



Family Handbook

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families

Victoria

Website: www.firstfive.com.au



Our Purpose

First Five Early Learning joins with families and community to establish a secure foundation for young children's health and wellbeing, learning and development.

Our Story

First Five Early Learning brings together a group of professionals who understand quality in early childhood education and care service delivery. With a simple desire to do the work well, the management group are invested in quality outcomes for children, families and centre teams.

With a combined 60 years' experience in the early childhood education and care sector, and similar in leadership and business operations, the First Five Early Learning management group will continue to influence and advocate for high quality approaches to early education and care. As active members of the Australian early childhood education and care community, we provide an exemplar of service delivery to the sector. Our purpose at First Five Early Learning is to join with families and community to establish a secure foundation for young children's health and wellbeing, learning and development.

Child Safe Organisation Commitment

At First Five Early Learning, we have zero tolerance to all forms of child abuse and harm. The safety and wellbeing of children is our priority, and we expect all team members to uphold this commitment. We recognise that action and a culture of safety and wellbeing is necessary to ensure children's safety and prevent harm.



**Child Safe
Organisations**

First Five Early Learning respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our centres are located. We pay respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise our centres have always been sites of teaching, learning and sharing of knowledge.



Our Values

- We care:
- for children – their health, wellbeing, learning and development
- for families
- for each other
- for ourselves
- for community
- for the environment

Our Philosophy

At First Five Early Learning we celebrate who children are now. We recognise learning begins from birth, with the first five years the most critical and sensitive for shaping children's health and wellbeing, learning and development.

We foster children's natural propensity to learn through play and discovery. We draw from early childhood education research and evidence-based practice to inform high quality approaches to teaching and learning.

We view children as capable learners and demonstrate respect for the multiple ways they represent their ideas and share their learning. We slow down in our work with children to hear their voices and respect their thinking.

We join with families and community to nurture children's learning and development in their formative years. We respond to children's identities, cultures and languages and recognise family and community as children's first and most influential teachers.



Quality Matters

The First Five years is a critical and sensitive time period for children's learning and development.

High quality education and care matters for children's early experiences and how they develop foundational skills for learning and life. For young children, high quality education and care incorporates:



SECURE AND TRUSTING
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
RESPONSIVE EDUCATORS



PURPOSEFUL LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS



PLAY-BASED LEARNING

Commitment to Quality

The guiding principles of the National Quality Framework underpin the approach to service delivery at First Five Early Learning.



The rights and best interests of the child are paramount

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, First Five Early Learning is a Child Safe Organisation, with zero tolerance to all forms of child abuse and harm.

The safety and wellbeing of children is our priority, and we expect all team members to uphold this commitment. As a Child Safe Organisation, we recognise that action and a culture of safety and wellbeing are necessary to ensure children's safety and prevent harm.

Civics and citizenship are underpinned by our view of children as active community members, who contribute to the social fabric of local and regional communities. From infancy, a rights-based approach to curriculum assures every child dignity and optimal development.

Children are successful and competent learners

At First Five Early Learning, our image of children as competent and capable learners drives our curriculum approach and the design of learning environments.

We foster children's natural propensity to learn through play and discovery and respond to children's ideas, interests, play schemas and developmental capabilities. Contemporary early childhood education research and evidence-based practice informs high-quality approaches to teaching and learning which foster positive dispositions towards being a successful learner.

We demonstrate respect for the multiple ways children represent their ideas and share their learning, and slow down in our work with children to hear their voices and respect their thinking.

Commitment to Quality (cont)

Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued

The relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the lands and territories now known as Australia is unique and enduring. First Five Early Learning commits to respecting and responding to the histories, cultures and languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Embedding practices occur at a curriculum, operational and community outreach level, ensuring culturally responsive pedagogy and practice, culturally secure operational procedures, and respectful and reciprocal relationships

with families and community. Ensuring team members develop a critical sense of self and understanding about their positioning in Australian society is central to all embedding practices to promote an anti-bias and antiracist approach to service delivery, and integrity across embedding practices. Children are supported to engage in discussions and experiences which encompass learning around diversity, difference, race and representation to build their racial literacy. Representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are inclusive of rural, urban, regional, traditional and contemporary identities and ways of being. All children in Australia have a right and a responsibility to learn about and through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, languages and pedagogies.

Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity underpin the framework

First Five Early Learning recognises that contemporary notions of inclusion encompass broad categories of diversity which take into account differences such as cultural, linguistic, spiritual and religious, gender and sexuality, physical and mobility. Diversity is recognised as a resource that enriches centre life, with all children being supported to access and participate fully in the daily program. To ensure equity, barriers to inclusion (environmental constraints, theoretical barriers, attitudes, and limited knowledge and skills) require re-thinking, with explicit training, support and action necessary to address limitations. At First Five Early Learning, we work in partnership with families, community, cultural leaders, inclusion support agencies, allied health professionals and organisations who uphold a rights-based approach to inclusion for all children and families.

The role of the parents and families is respected and supported

Children arrive at First Five Early Learning centres with strong identities as members of families and communities. We recognise family and community as children's first and most influential teachers and join with them to establish a secure foundation for children's health and wellbeing and learning and development in the formative years. Partnerships with families can be complex, sometimes requiring a 'third space' in which to locate and respond to the values, beliefs and practices of caring and educating for young children from multiple perspectives. We view families and community as co-constructors of curriculum, with opportunities for learning, resources and centre environments reflecting children's lived experiences. Within local communities across Australia, families represent diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We recognise culture and language as a protective factor for young children; both of which provide purpose, resilience and pride.

Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services

In First Five Early Learning centres, a commitment to continuous practice improvement is achieved through methodologies which invite critical reflection, including action research, communities of practice, and teacher-as-researcher projects. We recognise that best practice reflects the context in which a centre is located, with fundamental elements of high-quality education and care core to all centre programs. Continuous practice improvement belongs to every team member, with time, space and opportunities for ongoing professional learning regardless of role and tenure. Content and pedagogy knowledge is consistently reviewed in line with new research findings and evidence-based practice. In each First Five Early Learning context, definitions of best practice are developed in partnership with children, families and community.

Family Communication and Partnership Tools

Open communication between families and educators supports children. Our educators work in partnership with you, and we encourage you to share information about your child regularly with us. Every family has a preferred mode of communication so please talk to your child's educator about the best ways to communicate and work in partnership.

First Five Early Learning has many ways of communicating with families, including:

- Face-to-face conversations
- Phone calls
- Emails/letters
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Children's Learning Portfolios
- Formal meetings by appointment with the Centre Manager or room educator.
- **Xplor HOME app** – download today from Google Play or the Apple Store



Enrolment Information

Prior to your child commencing at our centre, you'll be required to complete an enrolment form, provide documentation and pay a non refundable "Holding Fee" of \$50 per child, capped at \$150 for 3 or more children. This is to secure your place at the centre.

In your first week of care you will be charged two weeks fees. This is to ensure your account is up to date and one week in advance.

On termination of enrolment, we require 2 weeks written notice to withdraw and/or reduce enrolment days for your child/ren from any permanent booking. Please see the Nominated Supervisor to obtain the required form to complete. Children are not able to attract CCS for any days after the last day your child physically attends the centre. There are some circumstances where CCS can be paid after the last day your child physically attends with an approved reason.



1. Enrolment Form

At First Five Early Learning we have a digital enrolment process with a link that will be sent to you once your Holding Fee has been paid

If you require assistance completing the enrolment form, please contact the Centre Manager so they can organise a time to do this with you in centre.

We require a copy of your child's birth certificate and

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.

Important - The main parent/guardian should be the primary carer listed with Centrelink and the person receiving Child Care Benefits for the child or children.

8 Getting this incorrect can delay Child Care Subsidy being paid to your account and you will be required to pay full fees until it can be rectified.

2. Family law and access

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

3. Excursions/Centre-based Events/Regular Outings

Excursions are an important and valuable part of learning in early education. They afford children different experiences and help them to observe and understand the world around them. For any excursion or regular outing in our community, we complete comprehensive risk assessments to minimise identified risks as part of the planning process. 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.



Authorised Nominees

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

- collect your child from the centre
- 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.

The enrolment form will include additional authorisations to seek medical treatment and emergency transportation for your child if required. Authorisations will also be requested for application of sun cream and permission to administer emergency medication to your child in the case of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency (Ventolin or EpiPen), 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.

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 social media and/or to promote our centre to the community through marketing and promotional materials.

If your child is in a photo or video is chosen to be used on social media or centre marketing we will issue you with a Media Release form gaining permission from you before we use it.

Photographs and video will also be used as part of our observation and programming process to document your child's learning and development, as required under the National Quality Standard



Medical Conditions

Allergies, Asthma, Diabetes, or Epilepsy

It is vital that we are aware of any medical condition including diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, eczema, asthma and risks of anaphylaxis including any potential triggers.

Families are required to indicate any allergy or asthma on the enrolment form.

