



# Early Years @ Phoenix Park

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## Long Day Care and Kindergarten

**Welcome** | Our Family Handbook provides important information you need to know to ensure the best possible start to quality education and care at Early Years @ Phoenix Park.

We strongly recommend you read the provided information and ask questions to confirm your understanding of how our service operates. You will be required to sign and return the form on the last page of the handbook to confirm you have read and understand the information you have been given in your enrolment pack.

*We have an open-door policy and you and your family are welcome to visit our Service at any time.*

# Service Philosophy

Firstly, we are proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people from the East Kulin region as the traditional owners of this land and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

EY@PP is a place where:

- children feel happy, safe and nurtured, surrounded by warm & responsive relationships;
- families feel welcome and supported, and
- Community members can meet, build connections & develop a strong sense of community.

Our Vision is for a strong and cohesive community in which children are central and families are supported.

Our Mission is to work together to deliver accessible, high quality integrated community based early childhood services that maximise child and family wellbeing and build and strengthen community connectedness.

EY@PP is committed to:

- **Being child-centred**  
We recognise children as active participants and decision makers in their learning within a play based curriculum. In developing the learning environment we listen to children, we support the development of their relationships, and value their contribution within the community.
- **Supporting families**  
Communication with parents is respectful, regular and responsive to individual needs and values. Families are supported through listening and sharing information about their child. Educators recognise what is important to families and reflect on how this can be supported through professionally recognised guidelines. Education and resources are made available.
- **Building communities**  
Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin all aspects of the centre. We acknowledge Australia's Indigenous heritage and that of the wider community. We invite the sharing of skills, knowledge and aspirations, building a community of learners with opportunities to connect families with each other and with other services.
- **Working together**  
We create a community in which the questions, expectations, and knowledge of children, families and educators, all have a respected place. Diverse communication methods are used to strengthen relationships. A collaborative approach sustains the evolving curriculum planning processes.

CONTENTS			
Service Information			
Service Type		Permanent and casual bookings	
Contact Information		Waiting list	
Management Structure			

		Policies and Procedures Orientation	
Our Commitment to Child Safety Code of Conduct Our educators and staff		Arrival and Departure The first day/week	
National Quality Framework		What you need to bring	
Regulatory Authorities Educator to child ratios		Lunch box ideas Meals	
Early Years Learning Framework		Breastfeeding Clothing Toys	
Educational Program		Behaviour Guidance Wellbeing Physical Play	
Goals for your child Documentation of learning		Rest and Sleep Birthdays Family Walls	
Communication		Sun Safety Parent Participation	
Enrolment Information		Family involvement Community information	
Fees, rebates and attendance		Health and Hygiene	
Complying Written Agreement Absences		Safety in our Service	
Withdrawal from care		Parent Acknowledgement	

## Service Information

Our Service caters for children aged 12 weeks to 6 years. We are open from 7.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and closed on Victorian public holidays. Notice will be given in Storypark or via email when these days occur.

We have 8 programs

3-20 months – Joeys

18 months – 2.5 years - Kangaroos

2-3-years - Wombats

3-4 years – Sugar Gliders

3-5 years - Emus

3 year Sessional Kindergarten- Wallabies

4 year Sessional Kindergarten - Platypus

4 year old Integrated Kindergarten – Quokkas

*SERVICE TYPE: Not for profit, community based, committee managed early childhood service.*

## Contact Information

Phone: 03 9569 9500

Email: [admin@eypp.org.au](mailto:admin@eypp.org.au)

Website: [www.eypp.org.au](http://www.eypp.org.au)

## Management Structure

Approved Provider: *Early Years @ Phoenix Park*

Nominated Supervisor: *Vasiliki Sotiriou*

Director: *Vasiliki Sotiriou*

Assistant Director: *Brogan Howson*

Educational Leader: *Helen Bell & Courtney Murray*

OH&S/Enrolments Officer: *Mischelle Glossa*

## Our Commitment to Child Safety

Our Service is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children is always maintained, whilst being educated and cared for by educators and staff at Early Years @ Phoenix Park. We promote a child safe environment that minimises the risk to all children in our care from all types of abuse, harm

and neglect. We understand our responsibilities and statutory duty of care to adopt and comply with the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Our staff carry out their responsibilities as mandatory reporters as required by law under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act 1998) and maintain up to date with knowledge of child protection law and child protection training.

Our staff are recruited through an extensive screening process to ensure they display the right personal qualities and experiences to provide high quality supervision and care to child in addition to holding a validated Working With Children Check.

We have a zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards children and any breach of child protection law. Any allegation or concern will be responded to promptly by management. We request that you contact our Director if you have any concerns on 03 9569 9500 or [admin@eypp.org.au](mailto:admin@eypp.org.au)

## Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct establishes the standards for all employees of our Service. Employees are committed to adhere to the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals outlined in the Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics. The values that underpin our work ethic include equality, respect, integrity, and responsibility.

## Our educators and staff

Our Service is made up of a team of high-quality professional educators who are committed to and passionate about early childhood education and care. Our staff promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children and consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children. We create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.

Our educators are continually evaluating how our curriculum meets the educational needs of our children and reflecting on ways to improve children's learning and development and are supported by a team of highly qualified professionals. Our educational leader and early childhood teachers guide our educators in providing quality, research based educational programs.

