



PARENT HANDBOOK

Mission Statement

Adventure Pathways Early Learning is an Education & Care service that meets the needs of the local Community. We endeavour to create a family orientated, warm, and friendly environment, where the educators are committed to providing excellence in care and education for the children, having your children feel safe and secure in a fun-loving atmosphere. We are committed to being accessible to all families, providing a safe and nurturing environment, with our warm family friendly feel. Children and families have a common desire for learning and approach the world in an ethical way.

Philosophy

At Adventure Pathways ELC we believe in providing children with the highest quality care, allowing every child to reach their full potential and have a smooth transition into school. We strive to provide a highly positive and stimulating environment where all members, including children, educators and families are made to feel welcome. Our service is committed to working with the framework, the National Quality Standards and implementing our Quality Improvement Plan

The Early Years Learning Framework

We acknowledge that each child's knowledge, ideas and culture, interests and abilities are the foundation of the program, every child is supported to participate in the program so that each child's agency is promoted. Such promotion is implemented by responding to children's ideas and play as well as upholding intentional teaching methods that scaffold and extend each child's learning. We value the importance of play because through play, children can explore and express and especially let their creative side be seen. Our program also promotes children's various skills through daily routines, such as structured/unstructured experiences and indoor/outdoor play. We especially focused on language programs, sports, music and literacy and numeracy, which are organised in ways that maximize each child's learning. Each child's learning and development are assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of documentation and evaluation. The program understands that decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, community, wellbeing, learning and communication.

For Families

All families are welcome and provided with warmth and care just as much as their child. Parents are encouraged to communicate openly and make suggestions or comments about the service. Connecting with families allows us to have a better understanding of the children, thus having a much richer relationship with them. We provide opportunities to engage in family input in various ways, such as a communication book, online apps, and most importantly direct communications with the Approved Provider.

For Educators

Educators work with integrity and trust, with children and families and each other. Educators are thoughtful and reflective, taking time for themselves to recharge, so their practises are at their full potential. We also provide the opportunity for educators to extend their professional development through attending appropriate training and in services. In our service, educators develop personal skills and caring attitudes in a positive atmosphere of mutual respect. All educators work within the Framework and must be versed in the Child Safe Standards.

Community and Culture

The service understands that it is part of a broader community. We value families, their cultural beliefs, and ways of being and doing. Educators strive to introduce and include opportunities to explore our community and the cultures within it. We provide opportunities to explore our community and the cultures within it. We provide opportunities for incursions and excursions, which recognise the importance of community, for example visiting the local library or post office.

Sustainability

At Happy Sunshine ELC we promote increased awareness of the environmental responsibilities to contribute to a sustainable, cleaner future by making eco-friendly decisions. We encourage the concept of '*Reduce, Reuse and Recycle*' this is promoted in our everyday practices and the resources we use. Sustainability is about empowering children and investing in their future by recycling, gardening, use of worm farms, conserving water and re-using products. As children are our future, they need to feel positive about the future as they are introduced to explore aspects of nature and given opportunities to learn sustainable practices.

Hours of Use

Upon enrolment, parents are required to indicate the hours of care that they will require. These are negotiated according to each family's work/study hours and travelling times. Staff rosters are worked out according to the number of children present at the centre at times. We are required to abide by strict staff: child ratios under the National Regulations. It is, therefore, mandatory that families use only the hours negotiated on enrolment. Hours can be renegotiated if work or study hours change.

Authorised Nominees to Collect Children

Only parents/ guardians and authorised nominees are permitted to collect your child from our centres. Children will not be released into the care of persons not nominated on the enrolment form unless written authorisation is received from the parent. For safety reasons, we will request photo identification from any authorised nominee unknown to our staff.

Under no circumstances will we release a child to any persons under the age of 18 years.

