



sandcastles
nursery, long day care centre and preschool



Parent Handbook
Part 2 - Guide to daily practices

(Last updated November 2011)

Contact details and hours for each centre are located on back cover

Welcome to Sandcastles . . .

*We look forward to having your child at our centre
and to ensuring that he/she has
the best possible experience each and every day.*



Starting childcare

We understand that starting childcare can be a little unsettling for your child and the whole family. We endeavour to make the transition as smooth as possible for you. To support you and your child through this process we suggest you do some of the following:

- thoroughly read your Parent Handbooks to ensure you understand how the centre operates
- start your child at the centre at least one week before returning to work as it is hard for both parents and children to cope with this big change at the same time
- plan your child's first few days to be shorter where possible
- make the most of your orientation visit; ask questions, ensure your child meets his/her carers and ensure your child knows his/her way around the room (especially toddlers and preschoolers) including knowing where the bathroom is and where to store personal belongings
- program the centre phone number into your phone in case you want to call the centre during the day
- expect changes in your child's eating and sleeping routine and read the forms which let you know how much your child has slept, eaten etc.
- parents are encouraged to spend time in the centre to show your child that you enjoy being in there and are comfortable with the carers
- answer your child's questions openly and honestly and reassure them (for toddlers or preschoolers)
- expect your child to pick up some germs in the first month or so of care, however feel confident that once your child builds up a resistance he/she will be less likely to pick up bugs when in preschool (even with strict hygiene policies children pick up germs by being in contact with other children)
- provide the centre with a family photo to help make the environment personal to your child
- ensure you feel comfortable with the centre / staff and your decision as children pick up on parent anxiety
- please feel free to call and check on your child during the day however be assured we will also call you if your child is unusually upset.



Helpful Information about day to day care

Other notes about starting childcare

Please remember to do the following everyday:

- allow time to talk to carers and share information about your child's individual daily routine and your child's experiences the previous night and earlier that morning
- be patient and provide support to your child - your child may not want to join in with other children straight away and may prefer to stand and watch - your child needs to take this learning experience at his/her own pace
- say 'goodbye' and wave to your child telling your child that you will be back, children need to trust you that you will say goodbye and return in the afternoon - after you say goodbye, your child's carer will provide your child with comfort and support and help distract your child by singing, getting involved in an activity or playing with a favourite activity
- where possible set up a predictable 'goodbye routine' so goodbyes don't drag out (try to follow the same routine each day so your child knows what to expect)
- talk about kindy, carers and events with your child - it is common for children to say they 'just played' at kindy so please read the program and look for specific information to use as cues when asking questions about their day to help your child recall information
- check your parent pocket, read notices, newsletters etc. and stay informed
- try to relax - if you are stressed or in a hurry to get to work, it will be harder to settle your child - try to make goodbyes as happy, calm and relaxed as possible.

It often takes time for a child to bond with carers, make friends and become really happy and settled in care - open communication, trust and respect between the child, carers and parents is essential in supporting this experience.

Arrival and Departure

We aim to help each child feel happy, secure and relaxed during his/her time in care and ensure a child's safety and security upon arrival and departure.

When dropping off and picking up children, parents must make contact with a staff member in their child's room.

Staff will be in their rooms to welcome children and parents, share information about how that child has been the previous night and earlier that morning and ease the child into care.

Parents must sign their child IN and OUT each day and record arrival and departure times. This is an essential requirement for parents to be eligible for Child Care Benefits.

If time allows, parents are encouraged to show interest in or participate in learning experiences during drop-off and pick-up times. The children will appreciate your interest in their activities and will also feel more secure in the childcare environment if they know you enjoy spending time there.

When dropping off children, parents need to complete any necessary medication forms and provide alternative contact numbers if they will be away from their usual place of work. At this time, parents should also advise staff if an alternative authorised person will be collecting their child later that day.

When it is the right time for the parent to leave, they are encouraged to say goodbye, not to walk away when their child is not looking as this may confuse and upset the child.