Our educators consider children's learning styles, abilities, interests, linguistic and cultural diversity, and family circumstances when planning and implementing learning programs. We support and respect the history and backgrounds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and aim to foster each child's sense of identity.

All staff are encouraged and supported to attend professional training and development to further their knowledge and skills.

All staff hold valid Working with Children Checks/Cards and all Responsible Persons (placed in charge of the day-to-day running of the service) have current ACECQA approved First Aid, Emergency Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications.

For further details on the qualifications of the educators, please see our Director.

## National Quality Framework

Our Service complies with the Australian Government's National Quality Framework (NQF) which consists of the legislative framework of the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and a rigorous assessment and rating system. Our educational program and curriculum are based on the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). We regularly self-assess our practices against the National Quality Standard and strive for continuous improvement through our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP assists our service to identify quality aspects of care we are already providing and assists in developing future goals for further improvement. Families are welcome to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. Additional information about the NQF can be found at [ACECQA/nqf/about](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about)

## Regulatory Authority

Our Service is regulated by the national body for early education and care – the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as well as the state licensing department in Victoria. To contact our Regulatory Authority, please refer to the contact details below:

## Educator to child ratios (VIC)

We comply with the National Regulations for educator to child ratios across our Service to ensure adequate supervision is provided for all children. Ratios are calculated across the service. This provides us with flexibility to respond to children's interests and needs at different times during the day.

### AGE OF CHILDREN:

### EDUCATOR TO CHILD RATIOS:

Birth to 24 months	1:4
Over 24 months and less than 36 months	1:5
36 months up to and including preschool age	1:11

## Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was developed to ensure all children in early childhood education and care settings across Australia, experience quality teaching and learning through play-based, holistic learning. The EYLF is made up of learning outcomes, principles and practices which educators use in their documentation of children's learning and in their reflection and planning. Fundamental to the EYLF is a view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging, being and becoming*.

From before birth, children are connected to family, community, culture and place. Their earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.

### BELONGING

Experiencing *belonging* – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging.

Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

## BEING

Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world. Being recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present.

## BECOMING

Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. Becoming reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

*The framework conveys the highest expectations for children's learning from birth to five years and through transitions to school. The expectations are communicated through the five overall learning outcomes.*

### Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

### Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

### Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

### Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners



- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

#### Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work
- Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

## Educational Program

We are committed to providing a developmental and educational program which caters for each child's individual needs, abilities, and interests. Our educational program is delivered through an intentional, play-based pedagogy aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Our program continues to develop as we use the relationships children have with their families and communities, working in partnership with parents, to ensure each child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities, and interests are the foundation of our programs.

We encourage children to be responsible for their own learning through choices in experiences, interests, and routine. We use conversations, actions and play as the basis for teaching which involves the children being partners in teaching by seeking out ideas, opinions, thoughts, and questions. We encourage children in promoting their independence and self-help skills by assisting within the routine and involving the children in interest-based projects to further enhance their learning and knowledge. We value children and family input and encourage family involvement to gather a comprehensive and holistic view of the child.

We know that children learn effectively through play and educators who are diligent in their responsiveness to each child support this. Applying strong intentional teaching practices provide the

children with an authentic and meaningful learning environment that challenges, supports and nurtures a child's development.

If we as educators have any areas of concern about your child's development, we will inform you and share our observations and advise of follow up assistance e.g., speech therapy. We understand this may be a sensitive topic and it is always your decision to follow up intervention. Educators are willing to discuss any aspect of learning and development with parents and support discussions with allied health professionals.

## Goals for your child at our Service

*"We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being."*

*Maria Montessori*

Educators' practices and the relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children's involvement and success in learning. Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support young children's learning. Children's early learning influences their life chances.

Wellbeing and a strong sense of connection, optimism and engagement enable children to develop a positive attitude to learning. (Early Years Learning Framework p.9).

We will create a range of short and long-term goals for your child that we will program to and observe on which will be based on the outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework and include:

- mutual respect and empathy
- concern and responsibility for self and others
- a sense of self worth
- social awareness
- importance of sustainability
- self-discipline and self-regulation
- habits of initiative and persistence
- creative intelligence and imagination
- self-confidence as an independent learner
- a love of learning.

We strongly encourage communication between families and educators to ensure continuity in what we are delivering to your child and acknowledge that the role of the educator is to work in partnership with families, children's first, and most influential educators.

## Documentation of Learning/ Portfolios

Educators observe children and facilitate their learning to provide each child with a personal, confidential digital/hard copy portfolio by documenting their learning throughout the year.

Our Service uses a variety of documentation to demonstrate learning which may include:

- your child's profile
- goals from families and educators
- observations- learning stories, captioned photos
- objectives for further development
- work samples- drawings, photos, recorded video
- checklists and transition statements.

The individual child's portfolio is maintained and used as a direct tool for evaluation and future planning within the Service's program. This makes the program reflect the value of individuality and is not used as a means of comparison between peers or stereotypes. The portfolio will be used in parent/educator meetings throughout the year and is always available for you to review at your convenience.