Custody Arrangements

Any parent not subject to any relevant court order may have access to his or her child at any time during the hours that the child is in care and receive information about the child on an ongoing basis. Certified copies of any court orders regarding custody and access arrangements must be provided on enrolment.

If any changes occur with the court order, please notify the centre director immediately.

Orientation

We offer every parent an orientation process, to actively involve you and your child into our service. This is usually a 1-hour time frame as many times as you feel is needed, before your child starts and to help you child settle into the room and be able to separate from you the parent/guardian and know that you will be back.

Fee Policy & Structure

Our policy at Adventure Pathways Early Learning is that all families pay their fees one week in advance always. (this includes the current week plus one). The parent must then continue to pay the weekly fee in advance to maintain a credit balance equivalent to one week of fees.

- All payments must be made via debit success and all families must complete a debit success form upon enrolment. Requests are carefully assessed and not guaranteed to be approved. Our centre will not accept cash payments.
- If you are planning holidays, an email to the centre of dates leaving and returning is required. This form must be filled out two weeks prior to the holiday absence to receive half price fees for discount during the financial year.
- All children's booked days, including public holidays and absent days must be paid to retain your booking. Late fees are charged if children remain in the centre after 6.30pm at a rate of \$1 a minute.
- Two weeks' notice is required if you wish to cancel a booking. Failure to do so will require parents to pay two weeks full fees. All accounts must be finalised by this time as any outstanding account will be forwarded to a debt collection agency.

Adventure Pathways ELC Fees

Daily Fees

- \$145.00
- 10 Hour Fee – \$120.00
- 9 hours fee-\$100.00

Absences

Please let us know if your child will not be attending the centre on their usual days because of illness, holidays, or other reasons. A quick email or phone call is all that is required to reassure us that your child is safe.

Please note that fees are payable for all absences. Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will continue to be applied for up to 42 absent days in a financial year.

Illness

The centre is not the best place for a child who is feeling unwell. Often, they just want to be quiet and with a family member who can provide the extra attention that they need at this time.

Furthermore, the proximity of children and staff in any childcare centre can increase the cross-infections, despite stringent hygiene procedures.

Anyone displaying symptoms of infectious disease, including vomiting and diarrhoea will be excluded from the centre for the period recommended in the 'Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education & care services (5th Edition)'. A letter from a medical Practitioner stating the person is no longer infectious is required before being allowed to return to the centre.

It is extremely important that parents inform the centre director if their child has been confirmed to have an infectious disease. This will allow us to implement appropriate strategies to ensure the safety of all users of the service.

If an infectious disease has been confirmed, the centre will notify all families via email and centre front door detailing the condition. Strict confidentiality will be maintained when conveying this information.

A child who has been prescribed antibiotics for an illness is excluded from the centre for 24 hrs from administering the first dosage.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you and make the child as comfortable as possible until you can come and collect him/her. Details of the illness will be recorded on the centre's 'Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness' form and a copy provided to you for your records.

Medications

Medications will only be given under the following conditions:

- The centre medication form is completed and signed by Parent/Guardian, including all relevant details of the medication to be administered.
- All medications must be in its original container with a pharmaceutical label clearly showing
 1. Child's Name o Name of Medication
 2. Specific Administration Instructions
 3. Dispensary and Expiry Date

Under no circumstances is any type of medication to be left in children's bags or lockers. Please hand all medications to a staff member and complete the medication form.

Medical Conditions Plan

A 'Medical Management Plan' prepared by a Medical Practitioner must be provided to the centre director if your child has a medical condition, including an allergy or asthma.

If medication is required as part of the management plan, please ensure it is left at the centre whilst your child is in our care.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the centre director if there is any change to the plan and to update it at least once annually.

Accidents and Injuries

Adventure Pathways Early Learning Centre has stringent measures in place to ensure the safety of the children. However, accidents can occur.

In the case of a minor injury, details will be recorded on the centre's 'Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness' form. A copy will be provided to the parent to read and sign when they come and collect the child. In some cases, the staff may call the parent following an incident just as a courtesy to let them know what has happened. The parent will only be asked to collect the child if deemed necessary.

