



Gracelands
Early Education Centre

Parent Handbook

7 Arnold Avenue, Kellyville NSW 2155

Phone: 9629 5499

Email: admin@gracelands.com.au

Dear Family,

Welcome to Gracelands Early Education Centre.

Gracelands is a family owned and operated Centre that strives to bring you and your child the highest quality care by providing a nurturing, warm, welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. We provide developmental programs designed to stimulate the mind and set the foundation for their education and arm them with an appreciation and thirst for learning.

In addition to stimulating the mind, we feel it is important to nurture the body. Hence we provide high quality healthy nutritional meals that your child will find both tasty and appealing.

We support and encourage our families to be active contributors and participants in our Centre as we believe this partnership assists in the development of a child to fulfil their full potential.

This handbook will provide you with important information you need to know about our Centre to ensure the best possible start to your child's care and education.

Gracelands is licensed by NSW Department of Education and Community Services and we operate in accordance with the legislative requirements of the *Education & Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

Should you have any questions or queries we are more than happy to assist you.

We look forward to welcoming your family into ours and extending our family tree.

Kindest Regards,



Elizabeth Russo
CENTRE DIRECTOR/APPROVED PROVIDER



CENTRE INFORMATION

Centre Director: Elizabeth Russo

Management: Joe Russo

Nominated Supervisor: Susie Abbas

Office Manager: Christine Thomas

Contact Details

Phone: 02 9629 5499

Address: 7 Arnold Avenue, Kellyville NSW 2155

Email: admin@gracelands.com.au
elizabeth@gracelands.com.au
christine@gracelands.com.au

Website: www.gracelands.com.au

Operation Hours: Monday – Friday 7:00am – 6.30pm

Long Day Care Fees

| Room | Daily Rate |
|------------|------------|
| Nursery | \$129.00 |
| Toddlers | \$125.00 |
| Pre-Kindy | \$119.00 |
| Pre-School | \$119.00 |

Pre-School Hours Fees

| Room | Amount |
|------------|----------|
| Pre-Kindy | \$104.00 |
| Pre-School | \$104.00 |

- 9:00am – 3:00pm
- Minimum 2 days per week

Fees Include: All Meals
Nappies for Nursery and Toddler Room
Sunscreen for outside play
Sleep sheets for rest time

Parents to Provide: Broad rimed, Bucket Hat or back flap sunhat
Bag with a change of clothes (all items to be labelled)
Baby formula, labelled bottles, dummies or comforters
Children to bring a labelled plastic drink bottle filled with **WATER**, with lid (no aluminium bottles)

Fees are reviewed on a bi-annual basis or whenever a significant event that is beyond our control is imposed on the Centre. In the event of a fee increase, Parents will be provided with a minimum two (2) week's notice of an impending fee rise.

OUR CENTRE PHILOSOPHY

Welcome to Gracelands Early Education Centre.

Gracelands Early Education Centre is a family owned and operated Centre that strives to bring children and their families the highest quality care by providing a nurturing, warm, welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. We provide developmental programs designed to stimulate their mind, set foundations for their education and equip them with an appreciation and thirst for learning.

Children

- Children are unique and capable individuals, who come to our Service with their own interests, talents, skills, and ideas. We value and appreciate that each child is unique and that their rights and choices are to be respected at all times.
- Each child in our care is worthy of love, acceptance and praise.
- Children have a right to be active participants in their own learning and will be empowered to express their views and ideas.
- A child's opinion is valued for its validity to their own personal perspective. Autonomy and initiative will be respected and encouraged.
- We, as Educators, will protect and cherish the innocence of children and thus strive to provide a safe and secure environment.
- We are committed to providing high quality care and education experiences to each child.

Families

- Children belong first to a family. Families will be acknowledged as being the primary source of information for the wellbeing of their child. The significance of their relationships cannot be underestimated. Family values and cultures will be included into all aspects of the daily routines, program development and implementation.
- Every family will be welcomed, treated with respect, professionalism and understanding.
- Communication between families and Educators should be open, honest and frequent to provide and encourage Parents with the opportunity to express their opinions and or concerns.
- We strive to develop positive, mutually respectful relationships with each family member, as we work in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.
- We believe that working in partnerships with families is central to ensuring continuity and progression in a child's learning, development and future success.