## Communication

We work in partnership with you and your family. We support and encourage communication with your child's educators about your child's unique needs and their general enjoyment of their day at our Service. Everybody has a preferred time and method of communication. Sometimes, mornings and afternoons can be a little rushed, and not the best time to discuss your child's progress. You are encouraged to talk to our Nominated Supervisor to arrange to meet your child's educator at a mutually convenient time.

Our Service uses Storypark to provide real time updates about your child.

We have many types of communication we use for families, including:

- Phone calls

- Emails
- Letters
- Face to face
- Storypark posts
- Formal meetings

## Enrolment Information

Prior to your child commencing at our Service, you'll be required to complete an enrolment form, provide documentation, and pay the bond.

### Enrolment Form

If you require assistance completing the enrolment form, please contact our Enrolments Officer or office staff for assistance.

We will require a copy of your child's immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register. This must show that your child is up to date with vaccinations for their age OR your child is on a recognised vaccine catch up schedule OR has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.

Please note, the names written on the enrolment form must match the names on your child's birth certificate to meet legal requirements.

### Family law and access

Our Service will uphold any responsibilities or obligations in relation to Family Law and access to the service. We require certified copies of any court order, parenting orders or parenting plans, relating to your child and request that if situations change, a copy of the Court Order is provided to our Service. We will only allow children to leave the Service with the written permission of the custodial parent/guardian. Without a Court Order we cannot stop a parent collecting a child.

### Authorised Nominees

You will be requested to provide information about authorised nominees on your child's enrolment form. These are persons that you provide permission to:

- collect your child from the Service
- provide consent for medical treatment for your child from a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service

- provide consent for the transportation of your child by an ambulance service
- provide consent to go on an excursion.

Please understand that it is essential we have up-to-date information on your child's enrolment record in case of an emergency. It is important that you notify the Nominated Supervisor (or Responsible Person) of any changes to enrolment information including:

- your residential address
- health of your child
- telephone/mobile numbers
- contact details for any parent or authorised nominee
- family changes (parenting orders)
- emergency contact information details etc.

## Authorisations

The enrolment form will include additional authorisations for our Service to seek medical treatment and emergency transportation for your child if required. Authorisations will also be requested for application of sun cream, permission to administer emergency medication to your child in the case of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency (Ventolin or Epi-pen), permission for an educator with current first aid to administer paracetamol in an emergency and permission to access medical treatment and transport in case of an emergency. Parents must also provide the name, address, and contact details of any person authorised to authorise our service to transport your child or arrange transportation for your child. This may be for authorisation for your child to go on an excursion and/or for your child to be transported by our service.

## Excursions/ Bush Kinder / Regular Outings

Excursions are an important and valuable part of learning in early education. They expose a child to a range of different experiences and help them to observe and understand the world around them. For any excursion or regular outing in our community, we will complete comprehensive risk assessments to minimise any identified risks as part of our planning for excursions. We provide parents with information about the excursion in advance and require written authorisation for each child to participate on an excursion or regular outing. Authorisation for regular outings will be gained once every 12 months or whenever any of the circumstances of the outing may change.

## Photographs, social media, promotion

As part of the enrolment process, we will also ask for your permission to take photographs and video of your child during normal activities and excursions for sharing with our parent community through Storypark, Instagram and/or to promote our Service to the community through marketing and promotional materials. Photographs and video may also be used as part of our observation and programming process.

## Medical conditions- Allergies, Asthma, Diabetes or Epilepsy

It is vital that we are aware of any medical condition including diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, eczema, asthma, risks of anaphylaxis of your child including any potential triggers. Families are required to indicate any allergy or asthma on the enrolment form.

Our Service requires a Medical Management Plan or ASCIA Asthma/Anaphylaxis Action Plan to be completed by your General Practitioner to assist in managing your child's needs. This needs to be provided prior to your child's commencement at the Service. In consultation with the Director, you will be asked to develop a Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan to assist our educators and staff. Any prescribed medication that your child may require must be provided each day they attend our Service.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child, please update your child's Medical Management Plan/ Action Plan every 12 months or whenever a change in their medication or treatment occurs. (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy) (ASCIA).

## Diagnosed disability

If your child has a diagnosed disability, please speak to our Director prior to enrolment.

We provide a supportive and inclusive environment that allows each child to fully participate in quality education and care.

We aim to develop and sustain supportive relationships with families and encourage discussions about how we can support your child to have equitable access to resources and participation. If your

child has a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) package, we may need your consent to contact services and/or therapists who are working with your child to seek information regarding their learning plan to support continuity of learning.

Our Service may be able to apply for additional support through the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) to assist your child's access.

## Fees, rebates and attendance

### Fees

Our daily fee for Long Day Care is: \$117 per day, before Child Care Subsidy (CCS) has been applied. This will be increased to \$122 per day from 2023.

Our daily fee for Integrated Kindergarten is \$122 per day, before Child Care Subsidy (CCS) has been applied. This will be increased to \$125 per day from 2023.

For 2023, sessional 3 and 4 year old kindergarten has no fee for families.

### Statement of fees

Each fortnight we will send you a statement via email before your fortnightly debit. Please check these statements to ensure all details are correct and accurate. If there is any discrepancy, please contact the office as soon as possible. Families are encouraged to check their statement to ensure CCS entitlements appear correct.

### Payment methods

Parents/guardians are required to complete a Direct Debit form upon enrolment. Fees will be deducted fortnightly.