In case of an incident that requires treatment beyond basic first aid, every effort will be made to contact parents and/or emergency contacts nominated on the enrolment form. Medical advice, including calling an ambulance, will be sought if necessary. It is a condition of enrolment that parental agreement to this procedure is provided on the Enrolment Form. Any medical/transport costs incurred, including ambulance costs, will be at the parent's expense.

Parent Grievances

We are here to ensure that your child is happy and healthy in our care. If there are any concerns, please let us know! We have a grievance procedure in the foyer.

By following this procedure, it gives those involved an opportunity to address any issues and ensure that your concerns are followed through and you are satisfied with the result and the course of action taken. All grievances are taken very seriously, and we will always ensure the resolution is discussed with the family involved.

"Adventure Pathways Early Learning Centre is a Family Setting"

"Separation anxiety is a normal stage in a child's life."

Introducing your child to Adventure Pathways family can be an emotional time, especially if it's your child's first time in care. It is fair to expect some tears when saying goodbye in the early days; however, there are many ways to transition them for the first time or starting at a new childcare. Prepare your child by attending our orientation programme, for an hour or two a

week to familiarise your child with our educators and your child's routines in their new environment.

This is also a great opportunity for you to spend time with your child's educators and centre who are looking forward to supporting your child and your family, so their care experience can be a positive time reducing some of the anxiety around separating from parents on their days in care. Please speak with our centre director to discuss when the most suitable time for you and your child is to visit. At our centre we work with our families and their routines. Please understand that you are required to stay on the premises during your visit, you are welcome to enjoy a coffee and a read through our centre information available.

On your child's first day it is a good idea to allow plenty of time to settle your child. On arrival, please put away your child's bag where appropriate (if not sure, please ask an educator to assist you). If your child is able please assist them to do this themselves, this is a great opportunity to foster their self-help skills. If time permits, sit with your child and assist them to transition to their new environment and engage in an activity. Communication between parent, child and educator is crucial in helping your child and family to adjust. Any messages or instructions for the day as well as giving them an approximate time for your return to the centre.

When it is time for you to leave, we encourage you to say goodbye to your child and let them know when you will be back, even if your child is upset, say goodbye and leave. This will help build trust between you and your child. One of our educators will assist by reassuring your child and engage them in another activity as you leave. They will continue to support your child and encourage them to participate in the fun and exciting activities programmed for the day. Please do not hesitate to phone our centre to see how your child has settled as many times as you need. The easiest way for your child to understand when you will return is by linking this to their routine. For example, by telling them I will be back after your sleep or after afternoon tea etc.

It is important that you return when you have said you would, if you are going to be late, please let the centre know and we will explain this to your child. 'Separation Anxiety' is normal during early childhood and occurs when a child becomes upset when separated from a parent / guardian.

In relation to Families

We see families as partners in the children's learning process and their input in all parts of the program is encouraged, supported and valued. We believe that individual differences should be celebrated on an everyday basis throughout the learning environment.

In relation to Children

We believe and understand that children develop in many ways. But for all children they learn in their environment that's safe, secure and confident. This way we are giving all children a sense of belonging.

Our program is built on the Children's Strengths and abilities and their interests. Through this we can promote learning and a positive sense of themselves.

Policies & Procedures

Adventure Pathways Early Learning has developed a wide range of policies and procedures in line with the National Quality Standard.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education and care services.

The NQS is divided into 7 areas that contribute to the quality of early childhood education and care:

- Educational Program and Practice
- Children's Health and Safety
- The Physical Environment
- Staffing Arrangements
- Relationships with Children
- Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Leadership and Service Management

The policies are reviewed regularly in collaboration with all staff and families. Your comments are important to us, so please feel free to provide any feedback on any of the policies.

A copy of the policy handbook is available for you to view in our foyer.