Educators

- We recognise Educators as our Service's biggest asset and most precious resource. Our Educators are well trained and passionate.
- We appreciate the experience and skills of all our Educators. We value their dedication as an integral element of the success of our Service.
- We aim to provide our Educators with a satisfying and safe working environment.
- Team work and effective communication are essential requirements for positive outcomes across all aspects of the Services' functioning; "together everyone achieves more".
- Educators are responsive to all children's strengths, abilities and interests. We will value and extend on children's skills and knowledge to ensure they are motivated and engaged in learning.

- We aim to create an environment of trust and respect, where we work towards achieving a shared goal. Ongoing education and training is a critical aspect of Educators professional development and we will continue to offer for our Educators the opportunity to extend their skills and knowledge.
- Ongoing critical reflection enables us to identify areas which may be considered a skill and those which may need further development.

Programs and Education

- In Early Childhood Education the curriculum is not the focus, the children are. We feel that a meaningful, integrated, emergent curriculum using the Early Years Learning Framework is the most beneficial to children's learning across all developmental domains.
- Children learn through play, therefore play is a vital part of our program.
- Educators will work alongside your child to actively promote their learning through worthwhile and challenging experiences and interactions that foster problem solving skills.
- Our curriculum, in which children are active participants and collaborators, allows for an individualistic and meaningful involvement by the children.
- We believe children are unique individuals who develop at their own rate. We will provide enriching, meaningful and realistic opportunities for children to explore, create, discover, and imagine.
- Children will be given time to play and learn, opportunities to explore and experiment, and encouragement to make decisions and to develop their self confidence.
- Our programs reflect planned and spontaneous experiences designed to support children's development in all domains. Through the Early Years Learning Framework, the program will see Educators use intentional teaching, (this is deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful). Educators who engage in intentional teaching recognise that learning occurs in social contexts and that interaction and conversations are vitally important for learning.
- Children are to be encouraged to negotiate within play experiences and resolve their own conflicts independently. Educators will recognise when intervention is needed and take responsibility to positively role model the correct outcome.

Environment

- Our Centre atmosphere is friendly, non-judgemental, nurturing and anti-biased.
- Children inherit a connection to the natural world. As Educators we understand that children often develop their ideas and understandings of the world around them from the information presented to them by the significant adults in their lives. Our Educators are some of those significant adults and therefore have a responsibility to present a positive approach to the environment.
- Our learning environments are welcoming spaces that strive to reflect and enrich the lives and identities of the children and families who participate in the setting. The learning environment will reflect and respond to their interests and individual needs.
- It is our duty of care to provide a safe and healthy environment for children, their families and Educators.
- We pride ourselves on our nutritional menu, ensuring the children receive the recommended daily dietary intake as advised by the various Governing Authorities.
- Our Service caters for different capacities and learning styles and invites children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions.

Communities

- We strive to be seen as a Service of Excellence within our community, a Service which values community involvement in all aspects of our program. A Service where community resources are utilised effectively to enhance the growth and development of individual children, families, and Educators.
- We embrace diversity within our Service and the wider community so that children view this diversity with a sense of appreciation and wonder rather than misunderstanding and fear.
- By respecting, acknowledging, appreciating and accepting the diversity of our Community, our Service will embrace, celebrate and share traditions and cultures throughout our program.

Leadership and Management

- As a community of Management, Educators, Families and Children we collaborate together guided by the *Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)*. We evaluate and review our service working alongside the *National Quality Standard* and developing our *Quality Improvement Plan*.
- We believe in a strong commitment to participative, collaborative and consultative management.
- We are committed to continuous improvement. We reflect on all the service's operations and administrative systems, putting plans in place to support performance improvement.
- We put in every effort to be available to support our Educators, Families and Children promoting a positive organisational culture and having a positive presence in our local community.

Source:

- Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments.
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority: The National Quality Framework
- Australian Early Childhood Code of Ethics
- The Early Years Learning Framework
- NSW Childcare Alliance



CENTRE TOUR

During a pre-enrolment Centre tour we take you on an informative tour of our service, to observe our Educators, practices and facilities. This is a great opportunity for all your questions about our child care service to be answered!

ORIENTATION PLAY SESSIONS

Leading up to your child's first day, we invite you to join us for an orientation play session at your convenience between the hours of 9:30am-11:30am or 3:00pm-5:00pm. You can visit as many times as you like. We exchange information with you to ensure that we understand your child's needs and home routines. Attending orientation play sessions benefits the transition between the home and Centre environment. It gives both the child and you as a Parent the opportunity to become more familiar with our routines and activities, bond with the Educators/Staff and ask any questions.