Collection of Your Child

On enrolment, parent/s (or child's primary guardian) must provide a list of adults authorised to collect their child from care. Staff members strictly adhere to this list.

Children will not be permitted to leave the centre with any person whose name does not appear on the Collection Authority in the Child Enrolment Form, or with a person under 18 years of age, or with anyone who appears to be under the influence of any substance.

Prior arrangements must be made with the centre if somebody who is not authorised on the child's Collection Authority in the Child Enrolment Form is to collect the child. Notice must be provided in writing and must include the recognised guardian's signature and date.

If the person collecting the child is not known to staff, but is authorised to pick up the child, photo identification must be provided (i.e. driver's license or passport). If this is not possible, the child will not be permitted to leave the centre with that person.

Communication and Parent Information

Parents are asked to read noticeboards on a daily basis to obtain current information about the centre.

Each child also has a pocket or pouch where parents can collect newsletters, invoices and other notices to ensure you are kept up to date with what is going

on in the centre. Please make sure you know where your child's pocket is and that you check it regularly.

Helpful Parent Information available in the foyer provides up-to-date information about the care of children.

What to Bring

Parents are encouraged to bring their child's clothing in an appropriate sized bag that is clearly labelled. Bags are stored in baskets or lockers.

Parents are asked to supply:

- a legionnaire's style sun hat
- a water bottle for drinking water throughout the day.

Parents are encouraged to pack at least one full change of clothing including at least three pairs of underwear. Additional pairs of underwear are required for children who are toilet training. If your child is toilet training, please ensure he/she is dressed appropriately to allow them quick and easy access to the toilet i.e. no overalls.

Parents are asked to label all items of clothing. A waterproof marker or sew-on label is good for this purpose.

Staff encourage children to wear smocks for 'messy' play and art/craft activities but occasionally children still get dirty and sometimes clothes can be stained. To protect the clothes without inhibiting your child's play and creativity we ask you to dress your child in sensible 'play' clothes each day - not 'best' clothes.

Children's Belongings and Lost Property

Toys and items of value should remain at home. Staff cannot take responsibility for items that children bring to the centre.

Staff members make all efforts to take care of all items of clothing that are clearly labelled. Your child may also bring a comforter for sleep time.

At times it may be appropriate to bring special items from home for use in the centre's programs. Suitable items may include books, CD's, DVD's, photographs etc. Such items must be clearly labelled with the child's or family's name and handed to a staff member in the child's room.

A lost property box or area will be available to parents in each room in the centre.

Health, nutrition and wellbeing

Meals

Meals are provided in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere where children engage in conversation with carers and peers. Carers role model acceptable social behaviour through participation at meal times.

Staff members interact with the children - encouraging good eating habits, the appreciation of different food tastes and the correct use of eating and serving utensils.

Information relating to each child's daily eating habits will be made available to parents.

Weekly menus are displayed for parents to help you plan your child's meals at home.

The centre provides morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Between meals healthy snacks will also be provided when appropriate.

All food served at the centre has a high nutritional value, please consult the Weekly Menu for more information.

Lunch

Daily menus offer a range of nutritious meals for children balancing all five food groups and following the dietary guidelines.

We offer a Spring/Summer and an Autumn/Winter menu for variation and to ensure the meals are appropriate for the weather conditions.

Morning and Afternoon Tea

Meals are provided at regular intervals which allows children to graze and eat when they are hungry.



Drinking Water

Drinking water is available throughout the day for children.

Allergies and Intolerances

All allergies and intolerances are considered by staff when preparing meals.

If your child has an allergy or intolerance on enrolment, you will be referred to our Centre Operations Manager.

If your child develops an allergy or intolerance during his/her time in care please see your centre Centre Manager.

We will endeavour to accommodate your child's specific needs within the centre and ensure appropriate documentation is completed as per our Allergies and Anaphylaxis policies and procedures.

Rest and Sleep

We ensure we meet each child's basic need to sleep and rest. We adapt routines to meet the individual needs of children ensuring sleep time is safe and supervised.

