



NORTHGATE-GREENWITH

Child Care Centre & Kindergarten



Transitioning to Our Childcare

-a handbook for parents-

www.northgatechildcare.com.au

www.greenwithchildcare.com.au



We acknowledge the Koorng people.

We pay our respects to the elders who hold a deep connection to this land, its waterways and creatures, its history and its future.

The Early Years...

In Early Learning there is so much more than just care for your child—early years are paramount for a child’s emotional, cognitive and social development. Our aim is to provide your child/ren with a safe environment where they can develop a sense of Belonging and Wellbeing, a strong foundation for future success throughout their school years. This is why we are committed to providing high quality programs and curriculums to our families to support children’s learning from birth through to school age.

We believe in the importance of relationships between children, families and Educators. We focus on our centres’ communities so that we can support, nurture, educate and help our children to grow .

We look forward to joining you and your child through the adventure of these Early Years.

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“Welcoming children and their families into our community is one of our top priorities.”



Settling into Care...

At Northgate and Greenwith we understand that starting at a new Centre can be daunting and emotional for both you and your child. Ensuring that families feel confident and children feel safe and secure is a priority with Management and our Educators.

To help with your transition into Early Learning we encourage “Stay and Play” visits prior to your child beginning care. This helps children to bond and form attachments with the Educators and peers with the comfort of knowing that family is close by.

Our Educators value these visits as it gives them an insight into your child’s world. Educators can discuss with families likes and dislikes, cultural backgrounds and practices and favourite activities to integrate into our educational programs.

On the first day of care, Educators will welcome your child and make connections to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible. We aim to establish meaningful relationships between children, Educators and families. We encourage you to phone the Centre at any time of the day to discuss your child’s learning, activities and wellbeing. Furthermore, we provide a digital platform to provide interactive and meaningful communication. KeptMe is an e-portfolio app where families can receive photos and learning stories from their child’s day in real time.

Each child will have their own unique journey to settling in to Early Learning, and while we would like to assure you that it will only take a few weeks to fully settle in, reality proves that it could be shorter—or longer than this. Our job is to support your child to feel safe and secure until they can arrive at care confident and ready to play and learn!

When this occurs, we know we have made lasting and meaningful connections with our family.

Early Learning...

Our Centres' curriculums are based upon the National Quality Standards and the Early Learning Framework. These standards help to shape the curriculums across Australia in Education and Care services for children under the age of 12.

Our Educators understand that children's brains and neurological pathways develop faster in the early years than at any other time in life. They believe in the importance of a strong relationship and high quality interactions to help shape confidence and resilience, creating a strong foundation for social and emotional wellbeing.

Management and Educators at our Centres are committed to ongoing professional development to remain current in their program and teaching methods to ensure that each child is receiving the best practices for their developing minds.

We believe that children learn by play and we pride ourselves on providing interactive experiences for children of all ages to explore literacy and numeracy, while using communication with families to facilitate individual interests to coincide with their learning journey.

Information on your child's daily program is always available in our rooms. We also use the KeptMe app to allow parents to have immediate online access to their child's learning stories and observations. We value the input and feedback from our families as they connect and engage in the daily activities of their children.

Northgate and Greenwith strongly believe in the importance of open communication between families and Educators and always welcome discussions regarding children's development.



“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children Play is serious working.

Play is really the work of childhood.”

- Fred Rogers

We believe in the importance of a communicative relationship with our families; working together ensures the best foundations for children's success in Education, the Centre and in life.



Helping along the way...

We have found that working together with families is the best way to ensure the highest quality education for your child. By building strong and lasting relationships with us and your child's primary Educator we can then support you to build on your child's development at home.

Our Centres aim to become an extension of your home life and that cultures and activities observed by your family can be recognised and integrated into your child's early learning while at care.

To achieve this our Educators ask questions regarding interests, cultures, customs and family dynamics. This creates an atmosphere that feels safe and secure and encourages your child to be ready to learn.