SEPARATION

When starting at a new Centre or new play environment and meeting new Educators/Staff and children, it is perfectly normal for your child to experience a little separation anxiety which is usually expressed through tears and tantrums! Our role as Educators/Staff is to ensure we provide reassurance, a smooth transition into room routines and an environment that is consistent to help your child settle easily.

To support both you and your child through this process, here are a few suggestions:

- Where possible, start your child at our Centre at least one week before returning to work as it is hard for both Parents and children to cope with such a big change at the same time. If possible, make your child's first few days a little shorter in duration.
- Parents are encouraged to spend a little time playing with your child before you leave to show your child that you enjoy being there and are comfortable with the Educators/Staff.
- Give your child a big hug and tell them that you will be back at a certain point in their routine. For example, "I will pick you up at after afternoon tea time".
- Always say "Goodbye" so that your child knows you are leaving. Please avoid coming back into the room once you have said your goodbye's as it will be confusing for your child emotionally. All rooms are fitted with observation windows (with reflective mirrors) so you can watch your child with the comfort of them not seeing you.
- Put our Centre phone number into your phone and call us during the day to see how your child is settling. Feel free to call at any time, however be assured that we will also contact you if your child is unusually upset.
- Expect changes in your child's eating and sleeping routines. At pick up, please read the "Daily Information Charts" and "Daily Program", which has all the information regarding your child's day.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS, ALLERGIES AND DIETARY NEEDS

Before enrolling you must inform management if your child has a diagnosed medical condition, allergy or dietary need. We have management care plans that require completion with your medical specialist to ensure our service can safely care for your child in our learning environment.

HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE DAY

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

When dropping your child off to care please arrive **no earlier than 7:00am**. Please make contact with your child's Educator and share information about how the child's night has been and further information to assist Educators/Staff with your child's day.

It is a legal requirement for you to sign your child **IN and OUT**, recording the arrival and departure times. Sign in/out sheets are provided in your child's room. Absences and Holidays do require Parent signatures. When the children are playing outside, the sign in/out sheets are located on the outside shelves. This is an essential requirement for Parents to be eligible for Child Care Benefits.

When picking up your child please arrive prior to the 6:30pm closing time. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute for the first 5 minutes, and \$5.00 per minute for every subsequent minute will apply for any pick up past our closing time.

If your child is booked in for Preschool Hours 9:00am-3:00pm drop off and pick up is strictly between these times. A fee of \$1.00 per minute will apply for every minute prior or past these Preschool Hours that your child is at the Centre.

COLLECTION OF YOUR CHILD

We will only allow Parents or persons recorded as emergency contacts to collect your child from the Centre. Always acknowledge your arrival and departure with one of our team members. If you are unable to collect your child from the Centre, please notify us of the name and address of the person who will be collecting them. Photo identification will be required for any persons unknown to the Educators/Staff. Guardians and emergency contacts are legally required to be 18 years or older to sign your child in/out of the service. Please keep the door code confidential to regular pick up/drop off emergency contacts otherwise ask them to ring the doorbell.

COMMUNICATION AND PARENT INFORMATION

We have notice boards located throughout our service with current Centre information. Please take the time to read our notices. Each child has a Parent Pocket located on the walls outside your child's classroom. There is one per family, labelled with your eldest child's first name. Book Club catalogues and various other notices are placed in your Parent Pockets to keep you up to date with what is happening in the Centre. Please check these on a daily basis. Statements, Daily Programs, Newsletters, Calendar of Events and most Parent Notices are emailed to your nominated email account.

CHILDRENS PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND LOST PROPERTY

During the day your child will participate in many different activities and it is important that they are dressed in appropriate clothing. Older children are encouraged to wear sensible footwear and suitable clothes for climbing, running and painting. We encourage children to wear aprons when painting or participating in other messy activities. However accidents do happen so please remember to send along at least one change of clothes each day.

Please ensure all your child's personal belongings are clearly **LABELLED**. Educators/Staff members make every effort to take care of all items. Each room has a lost property box for unidentified items. Toys are to be kept at home. Nursery and Toddler children may bring a comforter to assist them to settle for sleep. These items must be clearly labelled. Prekindy and Preschool children can bring toys and items of value when it is their rostered news time. Please place these items in a bag with your child's name on it, upon arrival please place this bag into the room's news box.

