

# Croydon Early Learning Centre

with

4 Year Old Kindergarten



## Parent Handbook

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## **Welcome To Croydon Early Learning Centre**

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

Croydon Early Learning Centre has been providing care for families in the local community for 30 years. Sanjay and Shameem Misra have owned and operated the Centre for 14 years. Our aim is to maintain a high quality child care service by creating an environment in which children can grow and develop to their full potential.

*We believe that children:*

- are worthy of being heard, respected and valued
- deserve to enjoy the here and now of their precious childhood
- are capable of high achievement
- learn best by having time to explore their interests through play

*Our educators aim to:*

- develop strong and trusting relationships with each child
- instil a love of learning in all children
- provide a happy and stimulating learning environment
- treat all children as unique and capable individuals

*We acknowledge that families:*

- are the child's first and most important educator
- are unique and diverse
- and educators are partners in children's education and care

*Croydon Early Learning Centre is committed to:*

- continuous improvement through regular reflective practice
- best practice through ongoing learning and professional development for educators
- maintaining continuity of educators to benefit children and families

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The centre is open between the hours 6:30am and 6:30pm from Monday to Friday and closed on public holidays. If your child is to be absent please phone 9723 2070 by 9:30am.

## **CARE PROVIDED**

The children are grouped into the following age groups:

Babies: 6 weeks - 18 mths

Toddlers: 18 mths- 3yrs

Kindi Kids: 3 - 4yrs

Kindergarten: 4 - 5yrs

## **DELIVERY AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN**

Regulations require an adult to sign all children in and out of the centre. The sign-in folders are located inside each of the children's rooms. It is necessary for you to notify staff if someone other than yourself will be collecting your child.

Children will not be allowed to leave the centre with a person: under the age of 16; unknown to staff; or not listed on the enrolment form. In an emergency, however, a telephone call saying who will collect your child is permissible. The nominated person will need to provide identification before the child can be released into their care.

## **ENROLMENT PROCEDURES**

It is CELC's policy that the introduction process is comforting to both parents and children. Upon initial contact with our centre, parents will be invited to the centre for an orientation tour and discussion of the program and services provided. This enables both parents and educators to discuss the needs of your child and family.

A three hour orientation visit is offered at no charge. The enrolment form should be completed before your child attends the centre. We encourage new parents to spend some time settling their child into the centre and getting to know their child's educators.

## **FEE STRUCTURE**

<i>Full time care</i>	Weekly Rates	\$440.00
<i>Part time care</i>	Daily Rates	\$99.00
<i>Casual care</i>	Daily Rates	\$99.00
<i>4 y.o. Kindergarten</i>	(No additional fee. Daily/weekly rates as above)	

## **PAYMENT OF FEES**

Upon enrolment, all families are issued with the fee payment policy which states the conditions of payment. Payment is required weekly, unless otherwise arranged with management. Payment options include cash, EFTPOS, internet banking, or direct debit from a credit card. Payments may also be made by deducting fees from Centrelink payments (Centrepay). Please speak to office staff to arrange this service.

## **HOLIDAYS**

If your child will be absent from the centre for a family holiday, two weeks' notice is required. The holiday rate will be applied, which is 50% of the normal fees. Holiday rates can be applied for a maximum of two weeks per financial year. Full fees are applicable for all other absences and for all public holidays.

## **ABSENT DAYS**

The Child Care Benefit allows your child to be absent for 42 days of the financial year. After the 42 allowable absences are used, your Child Care Rebate cannot be claimed on any additional absent days. If your child is sick or a parent is ill and cannot bring the child into care, a medical certificate should be obtained to exempt this day from your allowable absences.

## **CANCELLATION FEES**

We require two weeks' notice in writing upon cancellation of care. If parents wish to withdraw children immediately, fees will still be allocated for the regular booked hours for two weeks.

## **LATE FEES**

Parents collecting their children after 6:30pm will be asked to sign a late collection form and may be charged a late fee. This fee covers the cost of the staff members who have to work beyond their allocated shift.