Change of details

It is extremely important that we are informed if there is change to the information provided on the enrolment form. This applies to all contact details and health requirements. Please email any changes to the centre director.

Signing Children in and out

Your child must be signed in and out of our Service every day they attend through the kiosk, this located at the front office. This is a legal requirement and must be followed. The sign in and out records are used for emergencies and for the calculation of CCS (Child Subsidy).

If a child is away for a booked day, absent because they are unwell or on holidays or if their booked day occurs on a public holiday the corresponding days must be signed for by the parent or guardian.

Please ensure our educators are aware that your child is arriving / departing, and you must complete the 'sign in and out process on the kiosk' ensuring you are documenting the time you arrived and the time you leave.

Emergency Care

Sometimes parents may need emergency care in addition to regular attendance days. This can be arranged with the centre director providing a vacancy exists at the time that care is needed.

Cancelling or Changing an Enrolment

Written notice to the centre must be provided if you wish to terminate or change your child's enrolment and/or booked days. For notices provided outside these dates a two-week notice period applies. Please note that Child Care Subsidy is not payable beyond a child's last physical attendance at the centre. Full fees will apply if you choose not to send your child during the notice period.

Priority of Access and Multicultural and Equity Policy

The Australian Government has Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating places in a long day care centre. They set out the following three (3) levels of priority:

- PRIORITY 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- PRIORITY 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies or of parents who both satisfy the work / study / training test
- PRIORITY 3 – any other child

Immunisation

From 1 January 2018, only children who are fully immunised for their age OR have a medical reason not to be immunised OR are on a catchup schedule can be enrolled in childcare. Children who have not been immunised due to their parent's vaccine conscientious objection cannot be enrolled in childcare.

Before Enrolment, Parents must provide the Centre Director an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) History Statement (that shows a child is up to date or can't be immunised for medical reasons) OR an AIR Immunisation History Form (that shows a child is on a recognised catch-up schedule).

Parents can request a copy of their child's AIR Immunisation History Statement at any time (up to their child being 14 years of age):

- using their Medicare online account through myGov <https://my.gov.au/>
- using the Medicare Express Plus App www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/express-plus-mobile-apps
- Calling the AIR General Enquiries Line on 1800 653 809

The Program

Our Qualified educators provide stimulating and involving experiences which develop each child's skills allowing them to achieve positive outcomes. A fortnightly program is displayed in each room for you to view, please take time to discuss this with your child's educator. Our programs reflect planned experiences from observations of children and child-initiated experiences. Our programs are flexible and adaptable to meet the individual and group interests, talents, and abilities.

Children have the opportunity for both indoor and outdoor play as part of each room's routine. Routines allow time for individual, small, and large group play. Children's language and literacy skills

are further developed during this time with social interactions that involve children in storytelling, drama, poems, and games. Music also plays a large part in these sessions as children can experiment with dancing, singing, and exercising their bodies. We ensure your child is an active learner by creating an environment that is challenging and stimulating where children can explore and experiment through play.



National Quality Framework

The Australian Government understands that parents want the best for their children. An important part of this is ensuring that quality early childhood education and care makes a positive contribution to children's learning and provides the building blocks for a brighter future. The National Quality Framework balances improved quality with maintaining affordability for families. The Australian Government will continue to provide childcare payments to reduce out-of-pocket costs for families who use Child Care Benefit approved childcare. Quality children's education and care is where children are happy, engaged and learning with qualified educators who are nurturing and caring.

Valuing children's play

Within the Early Childhood field our service plays a tremendous role in the life of children. We have the power to offer children a miraculous gift daily including opportunities for a healthy, happy and productive life. The most influential gift we will present to your child is the healthy concept of play, including how to be successful at play with peers. Healthy play is an integral part of a child's growth and development.