### Bonds

Other Fees & Charges:

Families are required to pay a bond upon enrolment. The long day care bond is equivalent to two weeks of care and will be refunded onto your last statement prior to ceasing care.

A \$100 bond will be taken for all sessional kindergarten enrolments and will be refunded onto your last statement prior to ceasing care.

## Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Child Care Subsidy offers assistance to families to help with the cost of childcare aged 0-13 years.

There are 3 factors that will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy, which include:

- **Combined annual family income**
- **Activity test – the activity level of both parents**
- **Service type – type of child care service and whether the child attends school**

Families who wish to receive Child Care Subsidy as reduced fees must apply through the [myGov](#) website. This includes completing the Child Care Subsidy activity test. Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to our Service to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families will contribute to their childcare fees and pay the difference between the fee charged by our Service and the subsidy amount received. This is called the '*gap fee*'.

On enrolment we will need the Customer Reference Number (CRN) of the person linked with the child, along with the child's CRN so we can confirm the attendance and ensure that you are receiving the appropriate subsidy.

## Complying Written Agreement (CWA)

A Complying Written Agreement (CWA) is an agreement between our Service and a parent or guardian to provide childcare in exchange for fees. The CWA includes information about your child's enrolment including your child's full name and date of birth, the date the arrangement is effective from, session details and details of the fees to be charged. Before Child Care Subsidy can be paid, you must approve the enrolment information within the CWA via the [MyGov website](#).

## Absences

We encourage families to notify the Service as soon as possible if your child will be absent for any day or session you have booked. It is recommended that absences are notified to the Service by email or a phone call.

Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any absence from an approved child care service your child attends for up to 42 days per child per financial year.



You can access your child's absence record on your [Centrelink online account](#). You can also find this information of your fortnightly statements

If your child has not attended our Service for 14 continuous weeks, your child's enrolment will be cancelled, and Centrelink will stop paying your CCS subsidy.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is generally not payable for absences on the first or last days of enrolment. If a child is due to start enrolment on a set date and does not attend, CCS will not be paid until the child physically attends. Also if the child does not attend care on their last booked day, CCS may not be paid for any period after the child's last physical attendance at the service. There are some circumstances where CCS may be paid in these situations (including exceptions due to Covid-19 in 2022), please speak with the office for further information.

## Fees in arrears/ Financial Support

Fees are due to be debited 2 days after you receive your statement.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, please speak to the Director or Assistant Director.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) may be available to support your family. We may be able to organise a payment plan before your fees go into arrears.

## Withdrawal from care/Reducing Enrolment Days

We require 4 weeks written notice to withdraw and/or reduce enrolment days for your child/ren from any permanent booking. Children are not able to attract CCS for any days after the last day your child physically attends our Service. *There are some circumstances where CCS can be paid after the last day your child physically attends with an approved reason.*

## Service Closing Time and Late Collection Fees

Please be aware our Service and program closes at 6:00pm. In accordance with National Regulations and licensing, we are not permitted to have children in the service after 6:00pm. A late fee is incurred for children collected after 6.00pm.

The fee is \$1 per late minute and will be added to your next statement. The late fee is strictly adhered to, as two staff members are required to remain at the Service until all children are collected.

If we are unable to contact either the parent or a person nominated by the parent on the enrolment form to arrange collection of the child/children within an hour of the Service closing, we may need to contact the Police or other authorities to take responsibility of your child.

## Permanent and Casual Bookings

Permanent bookings are an ongoing booking that:

- remains the same from one week to the next
- are chargeable regardless of attendance

Casual bookings are one off bookings that:

- can be booked at the last minute for emergency care. This is provided that we have vacancies. If there is no vacancy, we will put your child on a casual waiting list and will contact you if a vacancy becomes available
- are designed to support families taking on casual work and shift work
- can be cancelled at no cost, provided 24-hour notice via email is given

## Waiting list

**Permanent waiting list:** If you would like to increase your child/ren's permanent sessions but there are no permanent vacancies, your child/ren will be placed on a waiting list until a position becomes available. Positions will be allocated in order of application, whilst adhering to our Priority of Access process.

## Priority of Access

Our Service aims to assist families who are most in need and may prioritise filling vacancies with children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

# Service Policies and Procedures

You will find a copy of our Service policies and procedures on the shelf inside the service office. We expect our staff and families to adhere to our policies and procedures at all times to ensure we maintain compliance and abide by the National Law and National Regulations.

Educators cannot make exceptions for individuals unless the Director or Management do so on account of serious and/or unusual circumstances.

We are constantly reviewing our policies and procedures and ask for staff and family participation to ensure our policies and procedures adhere to the needs of our families and meet required regulations. Your involvement helps us to improve our Service and may lead us to change our policies and procedures.

## Orientation-Preparing for your child's first day

Orientation is an important start for your child and family to connect to our Service. We encourage each child to attend our Service in the company of a family member before they start their first day with us. This gives you and your child the opportunity to gain an understanding of our program, the lay out of the room, where to put your child's belongings, provide educators with additional information about your child and how we can best support their transition and settling in period. The Enrolments Officer will contact you to arrange suitable times and days for visits.

