



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Centre. We are an Early Learning Centre continually striving to provide the best possible care and learning experience for your child, in a fun, secure, flexible yet structured environment which promotes active learning.

We are registered to cater for a maximum of 50 children between the ages of 2 months and 6 years.

Our Centre is privately owned and managed by Georgia & Louis who have been running the Centre since 1999. Georgia is a qualified Early Childhood Educator and has been in the industry since 1995 and Louis is a qualified Accountant.

Georgia & Louis oversee the day to day running of the Service with strict adherence to and compliance of the Department of Education & Training (DET) Regulations.

AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

Children between the ages of 2 months and 6 years are undergoing complex developmental changes as they grow. Therefore, observations and age appropriate planning are tools to provide an educational and stimulating program, which will assist the children in the following areas:

SOCIAL: Through everyday communication, role-play and socialising with peers and adults.

COGNITIVE: Through literacy, numeracy, problem solving and decision-making.

GROSS MOTOR: Through climbing, crawling, learning to walk, cycling and dressing.

FINE MOTOR: Through drawing, painting, pasting and cutting.

LANGUAGE: Through discussions with children and adults, books, listening to CD's and songs.

Every program is displayed in your child's room and is evaluated weekly. Our Staff keep individual records of the children's development. You are welcome to make an appointment to discuss your child's progress.

Where special needs are identified, we will endeavour to meet the needs of the child and help them access any other necessary resources.

We strongly encourage parent participation in our program planning. Please feel free to speak to a staff member about your ideas. We have an open-door policy at our Centre. Parents are invited to visit our Centre and experience the Programs.

KINDER PROGRAM:

4 – 5 year old

Our 4 year old Kinder Program is specifically structured to provide our 4-year-old children with the necessary fundamentals required for a smooth transition into Primary School. The curriculum focuses on numeracy, literacy, decision making, responsibility, independence / self help, creativity and social interaction. The Program is delivered by a qualified Kinder Teacher who has a Bachelor of Education. Mid year and end of year reporting is available through parent teacher interviews.

3 – 4 year old

Our 3 year old Kinder Program introduces the children to numeracy & literacy, decision making, responsibility, independence / self help. The program also encourages social interaction between the children. Mid year and end of year reporting is available through parent teacher interviews.

Library – Kinder children

We have a collection of story books which are available for our Kinder children to borrow weekly. Please provide your child/ren with a library bag so they can borrow books. Damage or loss of a book will incur a \$10.00 fee. Please see Kinder staff for more information.

AGE GROUPS:

Nursery: 2 months to 2 years

Toddler: 2 years to 3 years

Kinders: 3 years to 6 years

Please note that unless your child is fully toilet trained they cannot progress to the Kinder Room.

HOURS OF OPERATION:

The Centre operates Monday to Friday between 7:00 a.m. till 6:30 p.m.

The Centre is closed during Victorian Public Holidays and 2 weeks over the Christmas period.

Where your booking is permanent, full time or part time, full fees will apply on the following days:

- For any days away
- For leave due to illness
- For holidays taken during the year
- For public holidays

Please note: If the Centre closes over Christmas no fees will apply. Please see a staff member for more information.

FEE STRUCTURE & PAYMENT:

- Weekly under 3 years old.....\$599.00
- Weekly 3 years old and above.....\$599.00
- Daily under 3 years old.....\$129.00
- Daily 3 years old and above.....\$129.00
- Late fee per minute (no exceptions).....\$2.00
- Direct debit payment failure.....\$9.90

After 6:30 pm a late fee of \$2.00 per minute will be added to your account to cover the cost of the staff that remain behind to care for your child.

Invoicing is done weekly and payment is via “Easypay” direct debit system which automatically debits your nominated savings account or credit card (Visa & MasterCard). Currently, this is processed weekly. Payment failures will incur an Easypay fee of \$9.90 which is charged to your account.

Your child's place cannot be maintained if fees have been outstanding for more than two weeks. The Director reserves the right to cancel bookings for accounts in arrears.

EXTRA BOOKINGS:

Extra bookings may be made but this is subject to availability. Cancellations must be made at least 24 hours before, otherwise, full fees apply.