Our centre requires a Medical Management Plan or 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 Nominated Supervisor, you will be asked to develop a Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan to assist our educators and staff. Any prescribed medication your child requires must be provided each day they attend.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child, please update your child's Medical Management Plan/ Action Plan every 12-18 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 Nominated Supervisor/Centre Manager prior to enrolment. We provide a supportive and inclusive environment that allows each child to participate fully 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 make contact with services and/or therapists who are working with your child to seek information regarding their learning plan to support continuity of learning.

Our centre may be able to apply for additional support through the Inclusion Support Program (SIP) to assist your child's access. Withdrawal from care/Reducing enrolment days.

We require 2 weeks written notice to withdraw and/or reduce enrolment days for your child/ren from any permanent booking. Please see the Nominated Supervisor to obtain the required form to complete. Children are not able to attract CCS for any days after the last day your child physically attends the centre. There are some circumstances where CCS can be paid after the last day your child physically attends with an approved reason.

Family Participation, Involvement and Feedback

Our centres have an Open-Door Policy and actively seek and encourage families to be involved. Your involvement can range from evaluating and adding input into centre policies and or your child's program and observations, volunteering within the centre and sharing skills and experiences which will benefit children and the program.

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, SMS, Facebook and Newsletters. We pride ourselves on strong verbal communication on a daily basis. We seek input from families on all aspects of service delivery; in particular, your child's goals, observations and program.

If, for any reason, you question or do not understand any aspect of service delivery or your child's experience we have a

Grievance Policy that supports all stakeholders in our community to consult and implement at any time.

Copies of our policies are available in each room, the office and family library. You are welcome to take a copy home and review at your leisure.

Family involvement

We welcome and encourage the involvement of all parents/families at our centres. Your ideas, experiences and skills are greatly valued and will enable us to extend each child's interests and abilities. There are many ways for your family to be involved – contributions big or small are appreciated. Here are just a few ideas.

Your occupation or hobby

You are the most important person in your child's world.

We welcome all parents/family members to share their occupation or hobby (e.g., music, craft, cooking). Our

centres are an extension of home for young children. We can use information that has come from discussions about occupations and hobbies in our program.

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 centres. Your involvement assists us to enrich the lives of all our families and children.

Reading

Children benefit greatly from shared reading experiences.

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

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.

Suggestions

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

Fees, Rebates (CCS) and Attendance



Fees

The centre fees will be provided to during your initial centre tour or orientation. Please note that all fees provided are before Child Care Subsidy (CCS) has been applied.

We offer 9hr, 10hr and full day sessions to assist you in maximizing your CCS entitlement hours. Our Centre Manager can assist you with further details about our session options to maximise your CCS hours..

Fees must always be paid minimum 1 week in advance.



Statement of fees

Through your parent app you have 24/7 access to your statement and the ability to pay fees. Please check your statements to ensure all details are correct and accurate. If there is any discrepancy, please contact the Centre Manager as soon as possible.



Payment methods

Direct Debit is our preferred method of payment. Parents/guardians are required to complete a Direct Debit form upon enrolment when prompted during the online enrolment process.

Fees will be deducted weekly by our chosen third-party payment company, Debit Success. (Fortnightly or monthly payments can also be arranged but accounts must always be in advance.)



Please note that additional charges will apply for any failed transactions as a result of insufficient funds.

There will be EFTPOS facilities at the centre as well as the ability to use the "PAY NOW" function in your Xplor Home app. (This is only applicable to the Primary Carer/Child Care Subsidy Account holder)

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 through our app Xplor Home app.

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. Once this Additional absences beyond 42 days may be approved for specific reasons with supporting documentation. Please talk to us about additional absences.

Centrelink will not pay Child Care Subsidy to booked days not attended. This applies to both bookings on commencement & at the end of care. Where your child does not attend their notice period you will be required to pay full fees.

You can access your child's absence record on your online statement by selecting 'View Child Care Details and Payments' on your Centrelink online account. You can also do this using the Express plus Families mobile app

Public holidays will be charged and counted as an absence if your child would normally have attended the service on that weekday, and fees would ordinarily have been charged for that day for your child.

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

Child Care Subsidy offers assistance to families to help with the cost of child care 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 to the child according to the family centerlink record. We'll also need 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 in your centres software provider and then with Centerlink via the MyGov website.

The First Five Years really matter, and the Government is committed to ensuring that Australian families are able to access affordable, flexible and high quality child care. Know that at First Five we celebrate who children are now. We recognise learning begins from birth, and that the first five years are the most critical.