If your child is reluctant to attend, please discuss this with their assigned educator so that they can develop strategies with you to support the transition from home to the Service. You are welcome to take photos of your child in our environment to show and discuss at home with them. Some children like to take a book from our library to read at home and return on the next visit.

## Arrival and Departure

Each day, you must sign your child in upon arrival and sign out upon departure via our iPads. You will be provided information on how to do this during your child's orientation. We are required by legislation to maintain our attendance record at all times. This record may be used in the event of an emergency situation at the Service.

Our staff have a duty of care to your child and will only allow your child to be released into the care of either a parent, guardian or an authorised nominee as listed on your child's enrolment record. If your

child needs to be collected by another person for some reason, you must provide the contacts details to management prior to collection. Our staff may ask to view photo identification of the adult collecting your child from care to confirm their identity.

## The first day/week

The first day in a new service is a big step for you and your child. Please don't be alarmed if your child experiences some separation anxiety. This is normal and our experienced educators will assist you and your child through this transition period. There may be tears and extra tight hugs when saying goodbye for the first few weeks but there are always cuddles, reassurance and genuine care from educators for both the children and their families. Sometimes this experience is upsetting more so for the family, not the child. We understand this and offer support through phone calls during the day, photos and open communication.

## Saying goodbye

We find what works best is a set routine so try to establish the care routine from the orientation process. Being well organised and avoiding a rush usually results in a calm start to the day.

Most children will want to have a look around first to see who else has arrived and to look at what activities are available. Please tell your child when you are leaving as they may become upset if they haven't had the opportunity to say goodbye. This will gain trust from the child, not only in you but in the educator, who is reassuring your child about their day and when you will return.

Rest assured; we'll contact you if your child becomes distressed.

## What you need to bring

### BACKPACK

For independence, we work towards all children being able to recognise and open their own bag. You can help by allowing them to be involved in selecting their bag and taking ownership of it. Please ensure it is large enough to hold all their belongings and is clearly labelled.

## SPARE CLOTHING

Every now and then, accidents occur, and it may be necessary for your child to get changed into a fresh set of clothes. Please include a complete change of clothes every day which can stay in your child's bag...just in case!

## DRINK BOTTLE

A labelled drink bottle is required every day for water. Children are able to refill their drink bottle when necessary, throughout the day. We always provide water and cups, but a drink bottle is a great start to school readiness.

## SUN HAT

A protective sun hat (either broad brimmed or legionnaire hat) must be worn when playing outside for protection against the sun. Please make sure to include it in your child's bag every day regardless of the weather conditions.

## MORNING TEA AND LUNCH *(for sessional kindergarten groups)*

Morning tea can be sent in either a medium-sized snap-lock bag (which can be reused) or if you prefer a small container, **clearly labelled with their name**

Children are asked to bring their lunch in a plastic/metal lunch box with a lid that they can open. Please send it in a cooler bag if food needs to remain cold as there will not be room for all lunches in the room fridge. We ask for you to clearly mark your child's name on the bottom of the box and lid. We also ask that you think about your child's ability to unwrap their lunch and open such things as muesli bars. Educators can provide tips to make this easier for your child.

We try to encourage healthy food choices at the Service and request that you provide sandwiches or wraps with nutritious fillings. Sprinkles & chocolate spreads are discouraged. Celery and carrot sticks or a salad are good additions to your child's lunch.

## Meals *(for long day care groups)*

Our Service promotes healthy eating habits and provides delicious and nutritious food for your child each day. We provide a nutritionally balanced breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late snack. We follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines to ensure our meals are prepared to meet the dietary requirements for all children. Our menu is carefully planned and prepared by a qualified cook.

We cater for the dietary requirements of all children enrolled at our Service. Please discuss your child's special requirements, allergies and any other medical conditions with the Director.

## Breastfeeding

We are a breastfeeding friendly service. Mothers who are breastfeeding are welcome to attend the Service during the day to feed their infant. We have a private, clean and quiet area for mothers to breastfeed their infants or express breastmilk.

Families that are breastfeeding should speak to the Director or Responsible Person to be aware of our policies on storing and serving breast milk.

Families that are formula feeding should also consult our Director or Responsible Person to be aware on how we need the formula prepared and stored. Regular communication is encouraged to ensure your infant's needs are met as they grow.

Please refer to our *Breastfeeding Policy*.

## Clothing

It is helpful to your child if they are dressed in non-restrictive, serviceable, and easy to wash clothes so that they feel free to join in all the activities and to develop independence. Shoes also, need to allow children freedom to run, climb, hop, and jump as well as being easy for the child to take off and put on by themselves. Joggers and sandals are appropriate shoes to wear.

Thongs and slippers are not suitable, and we prefer that these are NOT worn to the Service. Also, please consider clothing that enables the child to move around easily and allows children to be independent in dressing. Clothing such as long dresses, overalls, braces, belts and stiff buttons can prove a problem for children who need to go to the toilet. We require all t-shirts to have sleeves (no mid-drift tops) and hats that are broad brimmed are essential for effective sun safety.

## Toys

The Service has an abundance of toys and we ask that children do not bring in toys from home. This eliminates toys getting lost, broken, disappointment for other children and responsibility on educators to track numerous toys throughout the day.

