



*Bluebird*  
Early Learning Centre

*Family Handbook*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Bluebird Family and thank you for trusting us with your precious Children. Bluebird Early Learning Centre has created guidelines and policies in order to achieve a happy and smooth running of the Centre. This handbook tries to do that in a way which makes the Families, Staff and Management fully aware of each other's rights and obligation. The undermentioned information pertaining to the child's development is prepared within the guidelines of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Bluebird Early Learning Centre's Policies, Child Care Regulations and Child Care Act are located in the Office and are available to view at any time.

## 2. OUR PHILOSOPHY

Bluebird Early Learning Centre is for all the family. We consider Educators to be a part of a child's extended family. To ensure foundations for future growth, we embrace and endeavour to maintain the intimate feel of our homely Centre, striving to provide a warm, nurturing and safe educational environment.

We uphold the rights of the child by promoting and believing that all children are our future, each special and unique. We encourage positive relationships between peers, children and adults so that Children can feel valued and loved, and learn the basic skills of life through meaningful experiences.

We endeavour to provide a safe, clean and caring environment where children have freedom to choose their activities and make their own decisions. We believe empowering children with opportunities of choices and decision making will enhance their feelings of belonging, being and becoming.

We welcome Family involvement at whatever level people feel comfortable with, and consider any feed back or suggestions to be extremely valuable and appreciated. We strive to create and maintain strong, open and trusting relationships with our Families, which we believe will greatly benefit the Children.

We believe in creating a stimulating learning environment through play, as this supports children to explore experiment, enjoy and discover their physical, social, emotional and intellectual world around them. Our programme incorporates a balance between Educator and Child initiated activities and is designed to cater to

Children's individual interests, needs and varying levels of development, whilst having the flexibility to be spontaneous and non-restricting.

Our Centre invites community members to regularly share experiences with the Children. Excursions/incursions are planned to enable the Children to become involved in the community. We encourage Children to see themselves as valued and constructive contributors to the community which ultimately promotes confidence, self-worth and positive self-image.

At Bluebird Early Learning Centre we provide a high standard of hygiene and food preparation. Menus incorporate balanced meals that meet the recommended daily nutritional needs of Children within each age group whilst reflecting a wide variety of cultures. All children's medical, cultural and religious needs are respected and taken into account when menus are being updated and planned.

We feel it is important to acknowledge the Noongar People, the traditional custodians of this land and pay respect to Elders, past and present, for they hold traditional memories, traditions, culture and hopes of Australians.

We encourage children and educators to interact with and be respectful of each other. This reflects our anti-bias approach to Children and their families, accepting uniqueness in language, culture, customs, religious beliefs, spirituality and values. This inclusion means all Children are part of and participate in their environment. It means not just being there, it means being with, learning with, playing with, communicating with and socialising with their peers and educators.

We strive to make everyone feel part of the "Bluebird Early Learning Centre" family.

### **3. ENROLMENTS**

There are guidelines in the Commonwealth Childcare Assistance agreement which the Centre must adhere to regarding enrolment priorities. They are as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> priority - a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

2<sup>nd</sup> priority - a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test.

3<sup>rd</sup> priority - any other child

Within these main priority categories, priority should be given to children in:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- Families which include a disabled person.
- Families on lower incomes.
- Families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Socially isolated families.
- Single parent families.

The Centre keeps a waiting list - however priority of enrolment will be given to children of parents falling within the above categories.

Every effort will be made to accommodate everyone who requires care. We welcome any children with special needs and will take measures to provide the appropriate care required.

You will need to complete and sign the Centre's enrolment form when enrolling your child.

### **4. HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Centre opens at 6.30am and closes at 6pm, Monday to Friday all year round.

We close all weekends and public holidays.

Our staff finishes their duties at 6.00 pm sharp and we ask that you co-operate by having your children picked up by then.

### **5. GROUPING OF CHILDREN**

The children within Bluebird Early Learning Centre are grouped according to their age. 3 age groups exist, these are:

- 0-2 years,
- 2-3 years,
- 3-6 years.

Siblings are encouraged to visit each other during the day, especially during settling.

### **6. SETTLING CHILDREN INTO CHILD CARE**

We believe that, where possible, your child's settling period will be easier if you are able to follow some of the following suggestions.

