

**TLC**  
**EARLY LEARNING**  
**CENTRE**

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **Welcome to TLC Early Learning Centre**

Dear Parents,

At TLC our aim is to provide a warm friendly and inviting atmosphere where your child will feel safe and happy in their new environment as well as providing the highest quality care .We also offer a quality educational program to children of all ages as well as a high quality school readiness program for children attending our centre the year before formal schooling. Please feel free to contact the Centre Director on any matter regarding your child or the centre. If you would like further information on the centre's organization or on any matter you may wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the Director.

For some children it will be the first time away from family and friends, so it is important that they feel comfortable and secure in their new environment right from the start.

We look forward to sharing your child's early years with you and your family.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Please read all notices and signs when entering the centre. Check for up-coming events of interest and special requests.

Communication books in each room promote a sharing of information about the children's day while at the centre. Parents are encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions.

Each child has an information pocket where notices, newsletters and accounts will be placed for your collection. It is extremely important that you check this each time you visit the centre as it is an important key to communication.

### **CENTRE PERSONNEL**

Our Centre staff are dedicated to providing you and your child/ren with high quality care and education. Key Centre Personnel have Early Childhood Education

qualifications and participate in ongoing training to further develop their skills and knowledge.

A pool of relief staff are employed, ensuring children receive continuity of care while regular staff are away on leave.

Students from various Colleges may attend the centre for observation work and/or work experience. These students are always supervised by one of our qualified staff and are not included in staff:child ratios.

## **AGE GROUPINGS**

Our classrooms are divided into the following groups:

- \* Starlights 0-12months
- \* Moonbeams 12months-2years
- \* Snowflakes 2-3years
- \* Raindrops 3-4years
- \* Stars 4-5years

Each Group Leader brings individual skills and experiences enhancing their unique teaching style, therefore variations within classrooms may occur. We have a clear set of goals based on our philosophy established from a sound knowledge of Early Childhood Education theories and practices.

Our programs are based on individual and group observations and are evaluated on a short and long term basis. As we believe children "learn through play" we offer important play equipment like puzzles, books, dolls, dress-up clothes, musical instruments, blocks, sand play, climbing equipment and many manipulative toys including those with mathematical concepts.

We aim to provide a total learning environment where children are free to observe, question, make inference and explore.

They are encouraged to learn at their own pace, in all developmental areas:

- \* The healthy active child
- \* The Moral and spiritual child

- \* The creative child
- \* The child's sense of self
- \* The social and emotional child
- \* The communicating child
- \* The cognitive, exploring and problem solving child
- \* The sensory motor child

## **YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY**

Centre staff understand it is difficult for parents to leave their child for the first time, and encourage parents to call throughout the day to check on their child's progress. Here are some suggestions to assist you:

- \* Say "Goodbye"
- \* Don't prolong the farewell
- \* Say "I'm going now. I'll be back this afternoon"
- \* Give your child a kiss and a hug before you leave.
- \* Always let the staff know that you are leaving. This will signal the staff to give a little extra support to your child should they need it.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

By working together, parents and staff can help each child develop to their full potential. We encourage parent input and suggestions for our centre policies, philosophy and parent information documents.

Parents can participate in the program by sharing special skills, for example cooking, music or craft etc.

## **PARENT CONCERNS**

We are here for you and your child. We encourage parents with any concerns to bring them to the attention of the Centre Director or Centre staff immediately so they can be dealt with promptly. We aim to address any concerns immediately, with the emphasis being placed on resolving issues in a professional manner.

## **NEWSLETTERS**

Bi-monthly you will receive a centre newsletter. The main aim of this newsletter is to keep you informed of current events at the centre, the work that is being done in your child's room and current areas of interest to the children.

## **PERSONAL TOYS**

It is a Centre Policy that all toys from home are not brought to the centre. Toys from home can be lost or broken and it saves a lot of heartache if these items are left at home. We encourage children to bring nature items and other items of general educational interest. Soft Comfort toys for rest time are accepted but need to be left in their bag until the time of rest.

## **LOST PROPERTY**

Please check the lost property box regularly. Naming all items including socks, shoes and underwear, sheets, and general clothing items assists Centre Personnel to locate the owner.

## **CHANGE OF DETAILS**

Please notify the centre of any changes to your child's information. It is important for the centre to maintain up to date contact details at all times.

## **OUR POLICIES**

Our Centre Policies and Procedures can be found in the front foyer. We recommend that you take the time to read these policies.

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

It is the policy of the centre to focus on encouragement and positive guidance, rather than discipline. Centre staff try to recognize why a child behaves in a certain way, and encourage more acceptable forms of behavior.

