

# Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre



Parent handbook  
2019

# Welcome

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre. We hope that your journey with us is an enjoyable experience. Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre is committed to provide each child with high quality care and education. Staff endeavours to make families feel comfortable and secure in their new environment. This Handbook has been designed with families needs in mind and with the intention of answering questions about our Centre and the service we provide. If you would like further information on the centres organisation or any other matters, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Orientation

After reading through the handbook and being happy with the centre there are a few more steps that need to be taken:

- Call to arrange a time to take a tour through the centre
- Ensure that the day/s are available
- Fill in enrolment forms and return them as soon as possible
- Contact Centrelink to find out about Child Care Subsidy (CCS) ask them for a child care assessment and notify them that you will be starting at Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre.
- Once an enrolment is received and logged you will need to confirm enrolment in MyGov tasks.
- Meet and great with your children's carer/ room leader

## Operational Information

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre caters for children from 0-6 years of age. We are open 52 weeks of the year from 6.30am to 6pm, closed on public holidays and weekends. Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre is registered with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and is licensed by the Department of Community Services. We are committed to continual improvement in the centre's policy and procedures and endeavour to provide the highest quality of care and education for each child.

## Centre's Employees

Educators employed by this centre are dedicated, caring and supportive toward the needs of families and child (ren) ensuring your child receives high quality care and education

The educators at Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre are trained and experienced in caring for children and encourages each child to reach their full potential. They are responsible for the high quality of care and we believe all staff members, trained or untrained, have a variety of qualities that are a great asset to our centre.

Educators are encouraged to endorse further training and professional development whilst working at the centre. They abide by the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2017, Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct and the Centres Policies and Procedures Manual. All staff have Senior First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis Management certificates.

Staff are screened through a Working with Children Check that is carried out by the Commission for Young Children, before commencing work at the centre.

Relief Staff/Additional Staff are screened according to the above.

*Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre*

*Revised 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019*

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When permanent staff members are absent, they will be replaced with a relief staff.

## Students and Community

Students come to us from different institutions e.g. TAFE, Universities and High Schools. These students are always supervised by a permanent staff member. Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre is proud to provide experiences for students and trainees and contribute to the positive development of Early Childhood Educators.

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre will actively seek community support, resources and information based on mutual communication and decision making.

## Centre Philosophy

Here at Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre, we believe that a spontaneous learning environment will encourage and support children to build upon strengths and interests during play. With open-ended activities provided by staff in the different areas at the centre, the children work and extend their strengths and weaknesses to reach their full potential.

(Piaget quotes, “children think differently to adults, which is why interest based learning, strives when children have control of what they learn”.)

At Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre we encourage children to be themselves, not restricting them to stereotypes and gender. To show the children’s extending confidence we provide daily programming, communication books, daily picture feeds and also portfolios. These communication types keep families informed regularly and encourage strong family bonds between the centre and parents/guardians of the children attending.

Groups at Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre are based on the daily interests shown by the children and activities children participated in on the weekend. Groups are spontaneous to keep children interested in the different things they have discovered or recall past activities during the play.

Every child and their families, that attend Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre are all seen as unique, with unique needs, interest and strengths. All families are treated equally and we provide an anti-bias environment, for all to feel safe and secure.

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre’s Teachings are based on the Early Years Learning Framework. This document focuses on the extending and enriching children’s learning from birth to five years and assists with the transition to school.

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre works strongly with families in regards to behaviour. Educators aim to assist and provide knowledge for families who are in need of assistance. Encouraging and role modelling positive behaviour is what we practice within the centre. John B. Watson quotes “most behaviour that children represent is learnt Behaviour”

## Priority of Access

The Commonwealth Government regards children at risk of abuse or neglect as a priority group for access to quality child care. Families in crisis should also have support and assistance from child care services to the maximum extent possible.

Where demand for care exceeds supply, it is important for services to allocate available places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.

The Priority of Access determined by our centre is as follows:-

- Priority 1 - A child at risk  
 Priority 2 - A child whose parent/s satisfy the work-study-training test.  
 Priority 3 - Any other child.