We also believe that the care taken when settling your child in will assist you in leaving your child for the first time. You will have an opportunity to talk with the staff, watch them working with the children and ask questions when you are not so rushed. We understand and appreciate that children respond in different ways when separating from their parents. We will always attempt to respond to those varying needs.

The following may be helpful:

- Pre-enrolment visit(s) are encouraged.
- Parents are encouraged to spend some time with their child for the first few occasions (according to needs) and to allow staff to gradually take over.
- Feel free to telephone during the day to check on your child's progress.
- It is recommended that the first day for the child should not be too long a period - gradually increase the time to give the child reassurance that the parent is coming back for him/her.
- Staff will report to parents regarding the child's day and are happy to discuss any concerns.
- When your child becomes ready to move up into the next age group our friendly staff will discuss this transition with your input.

## **7. CONFIDENTIALITY**

You can be assured that personal details supplied to us are treated in the strictest confidence. The Director/Co-ordinator is available for confidential conversations concerning your child if required.

**Parent grievance procedure** - Any concerns need to be directed to the Qualified Educator in that child's room. If the parent feels that their concern has not been addressed, they are able to speak to the Director who will attempt to resolve the issue.

## **8. ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

On arrival at or departure from the Centre, parents must sign their children "in" and "out" using the Ipad which is located in the foyer. Parents are also required to confirm "ABSENT" if their child is absent for any reason, or for Public Holidays. Failure to do so may jeopardize your Childcare assistance. We stress that this is a Commonwealth Government requirement.

## **9. PICKING UP OF CHILDREN**

Only persons authorised on the Enrolment Form to pick up children may do so. Any other persons attempting to pick up children will be refused. All persons are asked for Identification and checked with the enrolment form before being allowed to take a child. Should you wish to change the persons authorised to pick up your child, you will need to do so in writing before those new persons attempt to pick up your child.

Should you need to temporarily authorise another person to pick up your child, you may do so by personally phoning or advising the Centre giving an accurate description of the person being authorised. You should immediately, or at the earliest opportunity, confirm the request in writing.

## **10. LATE COLLECTION OF CHILDREN**

When you are unable to collect your child at the usual time for any reason, please phone the Centre.

**Parents may be charged a late fee for collecting children after 6.00 PM** of \$15.00 per child for each fifteen minutes, or part thereof, until the child is handed over to the parent or the person authorised by the parent.

Staff will remain in the Centre for one hour after closing time. In this hour an effort will be made to contact the various people that are listed on the enrolment form (e.g... parents/guardian/emergency contact person). In the event that the person on the enrolment form cannot be contacted, the Family and Children's Service of your area and the Police will be contacted.

## **11. FEES**

We charge all families a "Start-up fee" which includes a shirt, hat and portfolio for your Child. This is \$20 and will be added to your first bill.

Fees are payable as listed on the notice board.

- \$109 per day for Babies & Toddlers
- \$107 for Kindy

Fees are then reduced by claiming Childcare Assistance if applicable. The percentage of assistance that a family may claim depends upon their assessed family income which is determined by the Centrelink.

All fees are to be paid each Friday and are for the current week only. Our method of payment is by direct debit using the Debit Success system. Any fees outstanding longer than 2 weeks, will result in you being asked to withdraw your child from the Centre. Debit Success charge a dishonour fee for each payment that is declined, as stated in Debit Success service agreement. All efforts will be made to recover fees, however if fees are not paid in full, further action may be taken.

**In order to maintain fees at a figure as low as possible and provide quality care for your children, fees must be paid for all public holidays. If you receive child care benefit or child care rebate you are allowed 40 absence days per year where Centrelink will continue to pay benefit. These include sick days, public holidays, holidays and casual absence days. Full fees are charged for holiday to keep your place open, these will be marked as absent days. Once you reach 40 days Centrelink will not pay benefits for the rest of the financial year.**



## **12. NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL**

One week notice is required for termination of your child's place. If you wish to obtain Childcare Assistance for this one week you must attend the Centre or full fees will apply.

## **13. STAFFING**

The Centre employs sufficient staff as required by the Department of Community Services. Staff will work under a suitable code of conduct and suitable behaviour will be maintained at all times.