MEALS

Our service provides breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack. All meals are served fresh from our kitchen, are highly nutritional and meet the requirements of the NSW Food Authority's recommended daily food intake. We cater for most children's allergies and dietary requirements and where possible alternative meals will be prepared.

We provide a five (5) week rotating summer and winter menu. Daily menus are displayed outside the kitchen. Daily information sheets in each room record your child's eating habits. Educators interact with the children at meal times, assisting them with correct use of eating and serving utensils, encouraging good eating habits and the exploration of tasting new foods.

If your child has any allergies or dietary requirements please ensure the Centre is informed in writing and a consultation meeting arranged to complete a management care plan.

We are a strictly NUT FREE environment.

DRINKING WATER

Drinking water is available throughout the day for children. We ask our Parents to supply a **plastic labelled drink bottle fitted with a lid** for their children to use during care. We refill these bottles throughout the day with **filtered water**. Please remember to take them home with you at the end of the day, to be washed and refilled.

REST AND SLEEP

Our Centre provides bedding for all children and ensures the bedding is only used by one child before washing. In the Nursery, we adapt to the individual child's home routine and cots are provided to meet their sleep pattern needs. Educators/Staff follow Paediatric and Child Health Division guidelines to assist in the prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS); ensuring sleep time is safe and supervised.

During our daily routine, all children are very active. Our learning environments offer a wide variety of experiences that stimulate them mentally and physically. We provide sleep time across all our rooms. If a child chooses to sleep whilst in our care, their Educator must allow them this sleep time even if a Parent specifies that their child does not have a midday nap. If a child chooses not to sleep, books and quiet activities are provided at rest time.



SUN PROTECTION

We are committed to ensuring all children are protected from the harmful effects of the sun by modelling and promoting sun safe behaviour and ensuring age appropriate sun safety education is provided to all children. Centre Educators will ensure that sunscreen is appropriately applied to each child and that they have a suitable hat before going outside. In the foyer on arrival please apply sunscreen to your child's skin and place a stamp on their hand so Educator's know it has been applied. Parents are asked to pack a bucket or back flap sun hat for their child **EVERY DAY**. Our Centre has a **NO HAT- PLAY IN THE SHADE** policy whereby children without hats remain in covered/shaded areas during outdoor play time. Our outdoor morning and afternoon play sessions are scheduled by season and weather conditions. We follow and practice recommended guidelines by the Cancer Council and we are a **SUNSAFE CENTRE**. You can find the daily UV ratings on display outside the office.

HYGIENE

Hand washing is an important practice to minimise the spread of disease and illness. Children are taught hand washing techniques and hygiene practices through games and play. These practices are carried out by Educators and children where possible; i.e. before and after meals, after using the toilet and after messy activities.

CHILD ILLNESS

Our service aims to create a safe and hygienic environment for the wellbeing of our children, their families and our Educators/Staff. Children should not attend the Centre if they are unable to cope with daily routines and activities. Centre management has the final say as to whether a sick child can attend the Centre. If a child, whilst in our care, is showing signs/symptoms of illness or acting out of character Educators will check their temperature before contacting the child's Parent/Guardian.

If a child develops a temperature of 37.5°C or above whilst at the Centre, our Educators are First Aid trained and will implement the appropriate measures to reduce this naturally. The Parents will be contacted to approve the administering of Paracetamol or Ibuprofen and asked to collect their child within an hour. An *Administration of Medication and Temperature Record Form* will be completed by Educators and upon arrival the Parent will be asked to sign the document for our records. The Centre's *Incident, Illness and Injury Policy and Managing a Child with an Acute Fever Policy* states that children experiencing high temperatures will be excluded from the Centre **the following day** unless a doctor's clearance certificate is provided.

MEDICATION

If your child requires doctor prescribed medication whilst attending the Centre, you must complete the *Medication Form* detailing the following important information:

- Name and expiration date of medication
- Reason for the use of medication
- Time of last dose and how it was administered
- Dosage required at the Centre and how the medication is to be administered
- Time medication is to be administered
- Your signature and date
- If more than one type of medication needs to be administered, instructions on a medical certificate provided by your doctor must be attached.