### Extra Days

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre does not offer make up days but if families are requiring an additional casual day, please email the Nominated Supervisor and we can organise an additional day for your scheduled week. These casual days are subject to the amount of children attending on the day in question and families will be notified if the day is available. Additional daily fees will be added to your next invoice. These go out every Wednesday, the following week..

### Enrolment Procedure

Once a position has been confirmed you will be required to complete an enrolment form. All records pertaining to your child are confidential and are only available to the teaching staff. It is your responsibility to inform the staff should any of the information change (address, phone number, custody etc.) It is important all records held by this centre are accurate and current. All evidence of court orders must be supplied to this centre before staff can implement parent requests.

Information required must always be up-to-date:

- Birth Certificate
- Immunisation Records (Must be kept up to date. Parents must assure a new form is brought when immunisations are administered) (Medicare)
- Court Orders
- Action plans (for any Asthma, Allergies or anaphylaxis must be given to the centre before beginning.)
- Medicare Number
- Family and Child's CRN number
- CCS Assessment through Centrelink on 136150

### Waiting List

If no positions are available at the time you visit the centre but still would like a position when one becomes available. A waiting list form is available for you to complete. The waiting list is also available should you require a position to be held but not needing it until a future date. Once the waiting list form is completed a \$50 non refundable fee per child, is payable on submission in order to hold a position open when one arises.

### Payment Structure

A \$50.00 Enrolment and one week full bond fee per family capped at (\$200) is required on the first day of starting care.

There is a two week written termination notice needed and for all fees' to be paid up to date before leaving the centre.

### Fees

**0-2 years \$90.00 per day**

**2-3 years \$88.00 per day**

**3-4 years \$86.00 per day**

#### **4-5 years \$86.00 per day**

Fees can be paid by cash, cheque, eftpos or direct deposit. If a cheque is dishonoured, an additional bank charge will be added to your account to cover this extra cost. Cash payments need to be sighted and signed in by a staff member before placing the money in the fees box; the centre does not take responsibility for the loss of cash payments. Eftpos is available for payment of fees. All credit card transactions will incur a 2% surcharge.

If the amount is not paid by the due date, your child's position will be terminated and the centre will recover outstanding fees using the services of a professional debt collector.

#### **Public holidays and family holidays**

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre is open 52 weeks a year, is closed **ALL** Public Holidays. If your Child scheduled days falls on a Public Holiday, families are still to pay daily fees as usual. If families are planning on going away, please let the Nominated Supervisor know by emailing her at mirrabooka@outlook.com as soon as you can, so we know for staffing and rostering purposes. **Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre does not offer make up days.**

#### **Late Collection Fees**

We ask that you collect your child on time. Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre has a late fee penalty of **\$5 per minute** after 6pm which covers the cost of two staff members' overtime. If children have not been collected by 6pm, staff will contact parents, followed by emergency contacts. If unreachable, the Department of Community Services will be contacted.

#### **Authorised Collector**

If someone other than a nominated authorised person is coming to collect your child from the centre, you must telephone the Centre with details, staff will need to check a form of identification, for example their license, to verify this. Minors (under 16 years of age) are not permitted to collect children. All children need to be signed out by the person collecting them.

#### **Child Care Subsidy**

Child Care Benefit is available and families must register with the Family Assistance Office. The telephone number for the Family Assistance Office is 136 150. Once an assessment notice has been received from the FAO, administration will calculate your weekly fee.

#### **Curriculum and Interactions**

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre offers the new Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), which is based on the children's interest and basic needs. The Early Years Learning Framework has been developed to assist educators to provide young children with the opportunity to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning **"All children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation."** The EYLF has five learning outcomes, outcome 1: children have a strong sense identity, outcome 2: children are connected with and contribute to their world, outcome 3: children have a strong sense of wellbeing, outcome 4: children are confident and involved learners, outcome 5: children are effective communicators. We welcome parents and friends input into our programs. A parent's interest section is placed in each room where you can make suggestions.

Portfolios will also be implemented so you can see your child's progress and achievements throughout the year.

Staff incorporate a “transition to school’ readiness program within all areas of the child’s day by our trained staff ensuring your child’s adjustment to school will be less stressful.