At least one staff member on the premises at all times will hold a current first aid certificate, be Anaphylaxis Trained and be emergency Asthma trained. All staff will supply a health certificate and Working With Children Check before the commencement of employment.

Regular Qualified and Unqualified staffs are appointed to care for the children depending on the children's age and the quantity of children. As per childcare regulations the staff to child ratios are: 1 staff to 4 children aged 0-2, 1 staff to 5 children ages 2-3, and 1 staff to 10 children aged 3-6. At least 50% of our Staff are Qualified. Everyone who does not hold a certificate or diploma is actively studying towards it.

Bluebird Early Learning Centre has appointed a Nominated Supervising Officer who is in charge of the day to day running of the Centre. There is a list of other educators who hold a Certified Supervisor's Certificate in the Foyer. If the Nominated Supervising Officer is not on the premises, then the most senior person holding the Certified Supervisor's certificate will be placed in charge.

We provide Students Placements in the centre where we take on students from schools around the area to complete childcare training and to gain experience with working with children. Only one student will be present in a room on any one day, and the students will never be left alone with the children. Students will complete tasks set by permanent staff in the room, including cleaning and child interactions.

Volunteers may be appointed by the service to assist with excursions. The volunteers will be parents of the children attending the service. If you are available to assist as volunteer on an excursion please inform staff on enrolment forms.

Our staff are employed to provide a happy, home away from home environment for your children where every need is met. Staff provide fun and stimulating experiences as well as providing comfort for all children. Staff practise high levels of health and safety to protect your child including hygiene and supervision.

## **14. PROGRAMMING**

Programs are developed for all children within the Centre under the guidance of the trained staff members and the approval of the Australian Children's & Education Care Quality Authority. The programs are based on the Centre philosophy, goals and aims as well as the individual Child's development, the Children's interest and the overall needs of the group of children. Our programming is all done digitally, using the ipads to take photos, videos and conduct learning stories and reflections on the Children. This is available to Families using the "Seesaw" app. We use the "Emergent Curriculum" programming method which is a flexible programme that is designed to accommodate your child's interests and needs and reflects the "Reggio Emilia" approach that we use. Educators collect the Learning Stories and Artwork for each child and collaborate them into each Child's portfolio. The portfolio is sent home once it is full. You are welcome to view the portfolio at any time. Please don't hesitate to ask the Educators if you would like to view your Child's portfolio. For more information about this, please feel free to speak to a Qualified Staff member. We will occasionally send forms to you requesting information about your child that we can then use for our Programme. Families are also encouraged to write on the programme in the "Parent Input" box. Your input will be greatly appreciated.

Programs are displayed in Each room on the Programming Boards along with learning stories for the week and are evaluated regularly. Please feel free to discuss the programme with the Educators at any time or make an appointment.

## **15. GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR**

Guiding Children's behaviour will be done in a respectful and fair manner. The Educators get down to Children's level and explain what behaviour is expected. The Educators will allow opportunities for Children to discuss and contribute to the Room Responsibilities and Behaviours expected.

No child will be subject to any form of corporal punishment, punishment by solitary confinement, smacking or other humiliating or frightening punishment.

All guidance and discipline within Bluebird Early Learning Centre will be positive. Parents are notified and kept informed if any behavioural problems occur and positive steps are taken to try and eradicate or minimise the problem behaviour.

## **16. EXCURSION**

If the Centre plans any excursion, permission will be obtained from the child's parent or guardian. The details of time, place and duration will be advised when seeking your permission. Educators will be sufficient to cover all safety aspects. We are committed to ensuring children are carefully supervised to protect their wellbeing and safety during any excursion or journey from or to the centre that involves travel in a vehicle organised by the service.

## 17. EXPECTATION & BENEFITS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

All parents and families are encouraged to be as involved with the Centre as they wish to be. Educators are always open to parent involvement and suggestions. Our centre supports sustainability and care for our environment. We are encouraging children to grow vegetables and herbs and to recycle scraps. Parents can be involved in many ways, such as bringing in recycling items for craft. We also welcome family input by sharing celebrations from different cultures. Bluebird ELC have a facebook page where we post photos and up and coming events. Regular opportunities are provided for the parents and families to attend special events as well as parent evenings.