The *Medication Form* must be completed on a daily basis if the medication is required for more than one day. Your child's Educator will sign the form to indicate that the medication has been administered. Any medication must be handed directly to the Educators in charge of your child's group so that it can be stored in an area inaccessible to children. Medication must be kept in its original container and cannot be shared by another sibling. Educators cannot administer non-prescription medication unless a doctor's certificate has been supplied.

Parents need to inform Educators if any medication, including Paracetamol or Ibuprofen, has been administered to the child before arriving at the Centre. The Centre's *Medication Policy and Procedure* states that children commencing a course of antibiotics will be excluded from the Centre **the following day** unless a doctor's clearance certificate is provided. This ensures the antibiotics are digested into the child's immune system and no allergic reaction has occurred.

SMOKE FREE PREMISES

Please refrain from smoking on the Centre premises, this includes within your vehicle.



INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Our Centre follows guidelines on health care as detailed in 'Staying Healthy in Childcare'. When any cases of an infectious disease are identified at the Centre we will display a notice outlining the name of the illness, sign/symptoms and exclusion periods. Other relevant health information will be provided through letters/emails, Newsletters and Parent displays. If Centre management are uncertain if a child has a contagious illness the Parent will be required to provide a doctor's certificate stating the child is not contagious and may return to care.

For further reading:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_childcare_5th_edition_0.pdf

IMMUNISATION

Our Centre has a responsibility and obligation to our families, children and Educators to prevent or minimise the risks and exposures to diseases that are preventable by vaccination. Immunisation is one of the most effective ways to manage this risk within the childcare environment, therefore we support the National Immunisation Program (NIP) which is currently recommended by National Health and Medical Research Council and supported by the Commonwealth Government. Under the new law which began on 1 January 2016, children must be up to date with their vaccinations, have a valid medical exemption, or be on a catch-up schedule if their parents want to keep receiving Child Care Benefits, the Child Care Rebate and the FTB Part A supplement. To ensure continuity of payments please ensure that we have the most recent copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement on file.

For further reading: www.immunise.health.gov.au

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

It is the Centres policy to focus on encouragement and positive guidance. We try to recognise why a child behaves in a certain way and encourage more acceptable forms of behaviour. It is important to establish trust and confidence between the children and Educators. We use language that is positive, clear and developmentally appropriate. Educators will be consistent with behaviour expectations and setting limits within the learning environment. If a child's behaviour is continually anti-social and is putting other children or Educators health or safety at risk then the following procedures will be followed:

- The child's Parents/Guardians will be continually informed of the incidents.
- A time will be made where appropriate for Educators/Parents/Guardians to meet to discuss the issues.
- A behaviour management plan will be implemented and carried out by Educators. External help may be sought if necessary. The plan will be evaluated and reviewed progressively.
- It may be necessary for the Parent/Guardian to collect their child early if other children/Educators are put at risk of harm.
- If after a reasonable period of time the child's behaviour is not improving, the Director and Educators will consult with Parents/Guardians in supporting them to find a more appropriate service.

CHILD RELATED ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

Our Centre is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all children in our care. Any child related incidents that may occur at the Centre are recorded on an '*Incident, Injury and Trauma Record Form*'. If your child has been injured during the day you will be required to sign the '*Incident, Injury and Trauma Record Form*' at pick up to indicate that you have been made aware of the incident. You may also be given a courtesy call to advise you of the incident and if necessary asked to collect your child. If you cannot be contacted and your child requires medical attention, we will take the necessary steps such as contacting the persons recorded as your emergency contacts or calling an ambulance.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO ADMINISTRATION

FEE PAYMENT

When you enrol at our Centre, you are required to pay a non refundable \$30 Administration Fee and a pro-rata two week Holding Bond at full fees. The Holding Bond is held to secure your child's position throughout their time at our Centre. When your child ceases care at the Centre, your Holding Bond will be refunded to your account and any amounts owing to you will be refunded into your nominated bank account once the two week termination notice period has passed and all of your child's attendance records have been processed by CCMS. **If after paying your Holding Bond you choose not to commence at Gracelands your Holding Bond is forfeit and therefore non refundable.**

Fees are charged and paid two weeks in advance. Statements are issued weekly on a **Monday** providing the amount due to be debited. It is **your responsibility** to open your statement and read it, checking that it is correct and reflective of your CCB/CCR entitlements. Please contact Christine in the office if you have any queries directly with your account. Fee payment is through Direct Debit via a Savings or Cheque account (weekly, fortnightly or monthly). Declined direct debits will incur a late fee surcharge of 10%. Direct debits that frequently decline will result in a written warning and possible termination of care.