"It takes a village to raise a child." Our Centres embrace the meaning of this African proverb. It takes the entire community of Educators, Family and Carers to interact with children in order for a child to experiment and grow in a safe environment.

Thank you for choosing us to be part of your child's village!

Subsidised Care and Government Assistance....

To help families with the cost of quality childcare and early education the Australian Government had devised a payment referred to as The Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This payment is paid directly to the service to reduce your weekly fees.

The Child Care Subsidy is determined by the following:

- A) A family's combined income which will determine the percentage of subsidy they are eligible to receive
- B) An activity test which will determine the amount of hours of subsidised care a family can access. (up to a maximum of 100 hours)

For the family to receive the Child Care Subsidy they must meet certain requirements:

- 1) the child must be 13 years of age or under and not attending secondary school
- 2) The child must meet immunisation requirements
- 3) The child's carers must meet residency requirements.

When applying for CCS, Centrelink will ask questions regarding the activity of both parents. In two parent families where each parent meets different steps of the activity test, the parent with the least activity will determine the amount of Child Care Subsidy hours. Other than standard work arrangements the test recognises the following:

- Leave from work (ie Maternity Leave, Long Service Leave, Parental leave)
- Unpaid work in a family business
- Voluntary work
- Actively looking for work
- Plus more

Families earning \$66958 or less per year who do not meet the activity test will have access to 24 hours per fortnight of subsidised care as part of the Child Care Safety Net.

HOURS OF ACTIVITY	HOURS OF SUBSIDY
FOR FAMILIES EARNING UP TO \$350,000	
8-16hrs	36hs/FN – 18hrs/week
>16-48hrs	72hrs/FN
>48 hrs	100hrs/FN



More Information about the Child Care Subsidy and Activity Test can be found at www.education.gov.au/ChildCarePackage.

It is the parent's responsibility to register for Child Care Subsidy. This can be done by contacting Centrelink either via phone on 136 150, in person or via their MyGov account at my.gov.au.

Making the most of your Child Care Subsidy...

Our Centres do this by offering flexible hours of care to our full time enrolments.

All attendances for our full time enrolments are submitted as a 10 hour day whilst maintaining the flexibility of the 12 hour day and do not attract any penalty fees.

This ten hour session of care is designed to further reduce out of pocket expenses by ensuring all hours of care utilised are subsidised thereby maximising Child Care Subsidy.

“I never teach my pupils,
I only provide the conditions
in which they can learn.”

~Albert Einstein



Payment of Fees...

Upon enrolling at one of our Centres you will be asked to pay a non refundable holding fee equivalent to the amount of our daily fee. This is not a bond but ensures a position with the Centre is held for you. Payment can be made by EFTPOS or Credit Card and upon commencement of care this fee will be credited to your account.

All ongoing fees are paid by Direct Debit on Monday for the previous week's attendance. If a Direct Debit is dishonoured a \$15.00 dishonour fee will be charged and a message sent to the primary account holder to arrange payment to prevent the account from going into arrears.

All children's booked days, including public holidays and absent days must be paid to retain your child's place. Late pick up fees will be charged for children who are collected after our closing time of 6.30pm.

To cancel an enrolment we require two weeks' written notice. Failure to provide this will require two weeks' payment of unsubsidised fees. Children must attend their last enrolled day to comply with the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). In the event that your child is absent on their last day at the Centre, the CCSS will retrieve the subsidy for the last day of non attendance 8 weeks later and your account will be adjusted to owe the full daily fee.

Please refer to the fee policy for all conditions of payment and cancellation of care.

Centre Security...

The safety of our children is paramount and as such our Centres are fitted with modern security devices to ensure that unknown people can not enter the premises.

Our doors are fitted with video intercom for visitors and delivery drivers entering the Centre. Once enrolled each family is given an individual code for entry into the building and our corridors are fitted with video surveillance. Each child will be digitally signed in and out of the Centre on each day that they attend. This is a legal requirement and in the best interest of your child.

This digital system enables us to know exactly which children are in the Centre at any given time and allows for efficient evacuations if required.