The centre holds regular parent evenings where parents are welcome to attend to discuss any issues or to make suggestions. The next date for the parent evening will be displayed in the foyer. All parents and guardians are welcome to attend. If there are any complaints towards the centre regarding your child or centre practises parents are asked that they discuss these issues with the relevant staff member concerned. If you still feel that action is necessary after discussions with relevant staff members you should take the matter up with the co-ordinator. If you are still unhappy with the situation the co-ordinator can offer to take the matter to the owner for guidance. For any more information regarding parent grievance procedures please ask to see the centre policies.

## 18. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

We have available to parents several sources of information on varied topics such as children's health and child development. We also have a whole range of different pamphlets which are available to you and can be found in the foyer. We also email families regularly to keep them updated on information, centre events, community events etc. If the information you are seeking is not there, please ask a caregiver for further help. We have a community book in our foyer showing services available in the local area, parents are welcome to look through it at any time, please feel free to add any flyers or information you feel is relevant to our area. We have a duty to keep adequate records about staff, parents and children in order to operate responsibly and legally. The centre will protect the interest of the children and their parents and the staff including appropriate privacy and confidentiality. Archived records will be stored in a safe and secure manner.

Bluebird Early Learning Centre are also proud sponsors of Starlight Children's Foundation Australia



For any Childcare information, please contact:  
Education & Care Regulatory Unit, Ph: 6551 8333, Fax: 6552 1555,  
Country free call: 1800 199 383, Email: [ecru@dlgc.wa.gov.au](mailto:ecru@dlgc.wa.gov.au)

## 19. HEALTH EMERGENCIES

If during the day a child becomes ill, the parent will be contacted immediately **or**, if we are unable to contact the parent, we shall contact those person(s) listed on the Enrolment Form as emergency contact. Please list as many contacts as you can.

**It is essential that you inform us about any changes regarding address, telephone number and emergency contacts.**

Each educator holds a current first aid certificate, Anaphylaxis Training certificate and emergency Asthma training Certificate. All staff will supply a health certificate and Working With Children Check before commencement of employment. Parents are required to inform the Centre of any known conditions/sicknesses and supply necessary medication such as an epi-pen or asthma reliever.

Normally all medication is required to have written permission before it can be administered, however in the case of an emergency the Centre reserves the right of "Exclusion to Authorization" which means that our Staff may administer medicine to uphold our "Duty of Care" and prevent a life threatening situation.

## 20. EMERGENCY, EVACUATION & ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

Our priority is children and educator safety. Fire drills will be conducted quarterly and evaluated each time.

Procedure in case of fire or any other emergency is displayed in the Centre and the educators discuss these procedures at regular intervals.

Every educator will be aware of the number of children in their care at any one time.

Educators are expected to remain calm and heed instruction and carry them out efficiently and effectively without causing confusion and distress to the children. Attendance sheets to be taken when evacuating.

## **21. ILLNESS, INFECTION & INJURY**

1. In a group care situation, one of the most troublesome problems is to control the spread of infections among the children and educators. Every step possible is taken to prevent the spread of illness and infection.

It is generally accepted that seriously ill children will be excluded from a group child care program, although policies for the exclusion of mildly ill children are controversial and variable.

The reasons for exclusion of children are:

- To ensure that the child's comfort is met by one-to-one contact
- To prevent cross-infection of other children
- To prevent cross-infection of staff

2. Health regulations - The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012 State "...if there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at an education and care service, the approved provider of the service must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease at the service".

Parents and educators will be advised in the event of any communicable disease(s) identified in any child who attend the Centre. Extra through cleaning will be done if there is an outbreak of illness. We use the "Doterra on-guard cleaner" which is environmentally friendly and safe around children. When children are not around stronger cleaning agents may be used for the purpose of killing germs.

The Directors will have the final say as to whether or not a child will be excluded from the Centre taking into consideration the sick child, other children and staff.

3. Injury & Illness: If your child becomes ill or is injured at the Centre, every effort will be made to contact you, the parents or guardian. However, if the parents or guardian are not available, the Centre may take your child to the Centre's doctor or by ambulance to the hospital. In the enrolment form parents must sign declaring medical & ambulance coverage as this is your responsibility.