CREDIT CARD

Within our Enrolment Form, we require a copy of your Credit Card details. If Direct Debit fee payment is declined, written consent permits us to deduct the due amount using the Credit Card details provided. A Credit Card surcharge of 1.5% will be added to your statement. American Express or Diners Card are not accepted.

CHILD CARE FEE ASSISTANCE

The Australian Government provides financial assistance to help you with the cost of placing your child in care. In order to claim Child Care Benefit or Child Care Tax Rebate eligible families must provide us with:

- Your Customer Reference Number (CRN)
- Your child's Customer Reference Number (CRN)
- Your Date of Birth
- Your Child's Date of Birth

This information will be provided to and validated against DEEWR records in order for you to receive CCB and or CCR. If you do not have a CRN please contact the Family Assistance Office by calling 13 61 50, online at www.centrelink.gov.au or by visiting an office in person.

Families now have four CCR payment options:

| | |
|----------|---|
| OPTION 1 | CCR paid weekly/fortnightly to your service as a fee reduction thereby reducing the gap fee, after attendance records have been submitted by our service. |
| OPTION 2 | CCR paid weekly/fortnightly to your nominated bank account after attendance records have been submitted by our service. |
| OPTION 3 | CCR paid quarterly to your nominated bank account. |
| OPTION 4 | CCR paid annually to your nominated bank account. |

When completing the assessment process for child care fee assistance, we **STRONGLY RECOMEND** that all families choose:

- ✓ **OPTION ONE**: Child Care Tax Rebate is **PAID TO THE SERVICE** weekly/fortnightly as a fee reduction thereby reducing the gap fee, after attendance records have been submitted by our service.

For most families, the Family Assistance Office will retain a small amount (15%) of the weekly/fortnightly Child Care Tax Rebate payment until the correct entitlement is calculated at the end of each financial year. This is to assist families incurring a debt because of changes to their entitlements throughout the year.

ABSENCES

Please contact the office if your child will not be attending care on their booked day. On return the "Sign In/Out" sheets must also be signed for any absenteeism. Please note if your child is absent fees will be charged at the daily rate, half fees and make up days cannot be applied. If you are absent on a booked make up day it is still included as used.

ADDITIONAL CASUAL DAYS

Additional casual days of care are often available. Please contact the office to check availability.

LEAVING THE SERVICE

Two weeks written notice must be provided to Centre Management advising your intention to withdraw your child from our care. Your Holding Bond will be refunded to your account and any credits will be refunded once your child's attendances have been processed by CCMS. Please note, your child must attend their last day of care to receive CCB and CCR entitlements from the Family Assistance Office otherwise the full fee will be applied.

UPDATING INFORMATION

It is the responsibility of our Parents to inform the Centre of any changes that can affect the care we provide. Contact numbers (home, mobile, work), home address, new credit card expiry dates and authorised persons to collect your child are all examples of information we need kept current.

HOLIDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Gracelands offers a 50% discount on your childcare fees for holidays taken up to a four week period (pro rata) **per calendar year**.

5 day booking = 20 holiday half fee days
4 day booking = 16 holiday half fee days
3 day booking = 12 holiday half fee days
2 day booking = 8 holiday half fee days
1 day booking = 4 holiday half fee days

Two weeks written notice in advance is required to apply the discount on your nominated days. Please note, for holiday half rates to be applied your account needs to be balanced or in credit.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Gracelands allows make-up days for Public Holidays and applies a 50% fee reduction for five day a week attendance. Make-up days need to be booked within an **eight (8) week period of the Public Holiday and are subject to your account being up to date. Make up days need to be booked on a day your child does not attend the Centre, cannot be used or swapped with booked days or absent days**. Parents still need to sign the Public Holiday sign in/out sheets to acknowledge the booking.

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

We close our service for a short period over the Christmas holidays. This period varies from year to year depending on the day Christmas falls. Please ensure you read your newsletter for the closing dates so your holidays can be planned around these dates. Families' accounts are not charged during the closed period (approx 2 weeks).



BIRTHDAYS

We encourage Parents to let their children share special celebrations with us at the Centre. If you would like us to celebrate any occasion with your child please talk to your child's Educator. Please keep in mind we have children enrolled with allergies, so cakes brought from home must be accompanied by a list of ingredients.