## **CHILD CARE BENEFIT and REBATE**

The Australian Government offers a subsidy scheme for all families who use a registered child care service, providing the parents are Australian residents and the child immunization records meet the registered requirements.

Child Care *Benefit* (CCB) reduces the cost of your total child care fees and is income-tested. Families have a choice of receiving their benefit as a reduction of weekly fees with the payment going directly to the service, or at the end of the financial year as a lump sum payment.

The Child Care *Rebate* (CCR) is not income-tested and covers 50% of your out-of-pocket costs, currently up to a maximum of \$7500 per year. Families have the option of receiving the CCR fortnightly, quarterly or annually, or through CELC as a fee reduction.

Families can visit [www.humanservices.gov.au/estimators](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/estimators) to find an estimate for their CCB and CCR rates.

It is vital that the Family Assistance Office/Centrelink is notified of any changes to a family's situation, eg: income increases or reduces; the birth of a new child; or change of address. At the end of the financial year each family is assessed for the rebates they have claimed and any differences may result in parents having to repay a debt.

### **SETTLING IN**

The settling in process can initially be a difficult time for both children and parents. Young children may feel overwhelmed or unsettled by the new surroundings, new routines and new faces. However, children are very adaptable and usually settle in within a short period of time.

It is important for families and educators to discuss the settling in procedure. It is essential to tell your child when you are leaving, and when you will return (eg: after lunch or after snack time) so that they can develop trust. *Never sneak away.* It is preferable that the initial separation be brief, gradually increasing as your child settles in. If your child has a favourite toy or comforter, bring this to the centre. Your child will find comfort in its familiarity.

Parents often take longer to accept leaving their child in the care of others. It is not unusual to see a child happily settling down to the morning activities while the parent may be upset upon leaving. Parents should feel free to discuss any concerns they may have with the educators and we always welcome a phone call to check up on your child after you have said goodbye.

All items of clothing and belongings need to be clearly labeled. Please remember that toys and special items are safest at home (with the exception of comfort items). The centre will accept no responsibility for lost or damaged items.

## **ROUTINES, CURRICULUM and LEARNING**

The room leaders are responsible for developing a routine and curriculum that is suitable for the developmental needs and capabilities of the children in that room. In conjunction with information from families, Educators closely observe the children, get to know their interests, strengths and capabilities, and use this information to develop the curriculum so that it is based upon their needs and interests. Each room has a Reflection Journal on display near the sign-in folder so that families are aware of what activities are taking place each week. This document is also emailed to families.

Your child's learning, development and progress will be reviewed regularly. We use both the National (EYLF) and Victorian (VEYLDF) Frameworks to guide our curriculum, working towards the 5 national learning outcomes for children.

Evidence of learning and other items will be collected and presented in a portfolio that families take home at the end of the year. We strongly encourage families to take the time to read these documents.

Whiteboards in each room show information about bottles/feeds, meal times, indoor and outdoor activities and rest/sleep times. Information about nappies/toileting can also be found in the Baby and Toddler rooms.

Any questions or comments you may have should be directed to your child's Room Leader. *Please feel free to discuss your child's individual needs with the educator at any time.* We believe in developing and maintaining a strong partnership between families and educators so that each child can reach their full potential.

## **EDUCATORS**

All educators at CELC are employed for their experience, qualifications, commitment and dedication to caring for and educating children. The majority of our educators are qualified with a Diploma in Children's Services or a Bachelor in Education. Other educators are currently studying to become fully-qualified. We also have three qualified Early Childhood Teachers employed at CELC. All of our educators are trained and regularly updated with Level 2 First Aid, including Anaphylaxis and Asthma management.

We pride ourselves on having a high retention rate of staff, which allows children and families to develop strong connections and relationships. Many of our educators have been here long enough to see the children progress through the Baby room, all the way through to the Kindergarten and even school.

In line with current regulations the minimum educator-to-child ratios are:

0-3yrs: 1 educator to 4 children.