Each family can nominate who can drop off and collect their children on their enrolment form. Each nominated person will be given authority through our computer system and will create their personalised pin on their first time of signing in or out. This is now a legal requirement.

Upon arrival to the Centre we ask that you:

- with your child, greet the Educators in your room
- Sign your child in using the Kiosk iPad
- Write who is collecting your child and at what time on a daily children's list
- Say goodbye to your child and leave them with the Educators in their room.

Upon Collection we ask you to

- Come into the room to greet your child
- Collect your child's belongings
- With your child say goodbye to the Educator in charge & check on your child's day
- Sign out using the Kiosk iPad.

To ensure the safety of our children, no child will be released into the care of any person who is not written down to collect your child that day. If the collecting person changes throughout the day we ask that you phone our office to advise us so that we may change it on record. If we have not received word of the change we will not release the child until we have spoken to the person initially nominated to collect. If the person collecting your child has not done so before they will need to bring photo identification to verify their identity before collecting.

Please keep the above in mind when sending someone new to collect your child. We would rather an inconvenience to the person collecting than risk the safety of our children.

Please see our Arrival and Departure policy for further clarification.



You Are Always Welcome!

We encourage and welcome families to come in and participate in your child's activities - a sense of community is an important part of Early Learning.

We have an open door policy which means you don't need to make an appointment to come in and see your child or their Educators.

We value your involvement with daily activities.

Early Years Learning Framework...

Research confirms that quality educational programs significantly influence children's growth and development through play based learning. Our learning programs also incorporate input from our families, their cultures and the children themselves. This input encourages the children to feel safe and secure while investigating, being curious and exploring an understanding of themselves, others and the world around them.

Under National Law and associated Regulations, approved services are required to base their Educational programs on an approved learning framework. The programs should focus on addressing the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, while taking into account the individual differences of each child. The framework we use to outline children's practices that support and promote learning is

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

This framework includes principles, practices and learning outcomes that guide Educational Leaders and Educators in their curriculum decision making and assist them in planning, delivering and evaluating quality programs in Early Childhood.

The program will provide a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences and materials that are selected to achieve the following goals:

- Foster positive self-concept
- Develop social skills
- Encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment
- Encourage language development
- Enhance physical development and skills
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutritional practices
- Encourage creative expression
- Respect cultural diversity of staff and children
- Respect gender diversity

School Readiness...

Both Centres offer an extensive Kindergarten Preschool program to support school readiness through play-based learning offering children experiences that incorporate a focus on :

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Language

through storytelling, access to story books, lending library, letters and sounds (using Jolly Phonics which support our local schools), number recognition, sorting and counting experiences.

Our children have access to touch screen tablets that support programs to further enhance numeracy, literacy, shape and colour recognition.

In addition, children's interests are developed through experiences such as bubble printing, ramp rolling, water walls, construction, gardening projects, and cooking.



**“Play is the answer to how
anything new comes about.”
~Jean Piaget**

National Quality Framework...

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is a government initiative designed to encourage continuous improvement creating greater consistency for early childhood education and care services across Australia.

Importantly it sets out a series of National Quality Standards (NQS) against which all Early Childhood Education and Care Services will be assessed and given a rating.

The seven Quality Areas are:

Quality Area 1—Educational programs and practices

Quality Area 2—Children’s health and safety

Quality Area 3—The physical environment

Quality Area 4—Staffing arrangements

Quality Area 5—Relationships with children

Quality Area 6—Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Quality Area 7—Leadership and service management

Our Centre policies and procedures are built on these key seven areas. It is a requirement of the regulatory authorities that we look critically at Centre policies and have in place plans to seek Improvement – Quality Improvement Plans (QIP). These will look at areas such as collaborative partnerships with families and communities, relationships with children, staffing, physical environment, educational programs and most importantly – children’s health and safety.

Parents can play an important role in this process by offering feedback about any areas they feel could be improved. All Centre QIPs are displayed at the entrance to the Centres. We encourage you to take a moment of your time to read them.

