



HANDBOOK



The staff and children of Margaret Ives Community Children's Centre welcome your family to the Jacaranda Room. Each day approximately sixteen children under the age of three come to play and learn in our room. All children and families belong to the one baby section; however we do operate as two smaller groups to promote quality care.

Our Jacaranda Room consists of five primary care groups, with two caregivers on each side of the room, offering primary and secondary care to your child, and we also have our Team Leader, Michelle who operates as a secondary carer to all children and has a small Primary Group. Your child will be allocated a primary caregiver to assist with transitions.

We work in partnership with you to provide a warm, caring and stimulating environment for your child. We believe as a staff team that secure, nurturing relationships with caring adults enable children to build strong attachments and these are the foundation for all future learning. This is confirmed by recent brain research.

At Margaret Ives we use a primary care system where one caregiver assumes responsibility for your child's care and routines. This ensures the formation of special relationships, close bonds that enable clear communication with children, families and staff and shared understanding of your child's needs. Primary caregiving is not exclusive, all staff work as a team to ensure positive experiences for each child and their family

SETTLING IN

A settling-in period is important because it is less stressful for both you and your child to become used to the separation gently. This also enables your child to see you and the caregivers getting along well together. Your primary caregiver will spend time with you and your baby and be responsible for organising the settling-in period with you.

We recommend you visit the centre with your baby at a time when your child is most likely to cope with new situations e.g. not when they are tired, hungry or unwell. It is a chance for you to get to know the staff and also for your child to explore in a non-threatening situation. If you feel comfortable, it is more likely your child will too. The number of visits will depend on your child's needs and perhaps also your commitments.

Please keep days short when they start so they begin to understand that you leave but you also return. A few hours can seem a long time for a small child.

We encourage all families to create a family photo leaf for our family tree. They are a great way to build a sense of belonging.

ROUTINE

7:30 Centre Opens,
Indoor & Verandah
Play

8:45 Both Indoor &
Outdoor Play

9:15 Fruit Time

9:45 Indoor & Outdoor
Play (see curriculum)

11:00 Lunch with
Primary Educators.
Lunch Saved For
Sleeping Children
(Refer to daily menu)

11:30 Main Sleep
Time (awake children
play outdoors and on
verandah)

1:30 Wake Up
Refreshments. Indoor
& Outdoor Play

2:00 Afternoon Tea
(refer to daily menu)

3:00 Indoor & Outdoor
Play

5:30 Children Move
Through To Preschool

5:45 All Children
Collected

6:00 Centre Closes

JACARANDA ROOM ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Please remember to sign in and out on the attendance sheet each day and tick the sunscreen column when sunscreen has been applied. Also record collection time and person.

Medication must not be left in your child's bag or locker. Please fill in the medication book when your child requires prescribed medication. Staff must sight medications, details for administering and the medication authority. See our Medication Policy.

Read child's daily information book.

Nappies are supplied by the Centre.

Bags need to be named and be of an appropriate size to fit the lockers.

Inside your child's bag...

- Prepared and clearly named bottles.
- Labelled spare clothing that is appropriate for the season.
- A piece of fruit for the shared fruit basket (apples are considered a choking hazard).
- Any bottles, dummy's or comforters if required.
- ***NO toys from home as they can cause tension and conflict, get lost or break.***

ROUTINES

The Centre follows your child's own routine accommodating their individual needs in sleeping and feeding. A high emphasis is placed on quality interactions during routine times, and care is taken not to rush but to use this time for learning and developing a strong bond between carer and child.

Routines and rituals form the basis of our program, where the daily schedule is organised around the children's needs, not the other way around.

Children are encouraged to take an active role in the rituals of the day eg folding the washing, washing their own hands and face and preparing the room for sleep time.

HEALTH & SAFETY

As a Centre we strive to provide a safe and hygienic environment that promotes the health of both the children and staff. If you have any questions or concerns about the health or safety of your child do not hesitate to ask a staff member.

COMMUNICATION

There are many ways we can keep the lines of communication open between staff and parents. On our notice boards you will find information about our program, coming events, governing committee news, and items of interest.

We provide communication books which outline your child's day and are a valuable way for you to communicate with your child's primary carer. We also see you most days and you are welcome to phone at any time.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We encourage parents to visit the Centre and become involved and participate in our program. Please feel free to discuss any ideas you have with the staff. We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions

OUR CURRICULUM

We plan our program using the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia which supports our emphasis on relationship based programs such as primary caregiving.

Our program is based on the individual needs, strengths and interests of your child. We develop, in partnership with parents, an understanding of these through written observations of each child, careful planning, and evaluation.

One of our goals when your child begins at the Centre is for them to develop a strong attachment to their primary carer. A familiar face every day at the Centre will encourage a sense of trust and feeling of security for your child.

Our Program focuses on developing relationships to encourage a healthy sense of self and positive self esteem. By encouraging children's efforts rather than praising outcomes, and acknowledging the children's strengths, they begin to see themselves as competent and independent.

We aim to provide many opportunities for your child to explore using their senses through play and their daily routines. Through their senses children develop an understanding of the world and their relationship to their surroundings.

DOCUMENTATION

Learning Stories and snapshots provide a way of documenting or recording your child's learning journey, their development and relationships. Each story focuses on positive learning moments, challenges and achievements with respect. The stories in your child's portfolio can be read over and over again and shared with family and friends. Parents and other family members gain insight into what happens when their child is in care. Folders will be sent home once a term with documentation and you can also leave your own feedback and/or message for your child to revisit.

SLEEP

At the Centre we follow your child's natural sleep patterns and are sensitive to their home sleeping habits and routine. We try to accommodate your child's preference of how to go to sleep patting, rocking, comfort items and where they like to sleep (cot, pram, stretcher, quiet, or noisy area). Please communicate to staff your child's sleep patterns and special requirements and refer to our safe sleeping policy.

BREAST FEEDING

We encourage mothers to continue to breast feed their babies for as long as possible. Please feel free to discuss your needs with a staff member.



BOTTLE FEEDING

We use bottle-feeding times as an opportunity for special one-to-one bonding moments with your child. If your child requires bottles during the day, please ensure an adequate supply of clean, clearly named bottles is provided. We ask families to please make formula bottles at home before arrival. The Centre supplies cow's milk and soy.

MEALTIMES

Please encourage your child to have a nutritious breakfast for a good start to the day. Mealtimes are seen as a social occasion and an opportunity for much learning. The menu is displayed on the notice board.

We follow your lead in introducing solids to your baby. Please refer to our nutrition policy for more information.

MEDICATION

Please ensure all prescribed medication has a label from the chemist stating your child's name (not a sibling), the dosage and the frequency. We are unable to administer medication without this information on the bottle. Please fill in the medication form with all the required details and your signature, and hand the medication to a staff member.

All medications must be entrusted to a staff member and dosage information written by parents in the medication book. All medications must be labelled with the child's name. Unless there is a written medication authority form from a medical practitioner or pharmacist medication will not be administered. This includes nappy creams and teething gels.

Do not leave any medication in your child's bag or locker. Please refer to our Medication Policy for more details

Our Centre policy follows the recommendations from "Staying Healthy in Child Care" regarding exclusion periods for unwell children.

SICKNESS

If your child is sick e.g. vomiting or diarrhoea within 24 hours of attendance, or has an elevated temperature, please keep them at home. We do not have the facilities or staff to care for unwell children, and need to protect other children and staff from infection.

FEVER

A high temperature is usually a sign of infection. There is no evidence to suggest a fever is associated with teething. Please seek medical advice if your child has an elevated temperature