# Behaviour Guidance

We encourage children to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour. We give children the opportunity to self-regulate their behaviours during play to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Educators follow a *Behaviour Guidance Policy* that extends across the whole Service giving consistency of expectation in all rooms. We use a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour to help them develop a respect for others, for property and respect for self. If you require further information on this policy, please ask educators and refer to our Policy manual.

# Wellbeing

Wellbeing is more than just feeling happy, it is about our overall health- physical, social, emotional, and mental. We provide opportunities for your child to develop a strong sense of wellbeing through dance, movement, yoga, mindfulness, music, and relaxation.

# Physical Play

Physical play includes activities that use physical movements to allow children to use their energy, enhance their concentration, motivation, learning and wellbeing. We feel physical play is a vital part of everyday life. We believe in providing children with a range of physical activities and experience on a daily occurrence for them to challenge their large and small muscles, allowing them to gain increasing control over their bodies as they learn the importance of physical play.

Physical play provides children with the opportunity to:

- develop strong bones and muscles
- improve strength and balance
- develop Flexibility and coordination
- develop Fundamental Movement Skills
- develop spatial awareness
- develop mathematical concepts
- be confident as they learn to control their bodies and understand their limits
- learn to cooperate and share with others
- promote healthy growth and development

## Rest and Sleep

Rest and sleep routines vary according to individual needs. We aim to make rest time a relaxed, pleasant time for all children. We provide beds for children and play soft music in the background. Your child may wish to bring a security item to have at rest time. Please feel free to discuss your child's rest or sleep needs with educators. Each day we provide information about the times your child rested or slept.

Quiet activities, such as puzzles and books are available for those children who do not sleep.

## Sustainability

Our Service is passionate about sustainability. We believe in supporting children to appreciate and care for the environment by embedding sustainable practice into the daily operation of our Service, infrastructure, and teaching.

To empower our sustainability program, we emphasise children's ability to make a difference, enabling them to learn and appreciate their environment in an engaging, fun and exciting manner. We do this by engaging children in discussion about sustainable practice, encouraging them to participate in a recycling program, reducing energy and conserving water. We aim to provide children with the skills and knowledge required to become environmentally responsible.

## Family Walls

We have a *Family Wall* in each of our rooms. This is a strong and valuable tool in our environment for your child to connect to, feel that they and their family are valued and that their family is as much a part of the Service, even if they are not always there. If you would like to bring in a photo, or a couple of photos that represent your family, we would love to add it to our wall.

## Sun Safety

We work in compliance with the *National SunSmart Early Childhood Program* to ensure children's health and safety is always maintained. We use a combination of sun protection measures whenever



the UV Index Levels reach 3 and above. We monitor the UV index levels daily and schedule outdoor activities when levels are safe. Our outdoor environment provides shade for play experiences, and we conduct regular risk assessments to ensure the play space and equipment is safe for children.

Children and educators must wear hats and appropriate clothing, including footwear when outside. Educators will encourage children, including by way of modelling behaviour, to avoid excessive exposure to the sun and to wear suitable sunscreen (at least SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum water resistant), which is reapplied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. We ask that children come to the Service with sunscreen already applied so they can participate in outdoor play immediately and not have to wait the 20 minutes after application. Consent to apply sunscreen is included in our enrolment form.

## Parent Participation and Feedback

Our Service has an Open-Door Policy and actively seeks and encourages families to be involved in the Service. This can range from evaluating and adding input to your child's program and observations, volunteering within the Service and sharing skills and experiences that the children and the program will benefit from and providing feedback.

You can be involved in our Family Committee. Your involvement can be as formal or active as you like as time permits. We respect that time is limited for most families and we ask that you inform us as to your preferred way of communication. We can arrange meetings with your child's educator at a time that suits you throughout the year and offer email, Storypark posts, Newsletters, and pride ourselves on strong verbal communication daily. We seek input from families on all aspects of the Service, in particular, your child's goals, observations and program.

If, for any reason you question or do not understand any aspect of the Service or your child's experience we have a *Dealing with Complaints Policy* that supports all stakeholders in our community and like all policies, is available for families to consult and implement at any time.

## Family involvement

We welcome and encourage the involvement of all parents/families at our Service. Your ideas, experiences and skills are greatly valued and will enable us to extend each child's interests, abilities,

and knowledge. There are many ways for your family to be involved. We understand that our busy lives can't always afford the time, however any contribution no matter how big or small is much appreciated. Here are just a few ideas.

## Your occupation or hobby

You are the most important person in their world. We welcome all parents to the Service to talk about their occupation or hobby (e.g. music, craft, cooking). Everything parents do interest children and these talks are the best educational resources you can provide for the Service.

We use information that has come from discussions about occupations and hobbies in our program and the ideas explored which can turn into interest projects providing valuable learning.

## Your home culture

We aim to foster relationships among families and community and invite you to share aspects of your culture, history, language, and celebrations with our Service. Your involvement greatly assists us to enrich the lives of all our families and children.

## Reading

Children love to be read to. If you or your parents have the time, please contact your room educators to organise a day for reading. We love grandparents visiting our Service!

## Recyclable items

We are always on the lookout for recyclable items for the rooms. Empty food containers, ribbons, wrapping paper, towel tubes (not toilet or egg or milk because of hygiene and allergy issues) paper or anything interesting from your work is much appreciated.