We have put together a Child Care Subsidy guide to assist you in the process from the decision to start your child in care to their commencement at a centre. You can view this on our website at www.firstfive.com.au

** To optimise your Child Care Subsidy hours, First Five Early Learning offer 9hr, 10hr and Full day sessions.



Child Care Subsidy cont'd

How do I maximise the amount of subsidy I receive?

First Five offers nine-hour, ten-hour and full day sessions to support families to make the most out of the government's Child Care Subsidy. They are called 'flexi hours' because they give families the flexibility to choose which hours best suit them to maximise the total fortnightly subsidy hours the government have allocated per child/family.

July 2023 Changes to Child Care Subsidy

- From 10 July 2023, if your family earns under \$530,000, you'll get increased Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
- The CCS percentage you're entitled to depends on your family's income.
- The income limit to get the maximum CCS is increasing. Families earning up to \$80,000 will get an increased maximum CCS amount, from 85% to 90%.
- If you earn over \$80,000 you may get a subsidy starting from 90%. This will go down by 1% for each \$5,000 of income your family earns. You'll either get more subsidy or have no change to your entitlement.
- If you have more than one child aged 5 or under, you can still get a higher rate for one or more of your children.
- The low income limit for Additional Child Care Subsidy Transition to Work will also increase to \$80,000.
- If you already get CCS, you don't need to do anything to get the increased rate. We'll apply changes to your CCS automatically.

HOW MUCH CHILD CARE SUBSIDY AM I ENTITLED TO?

Visit the Child Care Subsidy Calculator to get an estimate today.

<https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-calculator>

The subsidy you will receive, and any applicable cap will depend upon your own personal circumstances and is subject to your combined family income, hours of recognised activity and child care details. Even if you are currently receiving child care subsidy, you will need to update your details through your Centrelink account on MyGov. For more information visit The Department of Education's website at education.gov.au/childcare

WHY IS SOME OF THE SUBSIDY RETAINED, AND DO I GET THIS BACK?

Child Care Subsidy withholding is designed to help families avoid or minimise debts at reconciliation, which could occur due to changes in circumstances throughout the year (for example, changes to family incomes or activities). Parents can request their percentage of withholding be adjusted up or down through Centrelink/MyGov app. However, withholding is important as it helps protect families from possible debts. After reconciliation which occurs once families have submitted their tax return each financial year any outstanding subsidy is returned to the family.

Five per cent of all families' Child Care Subsidy will be withheld by the Government, however, withholding will not apply to Additional Child Care Subsidy payments.

CCS Income thresholds and Activity Levels

2023/24 CCS Family Income Thresholds

CSS family income thresholds^	Subsidy %
Up to \$80,000	90%
More than \$80,000 to below \$530,000	Between 90% and 0% The percentage goes down by 1% for every \$5,000 of income your family earns above \$80,000
\$530,000 or more	0%

ACTIVITY LEVEL

The Australian Government uses a family's activity level to work out the number of hours of subsidised child care it can get each fortnight.

Government look at both parents' activity and use the parent with the lower hours to determine the level.

Activity hours do not need to coincide with child care hours. For example, an individual working on the weekend can get CCS for care during the week.

Recognised activities (Can we have a graphic for this?) Families need to do a recognised activity to get CCS.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- paid work, including being self-employed
- paid or unpaid leave, including parental or maternity leave
- unpaid work in a family business
- training to improve work skills or employment prospects
- an approved course of education or study
- volunteering
- unpaid work experience or internship
- actively setting up a business
- actively looking for work.
- Recognised activities can be combined to determine the maximum hours of CCS a family can get.

Step	Hours of activity per fortnight	Maximum hours of CCS per child, per fortnight
1	Less than 8 hours	0 hours if you earn above \$80,000 24 hours if you earn \$80,000 or below
2	8 hours to 16 hours	36 hours
3	More than 16 hours to 48 hours	72 hours
4	More than 48 hours	100 hours

Parents can include travel time between their child care service and place of work, training, study or other recognised activity.

Meals and Special Occasions

A young child with blonde hair is shown from the chest up, smiling and eating a large slice of watermelon. The child is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The background is a bright, out-of-focus outdoor setting with green foliage and a white railing.

Meals

Our centre promotes healthy eating habits and provides delicious and nutritious food for your child each day. We provide a nutritionally balanced, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late afternoon. 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 centre. Please discuss your child's special requirements, allergies and any other medical conditions with the Nominated Supervisor/Centre Management Team.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special celebration for children and families. If your child is attending the centre on their Birthday, and you are wanting a cake, it is recommended that you speak to your centre management team so something can be prepared and provided by our centre cook. This reduces the major allergy risks associated with most other cakes and helps us to provide a hygienic celebration for the birthday child. Families are required discuss this with educators and management prior to the celebration as we monitor food and treats to ensure the safety of all children and staff. For further information, please see our Celebration Policy.