### Additional Needs Program

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre has access to various Early Intervention Services and liaises with children’s Occupational Therapists etc. If you have any concerns with your child’s development, please make an appointment to speak to us so a plan of action can be negotiated. Similarly, if the staff have concerns, they will discuss these concerns with the Director and approach you confidentially.

### Visitors and Excursions

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre believes that visitors and excursions are an essential part of the program as they provide an opportunity to expand a child’s interaction, experience, explore different environments and learn new skills. Parents will be informed in advance of any events and are required to give prior written permission. Visitors and excursions will be held on alternate days when possible so all children can participate in the experiences.

### Health and Safety

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre follows the guidelines by the Department of Health in regards to infectious diseases. With so many children attending the centre, we must ensure the well-being of all the children, please see information located on the communication board. Therefore, children with infectious diseases are not permitted in the centre. Please notify the centre if your child has an infectious illness. Children showing signs of any infectious disease will be asked to stay at home until a Doctor’s clearance certificate is presented to the office or staff on duty. Any vomiting, diarrhoea, or high temperatures must be clear for at least 24 hours before returning to the centre. Days of absence must still be paid for by families.

### Emergency accidents at the centre

In any case of an emergency at the centre an Authorised Supervisor or designated representative will obtain medical, and/or emergency travel such as ambulance, dental and/or hospital assistance in the case of an accident, or any other emergency resulting in the need for immediate medical or dental attention, The expenses for these services will be paid by families. Staff will then call families when the ambulance is on the way.

### Medication/ Sick Child/ren

It is Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre policy to only administer prescription medication. Medication MUST be in its original container with specific details. This information must be written down on a medication permission form daily. If your child is on antibiotics, they must have taken them for 24 hours before they will be allowed to attend childcare.

If a child has a temperature of 38 C staff will endeavour to make your child comfortable and reduce their temperature. The child will then need to be collected ASAP. Details of this will be recorded in the children’s illness register in the medication folder.

If child/ren are away sick from school for their scheduled days families are still to pay daily fees as normal, as staff are rostered to the weekly sign in sheets. If your child is knowingly away for a long period, such as long hospital stay that exceeds 5 days of scheduled care, or sickness that requires monitoring for a lengthy period of time please email the Director at [mirrabooka@outlook.com](mailto:mirrabooka@outlook.com) where this can be discussed further.

## **Medical conditions**

No child enrolled at the service that has an allergy or medical condition will be able to attend the service without their medication prescribed by their medical practitioner and also an action plan or letter detailing steps that need to be taken when administering the medication at the centre. In particular, no child who has been prescribed an adrenaline auto-injection device, insulin injection device or asthma inhaler is permitted to attend the service or its programs without the device and the action plan/ detailed letter.

Families are required to provide information about their child's health care needs, allergies, medical conditions and medication on the Enrolment Form and are responsible for updating the service about these things, including any new medication, ceasing of medication, or changes to their child's prescription.

## **Immunisation**

Upon enrolment, parents need to supply proof of immunisation. A photocopy will be taken and will be kept in your child's file. Non-immunised children will be excluded from the centre during an outbreak of an infectious disease that is prevented by immunisation. Please note we no longer accept blue books and require a Medicare statement printout

## **Sun Protection**

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre provides a protective hat for your child, which covers shoulders, backs and necks. The centre will supply and use SPF30 Coles brand sunscreen to exposed areas of the skin. Parents are required to apply sunscreen to their child upon arrival in the morning.

If your child has an allergy or preference, of a certain sunscreen. Parents are asked to supply the centre with a sunscreen their child can use. Parents are also in charge of ensuring that their child's sunscreen if brought from home is kept stocked at the centre. Please give this to educators. No sunscreen is to be left in your child's bag.

Please ensure your child wears shirt/dresses with short sleeves.

## **Child Protection/Custody Arrangements**

It is Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre's duty of care and philosophy to provide an environment that is safe for all children attending the service. As early childhood educators we are placed in a position of trust to protect young children. All staff are mandatory reporters and are legally obligated to report suspected child abuse to the DOCS helpline without notification to parents. We have a comprehensive child protection policy which is found in the Centre Policy Folder. Custody arrangements need to be outlined in the custody or restraining arrangements. Please provide the centre with a copy for our records, and inform the Director of any legal changes.