ATTENDANCE:

You are required to sign your child in and out each time they attend the Centre. This is a legal requirement by the DET.

Parents are encouraged to bring their children to the Centre by 9:30 am. This is so that your child is able to participate in planned morning activities. If your child is going to be absent for the day, please notify the Centre by 9:00 am.

ENROLMENT:

Upon your visit to the Centre you will meet with the Director who will discuss with you the Centre Policies, daily routines and Centre Programs. You will be given an Enrolment Information Package. Please complete the enrolment form and return it long with your bond to the Centre as soon as possible to guarantee your child's position. A security bond of \$300.00 is to be paid at the time of enrolment, which will be held by the Centre until care ceases. This is then deducted from any fees that may be outstanding. Three weeks' notice, (21 days after the notice date) in writing, is required when your child / children are to be withdrawn or dropping a day/s from the Centre. Otherwise, normal fees will apply.

Please note: If care is not required the security bond is non-refundable.

WAITING LIST:

If a guaranteed enrolment cannot be offered, you will be placed on our waiting list. No deposit is required. When a position becomes available the Director will contact you.

CHANGE OF DETAILS:

Please notify the Centre of any changes to your child's enrolment information. It is important for the Centre to maintain up to date contact details.

ORIENTATION / SETTLING IN:

Prior to your child commencing at our Centre, we encourage you to bring your child in for orientation. This will help your child in becoming familiar with the new Carers and surroundings.

We understand that it is difficult for parents to leave their child for the first time. We encourage you to call throughout the day to check on your child's progress. Parents and children need time to adjust. Upon arrival or departure, allow time for your child to show you things and places that interest them in our Centre. Helpful hints:

- Say good-bye – never sneak out.
- Don't prolong the farewell
- Say "I'm going now and will be back this afternoon"
- Give your child a kiss and a hug before you leave
- Always let staff know that you are leaving. This will allow staff to give extra support to your child if needed.

Steps for the Orientation Process:

- Initially attending with the child for a few hours.
- Leaving the child without parent for one to two hours per day, leading up to half days then eventually full days. (This will happen with consultation between staff and parents).

- The timeline for this process will vary between children as it is dependant upon the child's progress.

PARENT PARTICIPATION / COMMUNICATION:

As we have an "open door" policy, we encourage parent input and suggestions for program planning and centre policies. By working together parents and staff can help each child develop to their full potential. Parents can contribute to the program by sharing special skills such as music, crafts and discussions.

A communication board is located in each room to let parents know of their child's routine for the day. A more detailed communication book is also maintained daily for your child and we encourage parents to read and provide feedback.

Please take the time to read the information on our notice board when entering the Centre and in your child's room. Look out for upcoming events and special requests.

Each child also has an information pocket. Notices, newsletters, invoices and receipts are placed in these pockets for your collection. It is extremely important that you check the pocket each time you visit the Centre as it is an important key to communication.

A suggestion box is located at Reception.

Newsletters will be distributed every Quarter, with the main aim being to keep you informed of Centre Events, current topics and areas of interest to the children.

PARENT CONCERNS:

We encourage parents with any concerns to bring them to the attention of the Director so that they can be dealt with promptly. We aim to address any concerns immediately, with the emphasis being placed on resolving issues in a timely and professional manner.

The suggestion box can also be used to raise any concerns you may have.

PARENT COMMITTEE:

We have Parent / Management Committee whereby parents are able to participate in general decision making and planning / ideas for the Centre. We meet three times per year and any parent is welcome to join.

CHANGING GROUPS:

Parents will be advised if their child is to progress to the next Age Group. Young children can become unsettled with changes, therefore, communication between staff and parents is vital to ensure that the child settles into the new Group smoothly.

Progression from one age group to the next depends upon age, developmental stage and vacancies.

We provide an orientation period for the child. The length of the orientation period is dependent upon how quickly the child settles into the new Group.

PRAMS & CAR SEATS:

Parents are welcome to leave their prams / strollers under the front porch. Please make sure they are folded and labeled with your child's name. Car seats may be left in reception. Please ensure they are labeled with your child's name.

Please be aware that the Centre is not liable for any loss or damage to your pram / stroller or car seats.