The benefits are

- Enhances a child's dexterity
- Promotes social skills
- Sharpens cognitive and language skills
- Encourages spatial understanding
- Develops cause and effect reasoning

- Clarifies pretend and real
- Enriches sensory and aesthetic appreciation
- Extends attention span, play persistence and self-mastery
- Helps to release emotions

Educators and teachers are purposeful in their teaching.

They consider

- Being intentional to reflect the guiding principles and practice of the EYLF.
- Everyday practices that may be ingrained, to enable recognition of them as intentional
- Promoting intentional teaching practice to families and the wider community.

Intentional teaching is characterised by educators taking the lead in deliberately and purposefully initiating and selecting a specific aspect, or aspects of learning to focus on. The educator decides to do something with a purpose in mind. Typically, this involves thoughtful planning-focusing on a learning outcome and deciding a strategy way to support children's progress towards them.

As part of our planning process your child will be given a folder which will have their documented learning throughout their journey with us at Happy Sunshine Early Learning. This folder is available for you to look at, at any time.

Our Service has a non -discriminatory access policy which ensures children of different needs, religion, cultural and ethnic backgrounds are treated equally. Their needs are accommodated, and their diversity of background is respected. Inclusion in childcare services reflects the acceptance in society of the principles of social justice – that children of all ability levels and cultural and ethnic backgrounds have the same intrinsic value and are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare.

The benefits for inclusion can be:

- The opportunity to participate in the typical experiences of childhood
- The opportunity to be with other children and form friendships and develop other social skills
- The opportunity for natural learning of skills in real situations
- The opportunity to gain understanding about the diversity of people in the community
- The opportunity to gain skills and confidence to pursue inclusion in other settings
- Access to peer models

Preschool Program (3-5yrs)

Happy Sunshine has a Kinder program for children aged 3-5 years. These programs are developed and implemented by Early Childhood trained Teachers with the focus of equipping children with skills that they will need to make a successful start at school.

Our Program is designed to foster the following areas of development.

Personal and Interpersonal Development

- An ability to form satisfying and happy friendships with other children
- An ability to work and play as part of a group, with the accompanying skills of cooperation, respect for others, sharing and turn-taking
- Recognition of self-worth as unique individuals
- A feeling of security and acceptance, which will lead them to take their rightful place in their family and community with confidence

Curiosity, Logical Inquiry and Mathematical Thinking

- An active, inquiring attitude towards learning
- An acquisition of skills: listening, questioning, observing and problem solving
- A broadening base of general knowledge of the world around us

Language and Literacy Development

- A love of books and poetry as a basis for reading-readiness
- Effective communication through vocabulary expansion, listening and asking questions
- The continued growth of clear speech patterns

Creative Skills

- To able to express one-self in one's own way using a wide variety of material
- To develop children's creative skills and aesthetic awareness
- To develop an appreciation of creativity of others

Physical Development

- The development of both gross and fine motor skills
- The confidence to try new physical activities

Positive Transition to School (School Readiness)

Our Kinder children are preparing for the adventure of a lifetime in school. Whilst our program provides children with essential skills from the day when they first walk through the doors of Happy Sunshine Early Learning, the last year of preschool is used to hone-in on these skills

- Have good eye-hand coordination skills (handling a scissor, correct pencil grip, using a ruler and so on.)
- Acquire basic understanding in numeracy and literacy concepts. In conjunction with the curriculum areas described in our Program, during the 3rd and 4th term we talk to the children about commencing school we also incorporate the following specific school readiness activities:
- Talking with children about school and encouraging them to ask questions or voice their concerns about school
- Arranging visits to local schools
- Reading stories about starting school o Including school props such as uniforms, bags, lunch boxes and chalk boards in dramatic play areas

- Supporting children to develop their self-help and social skills – looking after the belongings, being able to have the confidence to asking for help when necessary, resolving conflicts with peers, self-help skills in dressing, toileting, opening lunch boxes etc
- During this time, we work closely with families to ensure there is consistency between home and the centre in preparing children for school. As well as one-on-one discussions with families, we also plan information to discuss school readiness.

