

Woden Early Childhood Centre

Family Handbook



Useful Information

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'creating the future'

Translating and Interpreting service 131 450

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Preface

Welcome

You will find your decision to enrol your child in our Centre is a significant forward step in your journey to educate and develop your child. The fact that you are taking the time to read this handbook shows that you are actively involved in, and care about, their education (which makes you the caring parent we strive to attract and keep at our Centre).

We have written this guide because we feel it helps us establish a common understanding about what you can and should expect of your child's experience here at Woden Early Childhood Centre. We also talk about what we expect of you!

You are your child's most influential and effective teacher. We are here to facilitate varied, proven, and focused learning activities in a nurturing group setting. Your child's development depends in large part on our cooperation as part of this team. Everything that your child experiences at the Centre can be reinforced at home. Furthermore, it is important that your child know that you are involved in, and care about, what they are doing here at the Centre. It is so important to establish and reinforce consistency - in learning, in behaviour management, in daily routines, **and** in having fun!

You will come to know that we always place the children's best interest first and foremost in everything we practice and do. Many of the guidelines in this handbook help us to protect and reinforce this principle. If you have any questions please talk to us.

This booklet will provide you with background information on the Centre, including our philosophy and aims, some of our policies and practices and the way in which the Centre operates. We welcome your comments on routines and the overall program at any time. We encourage all families to become involved in the Centre and discuss any concerns with the staff or Director, The Centre's overall goal is to provide your child with the best possible care and support during the time spent with us. To make sure we achieve this goal, we want to work closely with you to understand your child's needs. We believe spending lots of quality time in the first days is vital in settling your child. Please present the Centre as a positive place to be (not somewhere they have to come while you are at work).

You can help us by talking to us often about your child's development, activities and needs. In this way we can work together to make each day at the Centre a happy and fulfilling one for your child. We hope that you will be able to spend time with staff each day to catch up with your child's activities and needs. This is particularly vital with younger children who cannot yet tell you how they spent their day.

This handbook can be changed by the Centre at any time, with or without notice. However, we strive to convey changes in policies and procedures in a timely manner.

About Our Centre

Woden Early Childhood Centre was built in 1986 by the then Institute of Technology now known as (Canberra Institute of Technology (C.I.T.)) The Centre was built to service the needs of the students and staff of CIT and community users. We are a not-profit Centre

The Centre is a community based Child Care service that is run by a management committee of current parents and staff. The Committee strives to provide an environment that families feel comfortable leaving their children and a place where high quality staff will stay and make a difference in the lives of young children.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in committee activities. The committee meets monthly and makes financial and policy decisions about the operation of the Centre. Meetings, agendas and minutes are displayed on the notice board in the foyer. Parents are encouraged to attend meetings.

We are a 61 place child care centre offering part time and full time care for children from birth through to school age. Care is offered on a weekly or daily basis. Extra care is available on a casual basis to children already using the Centre part time, if there are vacancies in the room on the extra day requested. Childcare is not available at our Centre once your child attends school

Management Committee

The Woden Early Childhood Centre is a non-profit community based organisation which is supported by the Canberra Institute of Technology for the use of Institute students and staff, and members of the general public. The building is owned by the Institute, and the Centre is run by a Management Committee comprising of families and two staff reps. The Committee meets on a monthly basis and makes financial and policy decisions for the running of the Centre. The Director is responsible for the day to day running of the Centre.

The Management Committee in conjunction with the Centre Director and determine staffing requirements for the Centre ensuring that these are maintained at a level consistent with quality programs. Licensing standards will always be maintained as a minimum and the Centre aims to have additional staff in each room.

Centre management understands and supports the philosophy behind providing continuity of care, management aims to move staff only when required, with the children's care being the priority, and therefore a staff member may move with the children at the beginning of the year

Centre Calendar

Upon enrolment, families are able to access a monthly calendar via the centre website www.wodenchildcare.com.au. The monthly calendar outlines specific dates when the centre has planned events. This is up dated as needed through out the year and displayed in the foyer and room to remind families.

Staffing of Rooms

Staff members have gone through a rigorous interview process. Extensive experience and/or excellent credentials are required, but form only part of the selection process. In addition to a formal application and reference review process, all staff are required to observe, evaluate, and respond to real instructional situations.

Our Centre consists of a team of professional childcare workers who are chosen for their skills and/or experience. They provide the highest possible care for children using the Centre. The names of the staff working in your child's room are listed on the door in that room. We also have a photo display in the front foyer.