3-5yrs: 1 educator to 11 children (as of January 2016)

### **FURTHER EDUCATION OF OUR STAFF**

The centre requires all educators to participate in a minimum of two professional development sessions each year, in order to access up-to-date information about all aspects of early childhood education. All educators are directly involved in meetings, and procedure and policy development of the centre.

### **STUDENTS**

Throughout the year the centre allows students to visit our centre. We feel the experience these students gain is vital to continuing and extending the early childhood profession. A notice will be posted in the foyer to inform parents about any students in the centre. Please note that students are not counted in the staff:child ratio and are fully supervised at all times.

### **INCURSION AND EXCURSIONS**

In addition to our programs, we provide the following special activities for the children each week: Science (3-5s only), Music, Kiddygym, Art, Cooking and Story Telling. These activities are rotated each term so that children who are not enrolled full-time can also benefit from these experiences.

In addition to these, we also have incursions or excursions planned throughout the year. Families will receive a calendar of events at the beginning of the year.

### **INCLUSION and DIVERSITY**

CELC strives to create an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices, and respects individuals and groups of people. All staff, parents, visitors and children are treated with respect and equity, and appreciated as individuals with unique abilities, skills and knowledge. We celebrate cultural differences and act to create an environment for children that assist them to acknowledge and value the differences and the similarities in our community. We actively plan opportunities experiences for the children that will encourage inclusive attitudes, knowledge and skills that they will need to live in an increasingly complex and diverse world.

Our program provides multicultural education to reflect the individual culture of the children and families within our centre. The centre makes every effort to

provide culturally appropriate child care and respect the uniqueness of each child by:

- Recognizing the value and contributions of each child
- Providing the opportunity for children to learn about their own and other people's culture
- Encouraging respect and understanding as to why people are all different
- Discussing geographical and cultural issues
- Treating all children and families in an anti-bias and positive manner

### **BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE**

Young children in our care are learning the rules of behaviour – what is acceptable and unacceptable according to our community and society. We recognize that children learn by experimenting, testing limits and experiencing consequences of their behaviour. Our goal is to teach children what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, so that they learn how to exercise self-discipline and make good choices. For more information, please ask for a copy of our *Behaviour Guidance Policy*, located in the office.

### **SLEEP / REST TIME**

We provides cots and beds for children, depending on their individual needs. The educators in the Baby Room cater for the individual sleep patterns of each child. All other children are given the opportunity to sleep after lunch. Older children may not wish to sleep; however, we encourage all children to have a period of quiet, relaxing time. Cots are used in the Baby Room. Toddlers and older children use a sleeping mat. These are wiped down and disinfected on a daily basis. Each child is provided with a Bed Bag containing a set of sheets and blanket for sleep time. These are washed on a weekly basis or as a specific need arise.

### **MEAL TIME / SNACKS**

All meals are freshly prepared at the centre by our cook. Meals are served regularly throughout the day and include beverages. We provide a nourishing, well-balanced menu which rotates over a four-week period.

All children are encouraged to at least try a meal. If a child refuses to eat, they may be offered fruit or a sandwich. Water can be easily accessed by all children throughout the day, via individual drink bottles or the drinking tap.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

We like to celebrate your child's birthday at the centre. Parents are welcome to bring a cake (store bought only and no nuts) to share with other children on such special occasions.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

Educators will work in conjunction with parents to assist your child with toilet training. If toilet training has already begun, please let us know so that we can continue and reinforce what is in progress at home in a consistent and positive manner.

If you are interested about whether your child is ready please do not hesitate to discuss this with us. Please remember that during training your child should be provided with several changes of clothes particularly underwear.

## **ADVICE AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

If you wish to discuss any issues regarding the progress or wellbeing of your child, please speak to the room leader in your child's room. We have access to a wide range of experienced professionals, services and resources. If you have any problems in the relation to the service we offer, please direct these to the director either by telephone or in person. We can then make a suitable time to discuss these issues if required. We will endeavor to address your concerns within a 24 hour period.

If you have other serious grievances you can contact:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Level 3

295 Springvale Road

Glen Waverley 3150

Ph: 9265 2400

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

If your contact number changes - even for a day - please let the educators know. It is important to inform us of any changes to you or your details. Eg: address, phone number, email address, custodial arrangements, immunization details etc.