We can supply your child's birthday cake for \$5.50. Please place your order with the office minimum one (1) week notice is required.

PARENT FEEDBACK AND PARTICIPATION

We recognise that Parents are the primary carers and Educators of their children. Our Centre has an "Open Door Policy" welcoming Parents to visit at any time or call to see how their child's day is. We encourage you to spend time with us in our Centre to build open and honest communication channels, working in partnership to provide continuity and quality care to meet the individual needs of your child. Parent involvement can be in a variety of ways including:

- Exchanging current information on a day to day basis with Educators.
- Attending special occasions such as Mother's Day Afternoon Tea, Father's Day Afternoon, Family Fun Days, End of Year Concerts or Grandparents Morning Play.
- Joining us for a play session such as craft, reading a story, preparing a cooking class, singing a new song or teaching us a new dance.
- Sharing resources, ideas or recipes from home.
- Provide feedback verbally and non-verbally on our feedback forms available within the Centre on – menus, policies and procedures, building and equipment, etc.
- Taking the time to read our notices and emails, Newsletters, Event Boards, Parent Information Areas, Daily Information Sheets and Daily Program.
- Participate by completing and returning annual surveys.

GIVE AND TAKE

In the foyer we have a permanent basket for non-perishable food donations for our chosen local charity "Give and Take". These baskets get picked up monthly and the items are put into care packages for families living in the Hills Area that are in need of support. If you would like to donate other household items you can contact them directly at: giveandtakefamilies@outlook.com

BABYSITTING

It is a policy of the service that Educators employed at the Centre will maintain professional relationships with our families and kindly decline any requests to care for children outside working hours.

For qualified experienced babysitters please contact:
Expect a Star www.expectastar.com.au 1800 669 653

OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Gracelands Early Education Centre is a 99 place privately owned Long Day Care Centre, catering for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years. Our learning environment is divided into age appropriate rooms:



NURSERY ROOM “GUMNUT BABIES” 0-2 YEARS

Our Nursery Room provides quality care for babies and toddlers with a secure and nurturing home like environment. Our Educators provide individualised care, meeting their individual physical and emotional needs whilst interacting, playing and caring for your child. We are committed to developing a trusting relationship that makes you and your child feel comfortable, happy and relaxed.



TODDLER ROOM “BUSY BEES” 2-3 YEARS

In the Toddler Room we aim to provide a happy, relaxed and secure environment. Through guidance and role modelling we aim to assist children develop skills to be more independent and develop self confidence. These self help skills include toilet training, feeding, dressing and recognising their own belongings.



PREKINDY ROOM “HAPPY HIPPOS” 3-4 YEARS

In the Prekindy Room we provide all the answers to “why?” as children now understand who they are and what they want. We encourage questions to be asked and give the children the responsibility to choose their desired activities and be responsible to pack them away when they finish. The Prekindy room starts the “foundation skills” for future learning.



PRESCHOOL ROOM “WISE OWLS” 4-5 YEARS

Our Preschool Room specifically caters for children who will be attending school the following year. We offer a comprehensive school readiness program that continually builds on your child’s learning skills until they graduate to big school. This involves a vast range of projects, experiments, learning centres and computer activities catering for individual, small and large grouped learning experiences.

To ensure a smooth transition to school our service also:

- Networks with local schools. Exchanging school readiness expectations and resources.
- Networking children/Parents enrolled to the same primary schools together.
- Provides you will half yearly Developmental Reports.
- Offers Parent/teacher interviews to exchange information on your child’s developmental progress through your child’s observation portfolios and answer any questions or concerns.
- Offers within our *Calender of Events*:
 - # *Lunchbox Week*- we ask you to provide a lunchbox and our Cook will pack a nutritious lunch box meal that will assist children in learning how to unwrap and open packets and also allow each child to practise the skills they will need to choose and feed themselves at big school.
 - # *School Uniform Week*- children dress in their school uniforms. Benefits include extending on your child’s pride and self esteem, recognition of school mates in the same uniform, increases language opportunities as they discuss with peers what school they are going to.

OUTDOOR PLAY AREA

Physical activity is an integral part of the children's day and it is important that they can run and jump and climb away from the confines of indoors. Our outdoor play spaces are much larger than the prescribed minimum standard and are divided into two developmentally appropriate areas: 0-3 years and 3-5 years.