We follow Paediatric and Child Health Division guidelines to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

We provide bedding for all children in the centre and ensure it is only used by one child before washing.

Children are often very active and stimulated throughout their busy day in childcare. Daily routines for preschool children provide time for sleep or rest and all children are provided with a stretcher for this purpose. If a child chooses to sleep while in care a staff member must allow him or her to sleep even if a parent specifies that their child doesn't require a midday nap.

If a child chooses not to sleep, books and quiet activities are provided at rest time.

Sun Protection

We follow practices recommended by the Cancer Council in relation to sun protection for staff and children. We encourage the wearing of hats and shirts with collars and sleeves that are made from closely woven natural fibre.

Staff apply SPF 30+ broad-spectrum sunscreen to exposed areas of children's skin before morning and afternoon outdoor play.

Room routines schedule outdoor activities before 11am or after 2pm (3pm during daylight savings).

The centre has a **NO HAT—PLAY IN THE SHADE** policy whereby children without hats remain in covered/shaded areas during outdoor play.

Our 'Sun Protection' Policy operates throughout the year.



Child Illness

We aim to create a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health and wellbeing of the children. As a general principle, children should not be brought into the centre unless they are able to cope adequately with the normal centre routines and activities. A sick child needs the special one-to-one care only possible at home.

The Centre Manager ultimately has the final say as to whether a sick child can attend to centre. Staff can only administer medication to a child as prescribed specifically by a doctor.

Staff monitor the health and wellbeing of each child throughout their day/s in care.

If a child is acting out of character or is showing signs/symptoms of illness carers will take the child's temperature and complete a Child Illness Report.

If a child shows signs or symptoms of a medical condition this is to be reported to the Authorised Supervisor.

If a child develops a temperature of 37.8+oC whilst at the centre, staff will take appropriate measures to reduce it. All efforts will be made to reduce the fever naturally by removing excess clothing, sponging the child or placing the child in a tepid bath. However, sometimes reducing a fever involves administering Paracetamol to the child - if this happens the child must be collected within 1 hour.

The Centre Manager will decide whether the child is to be excluded from the centre.

Medication

At the time of enrolment, parents must complete the Paracetamol Permission section of the Child Enrolment Form if they wish to allow staff to use Paracetamol to control a high temperature. Paracetamol will not be administered without parental authority. Staff can administer one recommended dose of Paracetamol for treatment of temperature or pain with appropriate authority.

Appropriate Medication Authorisation Forms are available from each room for parents to complete if necessary. Parents must ensure this form is filled out correctly and signed.

Parents should hand medication over to their child's Room Supervisor. Medication should never be left in a child's bag.

Only medication in the original packaging will be administered. Medication will not be given if it is out of date.

Where medication is for the treatment of long-term conditions or complaints such as asthma or epilepsy, parents are required to fill out an Ongoing Medical Condition form. Staff and families update these forms regularly.

Staff members have the right to refuse a parent's request to administer medication. In this case, parents are invited to visit the centre and administer the medication themselves.

Over the counter medication cannot be administered without written authority from the child's doctor stating the name of medication, date, child's name, illness being treated, dosage amounts, times and dates to be administered.

Infectious Diseases

Centre staff follow guidelines on health care for children as detailed in Staying Healthy in Childcare.

Parents are notified of any infectious disease identified at the centre. The name of the illness, its signs and symptoms will be displayed. Other relevant and current health information is provided for parents in newsletters and displayed on centre noticeboards.

All staff members follow the guidelines outlined in the 'Cleaning', 'Nappy Change', 'Toileting', 'Hand Washing' and 'Hygiene' Policies and Procedures to reduce the risk of infection. Staff are regularly trained and reminded of these procedures.

If a child has been vomiting or has had diarrhoea within 12 hours before arrival, the child is not to be brought to the centre.

If the Centre Manager is uncertain if a child has a contagious illness the parent will be required to provide a doctor's certificate from the child's doctor stating that the child is not contagious and may return to care.