SUNSMART:

As we are a "Sunsmart" Centre, you are required to provide your child with a hat for outdoor play. No hat - no outdoor play. We will ensure that each

child is covered with sunscreen before going outdoors. Should your child be allergic to common brands of sunscreen, we ask that you provide us with the required sunscreen for your child.

The Sunsmart period runs from September to April.

Please refer to our detailed Sunsmart Policy.

NUTRITION:

The children are served a nutritional cooked meal every day. We provide morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack.

A choice of cow's milk or water is provided along with morning tea. Nursery parents are required to bring their child's preferred milk in a labeled bottle.

Please refer to our detailed Nutrition Policy located at Reception.

CELEBRATIONS:

We encourage parents to let their children share special celebrations with us at the Centre, such as birthdays. Due to strict Food Safety requirements, we cannot accept food items from parents. If you like, we can arrange for a cake or treats to be distributed to the children for a small fee. Please inform the Director in writing two weeks prior to the event.

PERSONAL TOYS:

We strongly discourage children bringing toys or valuable items to the Centre, unless they are required for a special event or educational interest. This will prevent toys from home becoming lost or broken. Comfort toys are more than welcome.

LOST PROPERTY:

A lost property box is provided. Please check this box if your child is missing anything. To help ensure items are not misplaced or lost, it would be prudent of parents to mark their children's names on their clothing / items. E.g. Sock, shoes and undergarments.

SLEEP / REST TIME:

A day in an early learning centre can be very hectic. All children are encouraged to sleep in a cot or a mattress. We feel that even though some children may have out grown a sleep, a rest will help rejuvenate them. If your child does not wish to sleep, quiet activities will be organised for them such as puzzles or reading.

Rest / sleep time is between 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. with the exception of the Nursery which has no set sleep time. In the Nursery we follow the child's individual routine.

TOILET TRAINING:

No pressure is placed upon any child to use the toilet. Staff follow the child and the parent's lead. Since the consistency of toilet training is important once it has started, we encourage you to talk to your child's carer. Toilet training information is available at Reception.

Please note that if your child is not toilet trained they cannot progress to the Kinder Room.

Our Centre provides disposable nappies as part of our services. We ask that children come to the Centre in a disposable nappy and have another nappy in their bag for home time.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING:

During the day your child will participate in many different activities. It is important that they are dressed in appropriate clothing. Many learning

experiences come from messy play. We encourage children to wear smocks or aprons when painting or participating in other messy activities.

Parents are encouraged to dress their children in comfortable clothing and sensible footwear, which is suitable for painting, climbing and running.

As our outdoor program runs all year round, please provide a warm coat and a wooly hat / beanie for the colder months.

Overalls are not recommended as children find them difficult to handle when going to the toilet.

Please provide a full change of clothes each day.

CENTRE STAFF:

Our staff are dedicated to providing your child with high quality care and education. Qualified and unqualified staff are employed according to the Children Services Regulations 1998.

Staff to child ratios are as follows:

- < 3 years old.....1 staff member to 4 children
- 3 years old and over.....1 staff member to 11 children

Qualified staff to child ratio:

- 1 staff member to 15 children

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

Our Centre participates in the National Quality Standards Quality Improvement Plan administered by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

SAFETY:

Evacuation Procedures

An emergency evacuation plan is displayed in each room. The Centre conducts fire drills every quarter. The aim of this is to ensure that in the

event of a real emergency the children can be evacuated quickly and easily. If you are present at the Centre during a fire drill, you are legally required to participate in this procedure.

Drop off / Collection of Children

Upon arrival, please escort your Child to the Staff Member in your Child's room (under no circumstances is your Child to be left at Reception). Always acknowledge your arrival and departure with a Staff Member.

We will only allow the parents or persons stated in writing on the enrolment form to collect your children from the Centre. If you are unable to collect your child from the Centre, you will need to telephone or notify the Centre in writing. Photo identification will be required.

Parking

There are two designated parking spots in the front driveway. These two spots are for a maximum parking time of 5 minutes. If you intend to stay longer please park on the street. There are no parking restrictions in the street in front of the Centre.