Special Events

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



First Five Policies and Procedures

Please ensure you visit our website under “Centre Policies” to familiarise yourselves with and acknowledge the following.

- Health and Hygiene
- Fees
- Infectious Diseases
- Immunisation
- Medication
- Incidents, injury or trauma
- Emergency and Evacuation Procedures
- Drop off and collection of your child
- Social Media
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Rest and Sleep
- Sustainability
- Celebration Policy

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. First Aid kits are located throughout the centre.
- **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 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 and any related medical costs are the responsibility of the child's guardians/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.



Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting

The Child Protection Act 1999 requires education and care professionals, referred to as 'mandatory reporters', to make a report to Child Safety, if they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them.

Mandatory reporters should also report to Child Safety a reasonable suspicion that a child is in need of protection caused by any other form of abuse or neglect.

All adults must report sexual offending against children to the police unless they have a reasonable excuse. Adults in an institutional setting (e.g, a school, church or sporting club) must protect children from the risk of a sexual offence being committed against them.

All First Five Early Learning educators and management take part in Child Safety Training with "In Safe Hands" as part of their employment agreement.

Mandatory reporting obligations:

- Making the most appropriate reporting decision
- Reporting suspected risk of significant harm.
- Reporting problematic or harmful sexualised behaviours from children
- Working with other agencies
- Exchanging information
- Resources
- Policies
- Further support.

Defining child abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission (i.e., abuse) (CFCA, 2018).

Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:

1. physical abuse
2. emotional abuse
3. neglect
4. sexual abuse
5. exposure to family violence.

Orientation and First Day

Your child's first day is as important to us as it is to you and your child.

Orientation is an important start for your child and family to connect to our centre. We encourage each child to attend our centre 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 Nominated Supervisor/Centre Manger will contact you to arrange suitable times and days for stay and play centre 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 centre. You are welcome to take photos of your child in our environment to show and discuss at home with them



Arrival and Departure

Each day, you must sign your child in upon arrival and sign them out upon departure and note the date and times. 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.

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, an authority to collect form must be provided in writing to the Nominated Supervisor. Our staff will ask to view photo identification of the adult collecting your child from care to confirm their identity.

Your child's first day and week with us

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. We encourage parents to stay as long as they like during the morning drop off to help your child settle. 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.

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 experiences and develop independence.

Shoes need to afford children freedom to run, climb, hop and jump, as well as being easy to take off and put on independently. Joggers and sandals are appropriate shoes to wear. Thongs, slippers and gumboots are not suitable, and we prefer that these are NOT worn at the centre. Also, please consider clothing that enables your 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 midriff tops), and hats that are broad brimmed are essential for effective sun safety.



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.

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. Across the day, a child's backpack can provide reassurance as a connection to home.

SPARE CLOTHING

Please include a complete change of clothes every day which can stay in your child's bag. Your child will be involved in outdoor and indoor play, arts-based learning and many other experiences. It may be necessary for your child to get changed into a fresh set of clothes.

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 also always provide water and cups.

SUN HAT (One will be provided)

A protective sun hat (either broad brimmed or legionnaire hat) must be worn every day 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.

MEALS WILL BE PROVIDED BEDDING FOR SLEEP AND REST TIMES WILL BE PROVIDED.



Useful Links

Visit our website to find out more .

www.firstfive.com.au

Code of Ethics

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ECA-COE-Brochure-web-2019.pdf

Educator to Child Ratios in line with QLD legislation and guidelines

earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislation-and-guidelines/staffing-requirements-and-leadership/educator-to-childratio

Visit Staying Healthy in Childcare to check illnesses and exclusion periods that may apply

https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/426820/timeout_poster.pdf

www.nhmrc.gov.au/aboutus/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services

Victorian Child Safe Standards

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/>

Child Care Subsidy explained
(available in other languages)

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy

Services Australia Family Page

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/families

About Immunisation in VIC

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/immunisation-schedule-victoria-and-vaccine-eligibility-criteria>

Government Early Education Website
for Families

www.startingblocks.gov.au



Regulatory Authorities

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 our State/Territory. To contact our Regulatory Authority, please refer to the contact details below:

VICTORIA

Early Childhood Education and Care Department of Education

North Eastern Melbourne Area

North-Western Victoria Region

Department of Education

Level 2, 1 Flintoff Street, Greensborough VIC 3088

T: 03 7505 3645

www.education.vic.gov.au