Parents need to inform staff if any medication including Paracetamol has been administered to the child before arriving in care.

Staff and families should regularly update the medical history information kept for each child.

Immunisation

In relation to the Public Health Act, 1992, childcare centres have a responsibility to ensure that parents enrolling their child provide approved evidence of immunisation status.

The immunisation status of all children will be held on record for the prescribed period of time. The Centre Manager will maintain and update the Immunisation Register. If no evidence is shown of immunisation, then the child is considered to be not immunised against any of the vaccine-preventable diseases.

In the event of a vaccine-preventable disease occurring in the centre, the Public Health Unit and parents will be notified. Vaccine-preventable diseases include:

- Measles
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Mumps
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio

Non-immunised children will be excluded from the centre for the duration of the outbreak on the direction of the Public Health Unit. Normal childcare fees apply during the child's absence from care.



Responsibilities of parents in relation to administration

Absences

In the event of absence from care, parents are asked to call the centre to inform carers.

Additional Casual Days

Additional casual days of care are often available for children already attending the centre.

If you require additional casual days please talk to the centre manager about availability.

If you pick up an additional casual day, your child's name will be added to the attendance records and you will be invoiced for that day in the next billing period.

Updating Information

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the centre of changes that affect the service we can provide. Any changes to contact phone numbers, addresses or authorised persons to collect your child must be provided to the Centre Manager in writing.



Other information for parents

Transitioning Between Rooms

We aim to make transitions as stress-free as possible to help your child feel secure within the physical and emotional environment of the centre.

Parents are notified by centre staff when their child is developmentally ready to transition into the next room. Carers and parents decide on a date that the child could move to the next room.

Introductions between carers from the new room and parents take place to ensure parents feel comfortable with the new staff who will be taking care of their child.

Transitioning to School

We aim to prepare children and families for the child's transition to school by supporting the development of skills, confidence and independence.

We support learning through implementing a range of planned and spontaneous activities that are developmentally and culturally appropriate and based on individual and group needs.

Early Childhood professionals provide activities and experiences that help children build solid foundations for later learning. Activities and learning experiences cover all key learning areas and help prepare children for the transition to school.

Birthdays

We understand you may want to celebrate your child's birthdays with his/her friends at childcare. We are happy to help your child celebrate this occasion.

If you would like to send a birthday cake into care, they can share the cake with children for afternoon tea. Given that some children have food allergies, please provide a full list of cake ingredients. Please take particular note that our centre is a peanut-free zone.

Christmas Closure

The centre is closed for a short period each year during the Christmas break. The length of this period varies from year to year depending on the date Christmas falls. The length of this break is approximately ten working days. Please ensure you read newsletters for closing dates so holidays can be planned around these dates.

Parent feedback or grievances about the day-to-day running of the centre

To help us provide a service that meets the needs of families within the centre we rely on constructive parent feedback. Centre staff are available on a daily basis to discuss day-to-day care and education of your child.

If you would like additional time to discuss concerns with your child's Room Leader and/or the Centre Manager we are happy to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

We need to hear if you have any concern or complaint. If you are unhappy in any way please bring it to our attention so we can make every attempt to resolve the issue.

Contacting the Centre

The centre direct telephone number is a private number only for families enrolled in the centre. This number will be provided on your orientation visit. Carers are available throughout the day for you to check on how your child is enjoying his/her day. Please try to avoid calling at busy times during the day such as meal times.

Thank you for choosing Sandcastles Nursery and Long Day Care Centre.

*We look forward to welcoming
your child to our centre.*



HARBORD VILLAGE

The Harbord Village centre is located at
74-76 Lawrence Street, Freshwater NSW 2096

Hours:

Monday to Friday 7.30am - 5.45pm

CHATSWOOD

The Chatswood centre is located at
Level 4, 1 Cambridge Lane, Chatswood NSW 2067

Hours:

Monday to Friday 7.30am - 6.00pm

For further information about any centre,
please refer to our website

www.sandcastleschildcare.com.au

or call 1300 662 497