Under no circumstances can you park in the driveway if these two spots are taken. Please ensure the cross over and driveway leading to the basement is clear at all times.

Custody Arrangements

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

Excursions

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

CCTV

For the safety of your children and the staff at our Centre, the interior and perimeter of the building is monitored by cameras (excluding toilets, change rooms and staff room). There are monitors located in Reception, upstairs office and the Kinder room. We will be recording footage during closing hours only.

Access Control

Parents will be given a PIN number to unlock the front door and the door leading from reception into the children's areas. Please do not divulge this number to anyone else. If you have forgotten the PIN or an authorised person is picking up your child, they can use the intercom located in the front porch to call someone inside.

Doors & Gates

To ensure the safety of the children and staff, please close all doors and gates behind you.

Accidents & 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 Sheet. 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 needs medical attention we will take the necessary steps. Any medical expenses incurred will be the parents responsibility.

HEALTH & HYGIENE:

Immunisation

Please refer to our Immunisation Policy

Medication

If your child requires medication whilst at the Centre, you must complete a Medication Administration Form with the following details:

1. Name of medication
2. Dosage
3. Time medication is to be administered
4. Time of last dose
5. Parent's signature

The responsible staff member will sign the form to indicate that the medication has been administered. We will not administer a higher than recommended dose. The Medication Form must be completed on a daily basis, even if the medication is required for more than one day. The medication must remain in its original named container. Any medication must be handed directly to the appropriate staff member so that it can be stored in an area inaccessible to children. Parents are required to collect the medication from this area on departure. No medication, creams etc of any kind, are to be left in your child's bag.

Illness / Communicable Diseases

Our aim is to provide and maintain a healthy environment to safeguard children and staff from infection. The 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 / contagious disease, we will contact you immediately and you may be required to collect your child from the Centre. Please do not send your child to the Centre if they are unwell. The best place for recovery is at home.

It is Centre Policy that we do not admit any child who has a communicable disease or a fever of over 38 degrees. We require a Doctor's Certificate stating that they are no longer infectious before they can be readmitted to the Centre. Please notify the Centre if your child has been exposed to or has a communicable disease. This will enable us to advise parents of an infectious or communicable disease in the Centre by placing a notice on our information board.

Please refer to the communicable diseases exclusion period notice located at Reception.

First Aid & Anaphylaxis Training

Our staff have relevant First Aid and Anaphylaxis training according to the Children Services Regulations 1998 (DEECD).

Please refer to our Anaphylaxis Policy.

Washing

Strict hand washing procedures are followed. Children and staff are required to wash and dry their hands before and after meals, after using the toilet and after messy activities.

Oral hygiene – Kinder Children

Please supply your child/ren with a labeled tooth brush and cap as we encourage the children to brush their teeth after lunch.

Smoking

Our Centre is a totally smoke free area, this includes the driveway.

CENTRE POLICIES:

Centre Policies are located in the 'Centre Policies' folder at Reception. We recommend that you take the time to read these policies. Please feel free to speak to the Director or other staff members if you have any queries.

Centre policies can also be viewed on our website: www.mll.com.au

Sourced 13/06/18

*Resources: Dept Educ. & Early Childhood Dev. Regulations & Guidelines
Childcare Centres Assoc. of Vic.*

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy commences in July 2018, it will:

- replace the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) with a single, means-tested subsidy
- be paid directly to service providers to be passed on to families
- be simpler than the current multi-payment system
- be better targeted and provide more assistance to low and middle income families.



Families earning \$66,958[^] or less will receive a subsidy of 85 per cent of the actual fee charged (up to 85 per cent of an hourly fee cap). For family incomes above \$66,958[^], the subsidy gradually decreases to 20 per cent when family income reaches \$341,248[^]. For families with incomes of \$351,248[^] or more, the subsidy is zero per cent.

Combined family income	Subsidy percent of the actual fee charged (up to relevant percentage of the hourly rate cap)
Up to \$66,958 [^]	85 percent
More than \$66,958 [^] to below \$171,958 [^]	Decreasing to 50 percent*
\$171,958 [^] to below \$251,248 [^]	50 per cent
\$251,248 [^] to below \$341,248 [^]	Decreasing to 20 percent*
\$341,248 [^] to below \$351,248 [^]	20 percent
\$351,248 [^] or more	0 percent

*Subsidy gradually decreases by 1 per cent for each \$3000 of family income.