## **Fire and Emergency Drills**

Fire and emergency drills are conducted every month, so staff, children and families are familiar with the procedures in the unlikely event of an emergency. Children are also required to complete Fire drill scenarios throughout the day and in group times. The centre has a fire detection system installed and emergency evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the centre as are locations of hoses and extinguishers. Parents should familiarise themselves with the emergency evacuation procedures as they may be required to assist in an evacuation drill. These drill procedures can be located in both the nursery room and the green building for parents to look at. If you would like a copy we can print one off for you.

## Guidelines for Suitable and unsuitable Foods

The attached list names of foods that are suitable to pack in your child's lunchbox and those which are not.

The list is devised using the following: The Centre's health & nutrition Policies, Dept. Community Services Regulations and Guidelines developed by the nutrition dept. Central coast.

Foods outlined as Unsuitable should be kept at home, or as a special treat. These foods will be sent home in your child's bag of an afternoon and you will be made aware of this. Your child will be encouraged to eat suitable foods in their lunch box.

Staff are happy to help children with their food and this is done in the following ways: Ensuring the children's lunch boxes are placed in the refrigerator. Serving any tin food into a bowl, heating up food, assisting children to undo packaging. And ensuring you child's drink bottle is refilled with water. Please place your Childs lunch box and drink bottle in the refrigerator on upon arrival

These lists were developed with the best interests of the children in mind. They are not meant to make life difficult for the children and families. Staff will provide and encourage children to drink water throughout each day to avoid dehydration.

If your child is in the (Kookaburra) toddler room you are required to cut grapes in half and ensure all fruit is peeled such as apples, oranges and pears. Cocktail frankfurts must have skin removed. This is to avoid your child choking.

## Allergies and Special Diets

If your child has particular food intolerance, allergy or special dietary requirement, please discuss this with the Director so staff can accommodate and cater to your child's needs. Special requests will be required in writing. Should they require a specific range of products, you may be required to supply specific foods. Changes to your child's food or allergy requirements will need to be made in writing. The centre may ask you to contribute food to the centre if allergies are extensive.

### **Suitable Foods**

### **Unsuitable foods**

<b>Fruit:</b> Fresh Tinned Dried	Nuts of any sort (We are a nut free centre)
<b>Vegetables :</b> Cooked or raw	Chips
<b>Yogurt:</b> Vanilla Strawberry Banana Berries	Lollies
Cheese	Cakes
Crackers	Sweet biscuits
Custard – Plain	L.C.M bars
Salad	Peanut butter
Pikelets	Nutella
Rice cakes	Roll ups
Plain biscuits – arrowroots	Incredible bars

Breadsticks	Chocolate
Pasta	Popcorn
Baked beans or spaghetti	Chocolate muffins
Tinned fish – Tuna, salmon	Fruit juice of any type
<b><u>Sandwiches:</u></b> Salad Vegemite Honey Jam	Flavoured milk
<b><u>Drinks:</u></b> Water or milk only	Cordial
Baked beans or spaghetti	Fizzy drink
	Noodles & frozen dinners

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**Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre is a Nut, chocolate and egg free centre.**

### Parents and Staff

Parent –Centre's Partnership

Staff and parents communicate and work together by:

- Attending social events
- Sharing their culture, talents, skills and experiences within the centre
- Being a member of our committee
- Inviting families to spend time at the centre
- Assisting with odd jobs
- Providing feedback on policies and procedures
- Discussing issues with staff regarding the centre and their child

Staff want to create a unique relationship with all families attending our centre.

### Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy

As part of a group, all children in the centre have set limits and expectations that we all have to follow and maintain within a co-operative atmosphere. Children are encouraged to respect themselves, other children and staff. When unacceptable behaviour occurs staff will assess the situation and positively re-direct the child to an alternate activity and talk to the child. If unacceptable behaviour continues, a parent and teacher meeting will be held.

## Confidentiality

Information is kept in a secure place to prevent accidental or purposeful access by persons not involved in the childcare activities or in the administration of the centre. Parents will be requested to sign a Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre enrolment form when their child commences attendants. All staff will abide by the centre confidentiality policy.