## Special events

Our Service organises special events throughout the year. We will communicate these to families in a timely manner. We encourage parent input in all aspects of these events. Some of these include fundraising, celebrations, and information sessions.

## Suggestions

Parents are welcome to visit or call the Service at any time. If you have any suggestions or ideas on how we best can work together in the Service, please let us know.

If you have any concerns, please see your child's educator or the Director. We have a grievance procedure if you would like to formally raise any concerns.

## Community Information

We have community notice boards across our Service. These boards are used to display relevant programs, menus, notices, updates and reminders for children and families. Please ensure you check these on a regular basis.

Our staff can also provide information for families about a range of topics including early intervention; supported playgroups; Child Care Subsidy; Aboriginal Child and Family centres; health clinics.

## Health and Hygiene

Our Service has effective and systematic risk management systems in place to identify any possible risk of hazards to our learning environment and practices. Strategies are outlined in our COVIDSafe Plan. We strictly adhere to Public Health Orders and recommendations to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus.

All staff diligently practice and model personal hygiene measures such as hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette and disposal of tissues. We request that all children and visitors to our service wash their hands or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser upon arrival.

Our educators teach and model correct hand washing techniques to children and regularly clean and disinfect high touch objects throughout the service to reduce the spread of infection.

## When should I not send my child to the Service?

Please monitor your child's health and do not bring your child to the Service if they are suffering from any illness or infectious disease. We ask that families are vigilant and not send children to the service even if they have the mildest of symptoms of COVID-19.

To minimise the spread of infections and diseases, and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators, and staff, we implement recommendations developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)- *Staying Healthy in Childcare*. Our policies and procedures for *Sick Children* and the *Control of Infectious Diseases* are available for all families to view.

Our Service is a busy and demanding day for the bodies and minds of our children. We are not equipped to care for sick children; however, we will do everything we can to comfort a child who has become sick whilst in our care.

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Service, we will contact you or an authorised nominee to collect your child within a 30-minute time frame where possible. If your child is unable to be collected, educators will contact the child's emergency contact for collection. When your child is collected, you will be provided with an *Injury, Incident, Trauma, and Illness Record* completed by the educator which includes information about your child's illness, their symptoms, general behaviour and any action taken. You will be requested to sign and acknowledge the details in this record.

Your child should not attend the Service if they have had paracetamol within 24 hours for a temperature. Children who are on antibiotics are to be kept away from the Service for the first 24 hours to allow the child to rest and the risk of spreading the infection to decrease. If your child has been vomiting or had diarrhoea, they will be excluded for 48 hours. For certain illnesses, a medical clearance certificate may be required before your child returns.

## Infectious Diseases

The National Health and Medical Research Council have supplied the following information regarding minimum exclusion period for children from an early childhood education and care service. Please inform staff if your child has any of the following so that we can notify the Public Health Unit and other families of any infectious disease/illness. (Confidentiality is always maintained).

### Recommended exclusion periods- Poster Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services

CONDITION	EXCLUSION
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Until all blisters have dried
HIB	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness
Herpes- Cold sores	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible
Influenzas and flu-like illnesses	Exclude until well
Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash
Meningitis (Bacterial)	Exclude until well
Meningococcal Infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed
Mumps	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Exclude the child for 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least 4 days after the onset of rash
Salmonella	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases
Streptococcal Infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well
Tuberculosis	Exclude until a medical certificate from an appropriate health authority is received
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude if diarrhoea present

*If your child is unimmunised according to our records, then they will be excluded until the threat has passed and upon advice of the Public Health Unit*

## Immunisation

The Public Health Act 2010 requires all families to provide an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for their child prior to enrolment in an early childhood education and care service. The immunisation history statement must show that each enrolled child is up to date with immunisations for their age.

The relevant vaccinations are those under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

The only unimmunised children who can be enrolled in child care are those who are on a recognised catch-up schedule or those who are unimmunised due to medical reasons as described in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. Parents must provide an AIR Immunisation History Form or an AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form upon enrolment. In the case of an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease, management will contact families as soon as possible. We ask that families immediately inform our Service if someone in their family is diagnosed with an infectious disease to help minimise the risk to other children, families and educators.

We are legally required to notify the Public Health Unit of any cases of vaccine preventable diseases occurring at our Service. For an up to date immunisation schedule, please refer to your enrolment pack.

## Medication

If your child requires medication whilst at our Service, you must complete an *Administration of Medication Record* to give your consent for an educator to administer prescribed medication to your child. Medication must be given directly to an educator for appropriate safe storage.

Educators can only administer medication that is:

- prescribed by a registered medical practitioner (with instructions attached to the medication or in written form from the medical practitioner)
- in its original packaging and have the original label clearly showing your child's name
- before the expiry/use by date.

Upon collection of your child at the end of the day, you or an authorised person will be requested to sign the *Administration of Medication Form*.

## Incidents, injury or trauma

We aim to minimise the risk of accidents and injury as much as possible however, through play, exploration and adventure, children sometimes have accidents. We always have an educator with a First Aid, emergency asthma, anaphylaxis management and CPR qualification on shift at all times we provide education and care to children. First Aid kits are located throughout the Service.