Childcare Fee Assistance (CCS)

CCS is a payment from the Government that will provide financial assistance towards the cost of your child's care and reduce the cost of your total childcare fees. It is available to you if you are a parent, foster parent or grandparent with a child in your care who is attending a childcare program approved by the Government. There are certain requirements you need to meet to be eligible for CCS. Until your CCS has been approved and has commenced, we will require full payment of your child's early learning and care fees.

The Australian Government may provide financial assistance towards the cost of your child's care. If you would like to access this assistance, you will need to complete the Child Care Subsidy assessment with Centrelink by following the below steps:

What you should know about the Child Care Subsidy?

There are three key factors that will determine how much Child Care Subsidy families may receive:

The combined family income – how much families earn

Your fortnightly family activity level – how much families work, train, study or volunteer.

Sign in to your MyGov account. If you don't have one, you will need to create a myGov account at <https://my.gov.au>. Work through the steps to provide any new information and confirm your current details.

CCS - Initial Absence Days

Like most early learning centres and preschools, your child's place is reserved when they are away, so the day still needs to be paid for. Each financial year, the Family Assistance Office will pay your child's CCS entitlements for the first 42 absence days. These absences can be for any reason, including public holidays, and the initial 42 days must be used before any additional absences can be claimed (please see below).

CCS - Additional Absence Days

You may receive CCS for absence days after the initial 42 days each financial year. For all absences beyond the first 42 absent days, CCS will only be paid if you are able to provide evidence to demonstrate the absence has occurred under permitted circumstances. There is no limit on these days, but you will be required to provide documentation to support the absence.

Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome! We've put together a list of some of the most common questions we receive from families. If you don't find the answer you're looking for, please don't hesitate to contact us directly.

Q: What are your opening hours?

A: We are open from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM, Monday to Friday, all year round, except for public holidays.

Q: What age groups do you cater for?

A: We provide care and education for children from 6 weeks to 6 years of age. Our programs are tailored to the specific developmental needs of each age group.

Q: What is included in the daily fee?

A: Our daily fee is all-inclusive. It covers all meals (breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, and a late snack), nappies, sunscreen, and all educational programs and materials. There are no additional costs for incursions or special events.

Q: Are your educators qualified?

A: Yes, all our educators are highly qualified and experienced. We meet and exceed the National Quality Framework (NQF) requirements, with our team holding or working towards a Certificate III, Diploma, or Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood). Our staff also participate in ongoing professional development.

Q: How do you support a child's transition into the centre?

A: We believe in a gentle and personalised transition. We encourage families to attend a series of orientation sessions before their child's first official day. These sessions allow your child to get to know our educators and their new environment at their own pace.

Q: What is your approach to early learning and development?

A: Our curriculum is based on the National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and focuses on play-based learning. We encourage children to explore, discover, and learn through intentional teaching and spontaneous activities that are guided by their interests.

Q: Do you provide meals, and can you cater to dietary requirements?

A: Our in-house cook prepares fresh, nutritious meals daily. We have a seasonal menu that is approved by a paediatric dietitian. We can cater to all dietary needs, allergies, and cultural requirements.

Q: How do you communicate with parents about their child's day?

A: We use a digital platform to provide real-time updates, photos, and observations of your child's day. We also have face-to-face chats at drop-off and pick-up and hold parent-teacher interviews throughout the year.

Q: What security measures do you have in place?

A: The safety of our children is our top priority. Our centre has secure, coded access at the front door, and only authorised family members can pick up a child. All staff hold current Working with Children Checks. Additionally, we have installed 11 CCTV cameras for indoor and outdoor activities monitoring.

Q: How do I enrol my child?

A: The first step is to book a tour of our centre. This is a great opportunity to meet our team, see our facilities, and ask any further questions. After the tour, you can complete our enrollment form online.