When necessary, children are given time away from the situation to reflect on their behavior and consider more appropriate responses. Thinking time is a quiet break, not a punishment. At no time will a child be physically disciplined.

## **IMMUNISATION**

The centre is required to maintain up-to-date immunization records for all children attending the centre. Parents are requested to supply proof of immunization. Please advise the centre of any updated immunizations.

## **SUN SAFETY**

Please apply sunscreen to your child before arriving at the centre as it needs to be applied at least a half hour before exposure to sun for the best protection. Sunscreen will be re-applied during the day by staff. Should your child be allergic to common brands or the brand we are using, we ask that you send specific sunscreen for your child.

## **APPROPRIATE CLOTHING**

During the day your child will participate in many different activities and it is important that they are dressed in appropriate clothing. Please refrain from sending your child in 'GOOD' clothes as the most beneficial experiences come from

messy play. We do encourage children to wear aprons when painting or participating in other messy activities.

## **MEDICATION**

If your child requires medication while at the centre, you must complete the Medication Administration Form detailing important information requested on the form. The Group leader will sign the form and administer the medication along with the signature of another staff member who witnessed the administration of the medication to your child in the correct dose. This form must be completed each day the medication is required. The medication must remain in its original named container. The medication must be prescribed by a doctor and have a pharmacist's label stating required dose and frequency. Medication bought over the counter will not be administered. Any medication must be handed to a staff member so that it can be stored in a locked container inaccessible to children. Please ensure no medication, creams, etc of any kind are left in your child's bag.

## **ILLNESS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

We are committed to providing and maintaining a healthy environment to safeguard children and staff from infection.

The Centre Director reserves the right to send home or refuse attendance to any child that is considered not well enough to attend. If your child is unwell or showing signs of an infectious or contagious disease, we will contact you immediately and you will be required to collect them from the centre. Please keep your child at home if they are unwell.

It is the policy of our centre not to admit any child who has a communicable disease. We require a doctor's clearance stating that they are no longer infectious before they can be re-admitted to the centre.

Please notify the centre if your child has been exposed to or has a communicable disease. We will advise parents of an infection in the centre by placing a notice in the foyer.

## **HYGIENE**

Strict hand washing procedures are implemented in our centre. Children are encouraged to wash and dry their hands before and after meals, after using the toilet and after messy activities.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Our centre offers three meals per day and are nutritionally balanced. Regulations require that the centre provide 50% of the child's nutritional requirements. Each child is provided with morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. A late snack is provided to children after 5.00pm. The menu is rostered on a 4 week basis and these can be found in each room.

The children are not forced to eat their meal but they are encouraged to taste all foods presented to them. Staff and children eat at the same table promoting social interaction and a pleasant atmosphere at meal times.

**Please note on your enrolment form and inform staff if your child has a particular food allergy or special diet.**

We are happy for parents to send along a birthday cake for their child.

Babies on formula need to have their bottles made up at home and labeled with their child's name. This ensures that each baby gets only their bottle and their correct formula.

## **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

An emergency evacuation plan is displayed in each room. Once a month the centre conducts a fire drill. The aim of these drills is to ensure that in the unlikely event of a real emergency, the children can be evacuated quickly and easily. If you are present at the centre during the fire drill, you are legally required to participate in this procedure.



## **ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**

Even in the safest environment accidents and injuries do occur. Any accidents that may occur at the centre are recorded on an Incident Report. If your child has been injured during the day you will be required to sign the Incident Report, indicating that you have been made aware of the incident. If necessary you will be contacted to collect your child. If you cannot be contacted and your child requires medical attention, we will take the necessary required steps. In the event of an emergency, an ambulance will be called.

Any medical or emergency services expenses incurred will be the parent's responsibility.

## **COLLECTION OF CHILDREN**

We will only allow parents or persons stated in writing on the enrolment form or emergency form to collect your child/ren from the centre. If you are unable to collect your child from the centre yourself, you will need to ring the centre and let staff know of the changes for that day. This person must be at least 18 years old and authorized by you either on the emergency form or via a phone call which will need to be verified by two staff members. Photo identification will be required by any person collecting a child who is not known by staff.

## **CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS**

If you have a legal agreement outlining custody or restraining arrangements, please provide the centre with a copy from the courts for our records. Parents are requested to notify the Centre Director immediately if these legal circumstances change.

## **EXCURSIONS**

Parents will be informed in advance of any planned excursions. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to participate in an excursion.