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be provided as required. An *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed and when you collect your child, you will be notified about the injury and asked to acknowledge and sign the record. If your child injures their head, even if it is a small bump, you will be contacted to advise you of the injury. Our educators will continue to monitor your child closely and advise if you should come and collect them.

If an injury or incident is serious and we believe urgent medical attention is required, the Nominated Supervisor will contact you immediately. If we cannot contact a parent or guardian, we will attempt to contact an authorised nominee for consent. Where you or your authorised nominee cannot be contacted, we may call an ambulance. If you are unable to meet the ambulance at the Service, we will send one of our educators/staff members to accompany your child in the ambulance.

Please note that Ambulance cover is the responsibility of each family.

An *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed, and a parent will be required to acknowledge and sign this record. A copy of any documentation from the hospital or treating doctor will also be requested. Our Service will also be required to notify the Regulatory Authority in the event of any serious incident or injury. In these circumstances, you may be contacted by our Approved Provider and the Regulatory Authority to follow up the incident and actions taken by our Service.

## Safety in our Service

### Emergency and evacuation procedures

Our Service conducts risk assessments regularly and develops emergency management plans for a range of possible hazards. Throughout the year we follow our policies and procedures to carry out emergency and evacuation drills. These may occur at any given time throughout the day and week to ensure all children know what to do in case of an emergency. Emergency and evacuation drills are carried out in a well-organised and orderly manner and will simulate a range of possible emergency

situations such as fire (bush fire), lock down or flood. Under regulations, we are required to practice emergency and evacuation drills every three months.

Educators are trained to use the fire extinguishers that are in the Service. An emergency evacuation plan and lock down procedure are displayed in every room and exit locations are clearly indicated.

## Drop off and pick up time

Early childhood education and care services are busy places especially during the morning drop off and afternoon pickup. We ask that parents be extremely mindful of danger when arriving and departing from our Service.

- Please always hold your child's hand in the carpark area
- Be alert of reversing drivers in the car park as it is very difficult to see small children
- Use the kerbside, rear passenger door when getting your child into and out of their restraint
- Never leave a child or infant in the car unattended
- Never leave the front entry door/gate open
- Always do a visual check around your vehicle before driving
- Please ensure children do not enter areas in the Service that are for adults/staff only.

## Workplace Health and Safety

We are committed in providing an environment that is safe and healthy for every employee, volunteer, child, family, and visitor. We have made every reasonable effort to minimise the risk of serious injury and request all persons to our Service to adhere to our policies regarding Workplace Health and Safety.

Each morning, our educators conduct daily safety checks of the indoor and outdoor environment and will alert management of any potential risk or hazard to children to ensure this is rectified before children use the equipment or area.

We welcome all feedback regarding the safety of our Service. If you see something that concerns you regarding safe work practices, the safety of building and equipment or general work health and safety issues, please contact the Director immediately.



## Social Media

We use social media to communicate, share information and celebrate what is happening in our Service with enrolled families and our service community.

We promote safety and wellbeing of all children and are committed to ensure safe online environments when engaging in digital technology including social media. Our social media accounts are managed by the Educational Leader, and we set the highest level of privacy and security settings on the accounts. Content is regularly scanned, and any offensive language or comments removed immediately, and these users blocked.

We do not post identifiable photos of children on our Instagram page.

We maintain appropriate privacy of families, children, and educators by not publishing any personal information online.

Stay connected and find us on Instagram @earlyyearsphoenixpark

## Privacy and Confidentiality

We are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of children, individuals and families and have policies in place to ensure strict confidentiality is maintained.

To plan programs for your child/ren, we need to collect information from you. This information helps us to assess and plan programs in partnership with you. We do not disclose personal information about you or your child to other people or organisations without your consent unless we are required to do so by law. (This may include Child Information Sharing Scheme or Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes in Victoria)

We do not ask for personal information about you or your child from other professionals or organisations without your consent. You can look at the information in your child's file at any time or request a copy of information in the file.

Our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* is available to view at any time. This policy sets out how we ensure our Service acts in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy Act 1988. We ensure all personal information is protected, records and documents are maintained and stored in accordance with Education and Care Services National Regulations and that all staff understand the requirements of the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme. Any Privacy

complaints will be managed promptly and in a consistent manner as outlined in our *Dealing with Complaints Policy*.

Our Service is required to keep and maintain detailed records about children, parents and staff in accordance with relative legislation contained in the National Law and Regulations and Family Assistance Law. We ensure all records are stored in a secure and locked location. We must keep records for the prescribed periods of times as legislated related to child enrolment, attendance, medication records, incident, injury, trauma and illness records, child assessments and any relevant legal information/documents. Full details about record keeping is available in our *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*.

# Parent Acknowledgement

*I/We have read this handbook carefully. I/We understand the commitment that you are undertaking providing education and care for our child, and our responsibilities to the Service.*

*I/we have completed the enrolment form at the Service and provided the required documentation for our child. I/We have read and agree to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook and in the Service's policies.*

Family name	
Parent Name	
Child/ren's Name	
Parent/Guardian signature	
Parent/Guardian signature	

*Please list what skills talents, interest and culture that you and your family (not forgetting grandparents) are able to share with the Service.*


**Have you completed the orientation evaluation? Please circle**

**Yes/ No**