## **22. SUN CARE**

Bluebird Early Learning Centre promotes the Cancer Foundation's "Sun Smart" practises. Your child must wear a hat, sunscreen and protective clothing whilst outdoors. Educator's will ensure all children are wearing their hat and sunscreen before going outside and staff members will act as role models by also wearing a hat, sunscreen and protective clothing while outside.

Children are not permitted to play outside between 10am and 3 pm, unless the UVI (Ultra Violet Index) is 3 or lower. Educators will provide children with brief unrestricted outdoor play (between 10am and 3pm) during intervals of fine weather on an otherwise cold or wet days, or at times when some fresh air is needed for a few minutes.

## **23. IMMUNISATION**

We encourage the immunisation of all children attending our Centre. A child's immunisation record should be produced at enrolment. Children who are not immunised will be excluded from the Centre during an outbreak of infectious disease at the Centre. This policy exists to protect children who may be exposed to infectious disease because of close contact with other children at the Centre.

## **24. MEDICATION**

Parents are required to complete and sign a medication form. All details need to be filled out in full and then the form needs to be given to an Educator. Medication cannot be given without this authorisation however in the case of an emergency the Centre reserves the right of "Exclusion to Authorization" which means that our Staff may administer medicine to uphold our "Duty of Care" and prevent a life threatening situation.

Non-prescribed medications are not able to be given to the children by educators for more than one day unless there is a letter from a doctor approving this. All medications/creams etc must be given to an educator in the morning, and NOT left in the child's bag. Only Trained permanent educators in the centre will be responsible for administering the children's medication, however other educators are able to check the medication.

## **25. FOOD & NUTRITION**

We employ a Food Co-Ordinator whose duties includes providing nutritious and well balanced meals for the Children and will cater for individual needs of the Children. Meal times will provide positive learning experiences for the Children who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Parents/guardians will be consulted and asked to share family and multicultural values and experiences to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food planned to meet each Child's daily nutritional needs. Educator's sit with Children at meal times to provide positive conversations. We provide breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack.

You are requested not to give your Child any food to bring to the Centre, unless it has been organised with the Director. We ask that Parents please bring in formula tins and we will make up bottles as needed.

Please notify us if your Child has a special diet (e.g. vegetarian or for medical or religious reasons). Under special circumstances, we will ask that you provide the food. We also need to know of allergies, etc. The Daily Menu is displayed in the Foyer & Kitchen. Your input into the Centre Menu is welcome.

If your child's has a birthday at the centre you are welcome to supply a birthday cake for the children to share. Due to health and safety regulations, we ask that you supply a packet cake/muffin mix that the staff can make with the children OR bring in a shop bought cake with the ingredients listed and an expiry date. The cake that will be eaten by the children cannot be the same cake that the birthday child blows the candles out on. The birthday child may blow candles out on a **separate** cake or cupcake. This is to prevent the spread of germs from the blowing out of candles.

We will provide candles and the children and educators will sing Happy Birthday and have a small party for your child.

## **26. PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

All personal items brought into the Centre must be clearly labelled. We prefer if children do not bring their own toys to the Centre. The Centre will not be held responsible for them, although every care will be taken. They may also be taken from the child for the duration of the day, as the toy may result in conflict amongst the children.

## **27. WHAT IS NEEDED**

### **ON THE FIRST DAY:**

Your Enrolment form filled in

Your Child's Birth Certificate

Your Child's Immunisation Records

A pillow case if your Child has a day sleep. This will be kept and washed here.

### **EVERY DAY:**

A piece of fruit for our fruit bowl

A hat which is clearly labelled (to be brought in your Child's bag each day)

Two spare sets of clothes in your child's bag each day (if toilet training more -than this may be necessary)

Enough disposable nappies for the day (usually 4 nappies)

Bottles that are labelled and have a lid (please bring in formula tin)

Dummy or comforters (Fully Labelled)

A water bottle (to be taken home every day, washed and refilled for the next day).



*We take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Bluebird Early Learning Centre for the care of your Children. Our Educators look forward to getting to know you and your Children during your long and happy stay!*

*Please feel free to read through our Policy & Procedure files for additional information*