DECS)

Regulations 122,123,126,130-136,240-247 271

Settling In

Each child will settle into the centre in quite different ways. Some children will happily separate whilst others may cry or cling to you when you leave. How many days a child attends the centre each week may determine how long it takes them to settle in.

- 1. Visit as often as you can during the two weeks prior to your child starting. Please call the centre before you'd like to visit to arrange a suitable time. You cannot overdo visits – the more often you visit, the less strange the centre and educators will be to your child on day one! We recommend a minimum of one visit prior to enrolment.*
- 2. As day one approaches, try to plan for a short day. We recommend that the first few days in care are no longer than 6 hours – eg. 9.00am – 3.00pm. As other children start to be collected your child may start to become anxious and 'remember' that you are not with them, especially if a new friend is collected first. It can be a long day of adjusting to a new setting – so the shorter the day – the better their day will be.*
- 3. Please bring any comforters (special toys, dummy, bottle and blanket). Don't forget to clearly label everything.*

A separation routine might be:

- 1. "Let's sign your name in the book/unpack your bag/put your hat on etc."*
- 2. "Now we will see your teachers".*
- 3. "Ok, Mummy/Daddy is going to work now... see you after your afternoon tea."*
- 4. Kiss goodbye and leave smiling.*

If these strategies are followed your child will settle easily! Take a business card to place in your wallet/purse so that you can phone for progress reports throughout the day. Our educators will be completely honest with you about your child's settling and will discuss any future strategies if needed. If your child has trouble settling in you may want to consider bringing them into the centre for a visit with you on days that they are not attending, this is like an extension of our orientation, and can work well for families that their child has needed that extra help settling.

Sun Safety

*Due to our **Sun Protection Policy**, it is essential that all children bring & wear their provided wide brimmed hat to wear outside.*

As we encourage self-help skills, educators will support older children to apply their sunscreen independently whilst making sure that this is put on properly to ensure full coverage, before the children go outside. Children with allergies or sensitive skin that reacts to our centre sun screen will be asked to provide a sunscreen so that they also are able to abide by our sun protection policy. Children aged less than two years will have sunscreen applied by an educator.

Upon arrival at the centre, we ask that you apply sunscreen to your child before you leave to allow them to join in our indoor/outdoor play program without hesitation.

Our Sun Protection Policy minimises outdoor play for children between the hours of 11am and 3pm in summer, unless it is under a shaded area or under the veranda for a particular experience. Sun protection is required at all times in summer, and between 10am and 2pm from April to September. In June/July, no sun protection is required.

We strongly advise parents to dress their child in clothing that will cover the shoulders and upper arms (i.e. no singlets or spaghetti strapped tops/dresses).

For further information, please see our Sun Protection Policy

National Quality Standard QA 2

National Regulation Department of Education & Care (DECS)

Regulation 168

Termination or Reducing Days

In the event of terminating your child's enrolment or reducing days, families must give written confirmation of the four (4) week notice period that they are altering their child's enrolment and receive written acknowledgment from Handprints ELC. If you wish to reduce your child's attendance and due to maternity leave, Handprints ELC has the right to pick which day(s) of the week your child ceases to attend. This follows the DECS 'Priority of Access' guidelines.

For further information please see our Fee Policy

'Section 9. Withdrawal from Care'

National Quality Standard QA 7.

National Regulation Department of Education & Care (DECS)

Regulation 168, 172

Toileting

We are happy to support the toilet training of children. We encourage parents to discuss toileting needs and progress with our educators, so that we can support our children together. Toilet training must start at home; educators will follow through when this is started. Educators will provide families with knowledge and support in attaining this skill.

Waiting List

Handprints ELC maintains a waiting list for all children who are seeking places at one of our centres. The Waiting list is divided into 2 sections.

The Internal Waiting List

- *Children who are enrolled but require changes to their existing care arrangements such as adding or changing days;*
- *Siblings of children who currently attend*
- *Siblings of children who have attended Handprints ELC in the past.*

The External Waiting List includes children who have not been involved with Handprints ELC previously.

What to Bring Each Day

Families are required to supply a full change of clothing each day, including underwear. Even if your child does not have 'accidents', there are other situations where a change of clothes may be necessary. The following are suggested items that should be included for your child;

Nursery:

Bottle - *if formula, bring sterilised water & powder separate, if your child requires cows milk you may bring an empty bottle. If you chose to provide breast milk, this requires additional labelling and is to be given directly to an educator for appropriate storage. All bottles must be labelled with name and date.*

Hat – Sun Safe Hat (except in June/July when a beanie will suffice)

Clothes - two changes

Comforters – Dummy, security blanket or familiar toy if necessary

Pre-School/Prep:

Hat – Sun Safe Hat (except in June/July when a beanie will suffice)

Clothes – minimum one change

Comforters – Dummy, security blanket or familiar toy if necessary

On Rainy Days, we ask you to bring gum boots and rain coats as we actively encourage the full participation of our children in puddle jumping!

Valuables

*Please DO **NOT** bring valuables to the centre, including favourite toys, jewellery, money etc. Such items have a habit of being lost, buried in the sandpit, 'borrowed' or accidentally broken by others – they are safer at home. Handprints ELC accepts no responsibility for the loss of these items. There are many resources provided at our centres.*

Summary of your responsibilities

- *To keep the centre updated with any changes to phone numbers, email address and names on your contact list. This is extremely important in cases of emergency.*
- *To check your pockets daily for information, receipts, etc.*
- *To include a full set of clothes in your child's bag and sun hat.*
- *To read the Communication Book in the foyer for information, policies, procedures and upcoming events.*
- *To observe centre policies especially in regards to keeping sick children home, exclusion periods and medications.*
- *A soft toy or comforter may be sent for rest time. However, toys from home are often lost or broken and we ask that you do not bring any toys from home or any lollies, chips, chewing gum or chocolate, etc. Remember that many children have allergies and we therefore ask you to not bring any food on site, as we will be providing food to the children.*

- *Young children tell the time by events happening around them, therefore it is important to keep your arrival at the centre, both morning and afternoon at a regular time slot where possible.*
- *When dropping off your child for the day, please say good-bye to them when leaving. This will help your child settle down and enjoy their day!*
- *Where possible, involve yourself into every aspect of our practice. Collaboration between us is key to this being the best experience for your family.*

Remember all children react differently to new situations. Some children will adjust quickly, while others may take a lot longer. Be patient with your child and give them time to become accustomed to their new environment, friends and educators.

Please don't hesitate to speak to your children's educators or our director/nominated supervisor at any point during your time with us at Handprints ELC.

In Conclusion

We would like to welcome you to Handprints ELC and thank you for enrolling your child at our centre. It is our aim to provide you and your family with an enjoyable and positive learning experience for your child.

We are here to provide a high quality service to both you and your child and to do this successfully we need your assistance, support and involvement. Once again, if at any time you have any needs, concerns, suggestions or questions, please do not hesitate to speak to our educators or myself.

We look forward to getting to know you & your family better.

Kind regards,

Julia McKean

Company Director

julia@handprintselc.com.au