Outdoor play encourages co-ordination, development of social skills, gross motor skills and self confidence. Each of the outdoor areas offers activities that are structured and unstructured promoting adventure and exploration in safe and natural environment.

Our outdoor environments are modified from time to time to make sure the program remains stimulating, exciting and interesting.

We offer the following extra curriculum outdoor activities for our children including our own vegetable garden, worm farm, compost bin recycling program, animal enclosure with chickens and rabbits and a bird aviary with budgerigar and quails.

When the children are playing outside, you can find the "sign in/out sheets" on the outside shelves. Please remember to sign in and out daily!

FAMILY GROUPING

The Nursery children are dropped off and picked up in the Nursery Room. The Toddler, Prekindy and Preschool children family group in the Toddler Room between 7:00am-7:30am for breakfast. Then the Prekindy and Preschool children family group in the Happy Hippo Room till 8:30am, then again between 5:15pm and 6:00pm. The whole Centre family groups between 6:00pm-6:30pm for pick up in the Nursery Room. We support and encourage sibling play especially during the settling in period when the children first start care.



OUR PROGRAM

Our program is guided by the National Early Years Learning Framework for Australia - Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Framework forms the foundation for ensuring that all children in the early childhood education and care settings experience quality teaching and learning.

Play is considered the key way in which children learn. Our program and the learning environment are carefully arranged so that children have access to a range of resources that challenge them to develop new skills or practice recently acquired ones. Each child is encouraged to develop at their own pace, having opportunities to make choices and freely express themselves. All activities are programmed by our experienced Educators and are based on all the individual children's needs, strengths and interests.

A copy of the program is emailed daily and displayed on the Parent Information Wall in each room. Also on display is our Centre Philosophy, Room Routines and Learning Outcomes.

For further reading: www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We are continually learning and implementing ideas and strategies on how to care for and preserve our environment.

We have many sustainable daily practices that include:

- ✓ Saving water.
- ✓ Recycling paper and cardboard.
- ✓ Composting green waste.
- ✓ Using recyclable materials for art and craft.
- ✓ Using natural materials where appropriate.
- ✓ Growing edible gardens and caring for animals.
- ✓ Using email to communicate rather than print.
- ✓ Be more wise when photocopying, reducing print and double printing.
- ✓ Shredding paper to donate to the local pet barn.
- ✓ Recycling staff coffee pods into the garden.



Educating our children on best sustainable practices helps them be active learners who appreciate and value the world around them.

DEVELOPMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

These are the records we keep on your child and are available for you to view at any time:

- **INDIVIDUAL PORTFOLIOS:** Contain a variety of formats where Educators/Staff record their monthly observations. Also available are routine Forms completed upon enrolment and Parent Feedback Forms, information and evaluation of specific activities programmed for your child, samples of artwork and completed Developmental Checklists.
- **COMMUNICATION BOOKS:** Each room has an Educator Communication Book where Educators will record any pertinent messages parents may have at hand-over/drop-off. Educators/Staff will check these books as they begin each shift and throughout the day, and respond to the messages parents may have left for them.
- **NURSERY DAY BOOKS:** Children under the age of 12 months have an individual Day Book recording their daily routines. There are two sections:
 - a) Your child's night/morning before care (Parents complete)
 - b) Your child's day during care (Educators/Staff complete)Information exchanged includes, sleep/meal/bottle/nappy patterns, medication and children's behavioural information.
- **CHILDRENS DAILY INFORMATION SHEETS:** Children 12 months-5 years have their daily information (meals and sleep) recorded on Daily Information Summary Sheets. These sheets are available to check near the sign in/out folders in your child's room.
- **HALF YEARLY DEVELOPMENTAL SUMMARIES:** Sent home during the month of July, these Developmental Summaries provide a descriptive statement for each of the Early Years Learning Framework's five outcomes. This documentation provides a wonderful account of your child's time that you can revisit throughout the years as your child continues to grow.
- **WEEKEND SHEETS:** Each classroom have 'Weekend Sheets' available for you to record all the exciting activities you get up to on your weekend. These are then read by the Educators and incorporated into our interest based learning program.
- **ART AND CRAFT FOLDERS:** These are located outside each of the classrooms. Folders labelled with your child's first name will be filled with art and craft pieces for you to take home.