To help maintain the highest possible care for your child our Centres have a number of policies and procedures.

Families can view these at any time in the foyer of either Centre and they are also available on our Parental Skoolbag App.



Environment & Play Spaces...

Our daily routines involve a multitude of activities, from storytelling and group time, art, dance, drama, music, free play and simultaneous indoor and outdoor play. Educators provide great learning spaces within their rooms which are tailored to suit the age and development stages of our children.

Each of our age groups has an individual outdoor play space which includes lots of natural environment such as trees, plants and sustainable gardens. In keeping with our environmental policy we also actively incorporate recycled items and each outdoor space, with toddlers through to kindergarten having their own rainwater tanks. Some of our Educators are incorporating Environmental learning into their outdoor play with compost, worm farms and vegetable gardens.

As our children grow and develop so do their abilities, interests and needs. Each child will automatically transition to the next room when ready, to be challenged with new experiences of the new age groups.

Transitioning to a new room can be exciting and sometimes daunting for our children. To encourage a smooth transfer we provide short visits to start with and extend these over time. All transitions include communication with families and an assessment of each child to ensure that they are ready for the move.



Sustainable Practices

Our Centres have a “Green Team” comprised of 4 Educators who generate ideas and opportunities for our children to participate in sustainable practices.

We have an environmental policy which includes using recycled resources, water conservation, sustainable gardens and more.

If you have any ideas or would like to be involved speak with our friendly office staff!

Extra Curricular Activities

From time to time we will provide a range of activities such as:

- Dance
- Exercise
- Zumba
- Languages
- Sport

we do not arrange excursions outside the centre, but we do offer “incursions” involving have performers and shows visiting the Centre, for example:

- Farm Animals (ie Darcy’s Farm)
- Magic Shows
- Aboriginal Performances
- Music Shows
- Interactive shows (ie Dr Hubble's Bubbles)
- Puppet Shows (ie Drumming Monkeys)
- Police/Metropolitan Fire Service Visits



“The future belongs to those who believe
In the beauty of their dreams.”

~Eleanor Roosevelt

Policies and Procedures...

To help maintain the highest possible care for your child we have a number of policies and procedures that detail the day to day running of the Centres. The comprehensive Centre Policy Manual is available at all times in the foyer of either Centre and is also available on our Skoolbag App.

Parents and families are always invited to make suggestions regarding policies and these suggestions will be considered when the Manual is next reviewed. A draft copy of our policies and procedures is always released for perusal before final printing.

Following is a brief review of some of the policies we believe parents would be most interested in when choosing a centre.

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

We have a duty of care to ensure that all children, educators, carers, families, management, volunteers and visitors are provided with the highest level of safety. Every Educator has current Senior First Aid, CPR and Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications. At all times throughout the Centre we have a nominated Senior First Aid Officer available to attend to any incidents or accidents.

In the case of an illness or incident, Educators will administer any necessary first aid and parents will be contacted to collect their child. If the Senior First Aid Officer deems the severity of the illness too urgent to wait for collection or GP visit, an ambulance will be phoned to attend (please note that this is at the cost of the parent as per our Ambulance Policy). During such an emergency if a parent/carer or authorised nominee cannot be contacted the Nominated Supervisor will provide information regarding the child to the ambulance officers and an Educator known to the child will accompany the child to the hospital until the parent/caregiver arrives. Full documentation of incidents will be available for family review.

HEALTH & HYGEINE

Educators actively teach and practice good personal hygiene to minimise the occurrence or spread of illness. Our Centres believe that if a child is ill the best place for them to be is home where they can rest and recover quickly.

If a child presents ill while at our Centre the Nominated Supervisor may advise that they are not well enough to stay and the parent/caregiver will be asked to collect and make other arrangements for the day or until the exclusion period has ended. A medical clearance letter may be required for a child to return. While we understand that this can be an inconvenience to working families it is in the best interests of all our children and families to minimise the spread of disease and infection. Our policies and exclusion periods are guided by "Staying Healthy in Childcare - 5th edition."