## **FEES AND HOLIDAYS**

Upon enrolment families are required to pay a deposit to hold the position until the child starts at the centre. This deposit will come off the fees once the child has commenced care. If the child does not start at the centre then the deposit is forfeited. Families are required to pay two weeks in advance as well as the current weeks' fees on the first day of attendance. The account also needs to stay two weeks in advance at all times. Fees are to be paid weekly and at the beginning of each week and must remain up to date at all times. Failure to do so may result in reduced booked days or termination of child care places. Fees are to be paid by eftpos, Direct Deposit, cash, cheques, or credit cards. Payment of your fortnightly family tax benefit can also be paid directly to the centre (centrepay) as well as your child care rebate. Contact centrelink if you would like to include these options for payment. **All families who are eligible for the Child Care Rebate need to have this paid directly to the centre so parents will only need to pay the gap. Failure to do so may result in the loss of care.**

Should you wish to terminate your child's placement you will need to give **TWO WEEKS WRITTEN NOTICE** to the Director, or fees paid in lieu of notice.

Full fees will apply until the centre receives a letter stating that you are eligible for Child Care Benefit.

Two weeks per year for holidays can be taken as half fees as long as your account is up to date and the holiday dates are written in advance in the holiday book, situated in the foyer.

Fees are not charged for the two weeks over the Christmas/Newyear break when the centre is closed.

Fees must be paid for everyday your child is enrolled at the centre regardless of attendance. This includes days on which your child is absent, due to ill health or holidays taken, including public holidays.

## **CHILD CARE BENEFIT**

TLC Early Learning Centre is an approved child care service. All families using this service are eligible to apply for Child Care Benefit. Upon application to the Family Assistance office, families may choose to receive Child Care Benefit in the form of reduced weekly fees or as a lump sum at the end of the tax year. The Child Care Rebate is for parents working or studying and needs to be paid directly to the centre. Please have this organized before your child starts.

## **ALLOWABLE ABSENCES**

Each family is entitled to 50 days of absence per year while claiming Child Care Benefit. An absence day may be defined as: a sick day, holiday or occasional absence. Once the 50 allowable days have been taken full fees will apply.

If your child is absent due to illness and has a medical certificate, these absences will not count towards the allowable absence total.

## **SICK DAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**

Please notify the centre if your child is sick or unable to attend. If your child has been absent for more than two weeks without notification, we are unable to hold your position.

All public holidays and absences must be paid for and there are no make-up days. Please ensure you sign for all absences to remain eligible for Child Care Benefit otherwise you will be required by law to pay full fees.

## **ATTENDANCE RECORDS**

You are required to sign your child in and out each time they attend the Centre. Attendance forms are located in the foyer and must be signed upon arrival and departure. This is a legal requirement.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Our Centre operates Monday to Friday between the hours of 7.00am to 6.00pm for 50 weeks per year, closing for usual calendar Public Holidays and for 2 weeks over the Christmas/New year break.

Our Centre gives priority to working parents (both) but also accepts children from families where one spouse/partner is not working. A child from this family type may also be asked to change their booked days or to vacate their placement for a working parent if necessary. Priority will also be given to parents studying and parents with a special needs child either at home or needing care. We also give priority to families with children who have a diagnosis for a condition.

We ask that parents who don't work only use our services between the hours 8.30am to 5pm due to staffing arrangements.

## **LATE FEE**

TLC Early Learning Centre closes at 6.00pm. Arrangements therefore must be made to collect all children by this time.

Where a parent fails to collect their child/ren by 6.00pm a late fee of 1\$ per minute will be charged and will appear on your next fee receipt. The time will be taken by the centre clocks and if a parent incurs a late fee on more than three occasions a meeting will be called between the parents and Centre Director.

## **CHILD LEFT AFTER CLOSING TIME**

If a parent is running late to collect their child please notify the centre as soon as possible. In the event that a child is not collected by 6.00pm the staff will attempt to make contact with the child's parents or failing this the emergency contacts as listed on the child's enrolment form. Two staff members will remain at the centre with the child until they are collected by one of the above. If all attempts to find an approved responsible adult to collect the child have failed then staff will contact police. In such a situation staff will remain with the child until a DOCS Child Protection Officer arrives to collect the child.

## **WHAT TO SUPPLY FOR YOUR CHILD**

- \* A large bag to fit all necessary items.
- \* At least two sets of spare clothes including socks in case of wet clothing. Two cot size sheets and a blanket in winter for rest time. Pillows are not allowed in the 0-2 year olds rooms.
- \* Nappies or training pants for children not yet toilet trained.
- \* Suitable clothing that they can manage themselves during toileting.
- \* Suitable shoes for safe play. Thongs are not acceptable as they are deemed dangerous on climbing frames.
- \* A sun hat that protects the face and neck area.

We look forward to spending quality time with you and your child/ren.

Thankyou for taking the time to read this information booklet.

Parent Information Booklet modified July 2011.