## **SUN SMART POLICY**

The centre adheres to a strict "Sun Smart Policy." Families attending the centre are asked to supply a sun hat for their child to wear while outside, and appropriate clothing (no singlet tops – shoulders should be covered). We provide sunscreen and will apply this every two hours during outside play during the appropriate months. *(Refer to policy folder located in office)*

## **MEDICATION**

If your child requires medication it must be either handed in at the office or handed in directly to one of your child's educators. Parents must fill in and sign the medication book otherwise medication cannot be given.

Medication must be:

- a) In its original container
- b) Clearly labeled with the child's name
- c) Have clearly written instructions
- d) Be written and signed into our medication book
- e) Be signed out at the end of the day at collection

Medication must be handed in and not left in the child's bag.

## **ILLNESS**

The wellbeing of all the children in our care is our highest priority. Therefore, if your child is unwell please consider both your child and the other children and do not bring them to child care. We appreciate the difficulty of taking time off work. If your child is unwell during the day, however, we will contact you to pick them up. Please make sure your emergency contact information is up to date as we will contact them if you are unreachable or unable to come to the centre to pick up your child.

To keep cross infection at a minimum please keep an eye open for the following symptoms and keep your child at home:

- Conjunctivitis
- Diarrhea and or vomiting
- Sore throat / ear
- Cold sores
- Fever
- Nasal discharge
- Rash
- Head lice

If lice or eggs are seen on your child's hair, your child need to be treated before returning to care.

Alternatively, your child can be treated at the centre with an approved product. The procedure is repeated after 7 days. A small charge applies.

## **DOCTOR VISITS**

Every Wednesday (excluding school holidays) Doctor Jill Carstairs visits the centre. If you would like your child to be seen, please advise an educator on Wednesday morning as early as possible. If immunization is required the doctor needs to be advised before 8.30am on Wednesday or preferably the day before. Please remember to fill in the form in the Doctor's folder.

## **NOTICES**

The centre provides parents with regular updates on important issues, activities and information. These notices are usually emailed, put on our Facebook page, or put into your child's hanging pocket which is in the foyer (Toddler) or in the room (Baby/Kindi/Kinder). In addition notices are posted in the foyer or on the front door. We also have regular newsletters which will be emailed directly to you. Please ensure that you check for notices regularly.

## **ANNUAL PHOTOS**

Professional photographs are taken of the children once a year. Individual and group photos are taken and offered to parents for purchase. (Parents are under no obligation to buy.) Parent permission is gained prior to any child's photos appearing in newspapers or other publications.

## **4 YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

Our 4 year old kindergarten program runs Monday – Friday, run by a Bachelor-qualified teacher. This is a registered program and included in the long day care fees. For more information about 4 year old Kinder, please ask for a Kinder Information Book.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

We encourage parents to be involved in the day to day activities with their children in the centre. Parental involvement establishes trust and the child and helps the family to feel more at ease. Parents may like to take part in fundraising activities; help out in their child's room; assist with centre maintenance (eg: working bees); interact with the children in activities; donate materials and so on. Feel free to speak to any staff member regarding your participation.

Annually, or when necessary, the philosophy and policies of the centre undergo review. Parents are invited to be part of this process. The policies and philosophy can be viewed and reviewed by families and suggestion for improvements discussed and implemented. The policy folder is located in the office.

## CONCLUSION

We hope that this handbook has helped you to understand our approach to early childhood education and appreciate the important role that you play in supporting your child's learning. The key to successful learning experiences is to figure out what interests your child and to use those interests to engage your child in actively exploring and learning about environment. Together at home, at child care and kindergarten, we can enable your child to:

- Develop self confidence
- Become independent
- Have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Become effective communicators
- Become confident and involved learners
- Develop relationships

*Welcome to the CELC family.  
We look forward to creating a  
strong partnership with you in order  
to maximize your child's  
developmental and learning  
potential.*