When the subsidy commences the hourly rate caps will be:

Service type	Maximum hourly rate cap
Centre Based Long Day Care	\$11.77 [^]
Family Day Care	\$10.90 [^]
Outside School Hours Care	\$10.29 [^]
In Home Care	\$25.48 [^] (per family)

For families earning more than \$186,958[^], an annual subsidy cap of \$10,190[^] per child will apply.

[^] **Note:** These amounts are correct for 2018/19 and may be subject to adjustment through indexation in subsequent years.

Activity test

Family entitlement to the Child Care Subsidy will be determined by a three-step activity test, more closely aligning the hours of subsidised care with the combined hours of work, training, study or other recognised activity undertaken, and providing for up to 100 hours of subsidy per fortnight.

Step	Hours of activity (per fortnight)	Maximum number of hours of subsidy (per fortnight)
1	8 hours to 16 hours	36 hours
2	More than 16 hours to 48 hours	72 hours
3	More than 48 hours	100 hours

A broad range of activities will meet the activity test requirements including: paid work; being self-employed; doing unpaid work in a family business; looking for work; volunteering or studying. There will be exemptions to the activity test for parents who legitimately cannot meet the activity requirements.

Low income families on \$66,958[^] or less a year who do not meet the activity test will be able to access 24 hours of subsidised care per fortnight without having to meet the activity test, as part of the Child Care Safety Net. For the first time, families who currently use Budget Based Funded services will be eligible for child care fee assistance.

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO INCLUDE TRAVEL BETWEEN MLL AND WORK AND VICA VERCA IN YOUR ACTIVITY HOURS

Child Care Safety Net

The Child Care Safety Net is being progressively rolled out from July 2016 and aims to give the most vulnerable children a strong start, while supporting parents into work. It has three components:

- **Additional Child Care Subsidy**
- **Community Child Care Fund**
- **Inclusion Support Programme**

Additional Child Care Subsidy – July 2018

The Additional Child Care Subsidy is a top up payment in addition to the Child Care Subsidy.

Extra support for	Additional subsidy
Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect; grandparent principal carers on income support; families experiencing temporary financial hardship	A subsidy equal to 100 per cent of the actual fee charged (up to 120 per cent of the hourly rate cap), up to 100 hours of assistance per fortnight
Extra support for	Additional subsidy
Parents transitioning to work from income support	A subsidy equal to 95 per cent of the actual fee charged (up to 95 per cent of the hourly rate cap), hours of assistance determined by the activity test

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) – July 2018

Under the CCCF, child care services will be able to apply for supplementary funding through a grants program to:

- reduce the barriers in accessing child care, in particular for disadvantaged or vulnerable families and communities
- provide sustainability support for child care services experiencing viability issues
- provide capital support to increase the supply of child care places in areas of high unmet demand.

\$61.8 million of the CCCF will provide a third funding stream for Budget Based Funded services to ensure their viability in the new system. This is in addition to the Child Care Subsidy and the Additional Child Care Subsidy.

Connected Beginnings – July 2016

As part of the CCCF, the Connected Beginnings program commenced in July 2016. The program provides funding for the integration of child care, maternal and child health, and family support services in a number of Indigenous communities experiencing disadvantage, as recommended by Andrew Forrest in his review of Indigenous jobs and training – *Creating Parity*.

Inclusion Support Programme – July 2016

The Inclusion Support Programme assists mainstream services to improve their capacity and capability to provide inclusive practices and address barriers to participation for children with additional needs, particularly children with disability.

Implementation timeframe

- Connected Beginnings and the Inclusion Support Programme commenced in July 2016
- Consultation on Minister’s Rules and program guidelines is already underway
- Child Care Subsidy, Additional Child Care Subsidy and Community Child Care Fund commences in July 2018

A Post Implementation Review following full implementation will be conducted as part of a formal evaluation of the package.

More information on the new child care package and other programs is available at:
www.education.gov.au