MEDICATION

Any medication required to be administered whilst in our care must be in original packaging and accompanied by a prescription and medication plan completed by a doctor which states who the medication is for and when it is to be administered. Medication should be handed to staff upon arrival for safe storage and instruction and taken home at the end of the day. Under no circumstances is

medication to be left in your child's bag or on premises overnight. Please see our Medication Policy for further clarification.

IMMUNISATION

In January 2016, the Commonwealth introduced a policy of "No Jab, No Pay", meaning that families with children in child care who do not have them vaccinated will no longer be eligible for child care entitlements and family assistance payments. There are exceptions for children recorded with medical contraindication or natural immunity for certain diseases and those on a recognised catch up schedule. Our Centres adhere to these regulations.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Both Northgate and Greenwith Centres regularly practice Emergency Fire Evacuations and Lock Down drills. Each Centre has individual plans for such emergencies and Greenwith has an additional Bushfire Emergency Plan.

Participating in drills allows Educators and children to form a routine so that in the case of a real emergency evacuation can be carried out automatically and as efficiently and calmly as possible. As part of our evacuation measures all children are accounted for from our electronic sign ins which emphasises the importance of signing in and out every day.

NUTRITION

We understand the importance of a balanced nutritional diet for growing minds and bodies and play a supporting role in providing this to our children. We have cooks on site who prepare healthy nutritious meals for our children and over the years have been certified and involved in programs such as "Start Right, Eat Right" and "Eat a Rainbow". Educators integrate healthy eating into daily curriculums to help children understand the importance of a balanced diet.

We also offer vegetarian meals and can alter meals to suit dietary/cultural restrictions.

MULTICULTURALISM

At our Centres we recognise many different cultures and are sensitive to the diversity of practices within our families. We want all our families to have a sense of belonging within our Centres and our community and encourage input regarding celebrations and important dates throughout the year such as Diwali (the Indian Festival of Lights), Chinese New Year, Christmas and regular participation in Harmony Day. We incorporate multiculturalism into our every day practices by providing a range of music, singing, incursions, play equipment and more!



From Newborns to School Age we want our children to look back on their care as a fun and memorable time with love.

We want our families to feel that we have been the village that has helped shape their children into the confident inquisitive learners that they are.

SUN PROTECTION

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Research has indicated that young children and babies have sensitive skin that places them at particular risk of sunburn and skin damage. Exposure during the first 15 years of life can greatly increase the risk of developing skin cancer in later life. Early Childhood Services play a major role in minimising a child's UV exposure as children attend care when UV radiation levels are highest.

To help combat the risks of overexposure to the sun we will apply the following:

OUTDOOR PLAY

- From August to April when UV is 3 or over, sun protection is required at all times.
- Extra sun protection is needed between 11am and 3pm and during this period outdoor activities will be minimised. Minimising outdoor activities includes reducing both the number of times (frequency) and the length of time (duration) children are outside.
- From April to September (excluding June and July) outdoor activity can take place at any time, however UV levels will be checked and if above 3 sunscreen will be applied.
- Sun protection measures will be considered when planning incursions.

HATS

- Staff and children are required to wear sun safe hats that protect their face, neck and ears.
- A sun safe hat can be a legionnaire hat, bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm) or a broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm).
- **Please note: Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.**
- Children without a sun safe hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. veranda or indoors).

CLOTHING

- When outdoors, Educators and children will wear sun safe clothing that covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible.
- This includes wearing: loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline, longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.
- Children who are not wearing sun safe clothing will be required to play under the verandah or in the shade.

SUNSCREEN

Staff and children will apply SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours. Sunscreen is not required unless UV is 3 or above.



Early Learning is so much more than just care. It is the foundation on which the rest of the schooling years are based; it is the beginning of “Why”, of “How” and “What if”; it is encouraging an interest and inquisitiveness that will last a lifetime.