## Parents Concerns/Complaints

The relationship between staff and families is one key component in the development of a sense of belonging and caring which is central to the vision and philosophy of the centre. We aim to address any concerns with the emphasis on resolving issues in a professional manner. Please come and make centre personnel aware of your concern. Complaint forms will also be located on the communication board, so anonymous complaints can be dealt with.

## First day within the centre

Most children will experience some form of separation anxiety, if not in the first or second week it may come in the third or fourth. This behaviour is very normal, however, can be very disturbing for parents. If you are feeling anxious about leaving your child feel free to ring at any time. Also say 'Goodbye' never sneak out, if children ask you to stay and play, say 'I will play when I come to collect you' please make sure that you do when you collect them, you can spend as much time as you like with them and can see what they have done during the day.

Daily Requirements: **All clothes and equipment must be labelled**

- Bag
- Drink bottle filled with water
- Pillow and or any Comforters for rest time
- Dummy
- Spare change of clothes and underwear (if toilet training please provide several changes of clothes)
- Rest time bottle
- Sandwich (Lunch only) We provide all meals except lunch.

## Arrivals and Departures

Please ensure that you **sign in and out everyday**, this is used as an official roll in case of an emergency. Failure to sign your child in and out each day will result in parents being responsible to pay full fees as Child Care Benefit will not be paid.

On occasion where staff are occupied with other families or children parents are required to take their child to a staff member on arrival and notify on departure This ensures staff are aware of which children have arrived or departed and are supervised effectively.

## General Information

### Clothing/Personal belongings

Children should be able to attend the centre and carry out the day's activities in comfort and safety. We understand that family's cultural backgrounds will influence what the children wear, and these choices will be respected. However we may need to apply reasonable judgment in certain circumstances. It is the health and safety of all children that will guide staff in their suggestions and actions in relation to clothing.

Please ensure the clothes you choose cater to the sun policy, are appropriate to the weather conditions and are not hazardous in any way.

### Rest Time

All children are requested to rest each day, with Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre having a mandatory 20 minutes rest period. However no child is forced to sleep. Families will be consulted about their child's individual needs for rest and sleep in order to maximize continuity between routines at home and at the centre. Please bring any comforters that will make this time easier. Please ensure that everything is labelled.

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre does not take any responsibility if your child loses any toys that comes to the centre.

### Celebrations

Birthdays are special and our Kindy friends like to celebrate this happy time. If you would like to bring a cake it needs to be packaged and store brought, this ensures correct food preparation and hygiene has been considered. To help celebrate we will happily arrange to serve it. Please ensure there are no nuts in or on the cake as we have a **NO NUT** policy.

The centre aims to provide a multicultural perspective by delivering a curriculum that is accepting of the cultures in our wider community. If for cultural or other reasons you do not wish for your child to participate, please inform the centre.

### Centre Policies

The Centre has developed a number of policy documents which are available for parental inspection. Please feel free to view these documents, please see staff.

#### Home Language Translations

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre has access to translators and interpreters through the Department of Immigration and the Ethnic Affairs Commission. These people are contacted if the need arises.

Staff learn simple phrases in the child's home language to assist children in the settling in period and spend quality time with the child during this transition time.

## Communication with Families

We endeavour to keep parents up to date with what's happening at our centre in the following ways:

- You will find a pocket with your child's surname on it in the front foyer or child's room. Information such as newsletters, receipts, invoices and invitations will be placed in these pockets for you to read and or emailed to you
- Story Park or Owna communication.
- A staff member will speak to you each time you arrive and depart about your child's day.
- If you feel a communication book is needed for your child please notify staff
- Notice boards and emails
- Daily Diary and Communication Books
- Parent interviews / information evenings

Parents are encouraged to inform staff of their child moods, routines, behaviours on arrival this helps to ensure the child's needs are met throughout the day.

### Mirrabooka Information

Name-	Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre
Address-	26b Hillcrest road Mirrabooka 2264 NSW
Phone-	(02) 4973 3643
Email-	mirrabooka@outlook.com
Website-	Mirrabooka.org

Account details:

Mirrabooka Early Childhood Centre  
BSB:032- 521  
ACC:175822  
Please specify family name during transaction