Placement of staff is evaluated yearly and restructuring of staffing according to the ability, availability, personality, and teaching style of each staff in comparison to room children and current staff openings. We strive to keep some of our staff with the same group of children as they move up to the next room.

A qualified child care worker is in charge of each room, they are responsible for its overall running; this includes the program, journal and portfolioing. There is always a staff member with a first aid certificate; on the premises in fact most staff have a current First Aid Certificate.

We recognize the development of children is directly tied to the quality and development of the staff who work with the children. We believe Woden Early Childhood Centre staff are exceptional because of their:

- genuine love and respect for children
- desire and ability to teach children
- educational philosophy

To ensure staff are staying in touch with current practices and research they participate in professional development throughout the year. Training and the staff's time is paid by the Centre. Most staff have a certificate or diploma in early childhood services along with a current first aid certificate.

The Centre Director: Reesha Stefek is the current Director; she has been employed at the Centre since 1992 and has been the Director since 1994. Reesha holds a Certificate in Centre Management as well as a Diploma in Early Childhood Services.

The Rooms

The Centre has 4 rooms that are divided into different age groups in order to provide a developmentally and age appropriate programs.

Nursery:

Birth to 18 months.

8 children 2 staff plus an additional staff member

Toddlers:

18 mths to 2.5 yrs

15 children 3 staff plus an additional staff member

Intro:

2.5 to 3.5 yrs

18 children 3 staff plus an additional staff member

Pre-school:

3.5 to 6 yrs

20 children 2 staff plus an additional staff member

Please take the time to get to know the staff caring for your child and keep them up to date on your child's needs. Feel free to ask the staff about your child's day.

Movement of the children between the rooms, while roughly determined by age, depends primarily on the individual child's readiness to move into an older age group, and space available.

Placement of each child will be given individual consideration. The child's social and cognitive abilities, age and development, individual circumstances, staff and family recommendations, and room availability will be taken into consideration when making placement decisions.

Each child's readiness to progress is determined through consultation with staff members and families in the relevant rooms. You are encouraged to discuss this process with the staff in your child's room. Please remember if there aren't vacancies in the next room we are unable to move your child up, however each room programs for individual children, therefore each child's needs are met no matter what age they are or what room they are in.

Access

Priority of access to places is given to siblings of current users, CIT students and staff. Other places are available to the public, if not listed by the above priorities.

Allowable Absences, Signing in and out

There are attendance sheets in each room that must be signed on arrival and departure. This is a licensing requirement. It is also vital for us to know who is at the Centre, should there ever be an emergency. Families must also note and sign the book whenever their child is absent from the Centre. Families are required to state the reasons for absence and initial this on the sign-in sheet for the relevant days that the child was absent.

Childcare Benefits

Commonwealth Government Childcare Benefits is available to all eligible families. To determine eligibility for assistance, families must have their income assessed by the Family Assistance Office, (Centrelink) which then notifies the Centre of the family's eligibility and the percentage of assistance applicable. Paperwork and further information is available from the Centre or Centrelink.

Opening times and fees

The Centre is open from 8 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks per year and fees are payable for all times your child is booked for care this includes Public Holidays. The Centre is also closed for two weeks during the Christmas, New Year holidays (fees are not applicable for this period). Fees are also payable for times when your child is absent due to illness or holidays.

All fees are paid two weeks in advance. They are to be paid fortnightly on a Thursday, to coincide with Public Service and CIT pay days. Fee payment dates are advertised in the foyer. Please place fees into the fees box, which is near the office door. For security reasons, you are encouraged to pay all fees by cheque or EFTPOS. We do not accept cash. When paying by EFTPOS it is important to write your child's name on the docket and post in the fee box located next to the office door. If your child's name isn't on the docket we have no way of knowing who it belongs to.

A fine of \$50 will automatically be imposed on families who are late in paying their fees. They also risk losing their childcare place if they continually pay their fees late. This fee will be taken off the account if it is paid in full within the following fortnight.

Please give 2 weeks notice for the withdrawal of a child. Failure to do so may result in 2 weeks' fees being charged. We also request you give two weeks notice of change in care

The Facility

The Woden Early Childhood Centre is purpose-built to meet the emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of young children. Children and parents enter our building through a foyer that features the children's work and important notices for families. The Centre is accessed through a secure, pass code-protected door that leads into the front foyer. Our front area also includes an office, a parent lending library, staff room and staff programming room.

The hallway is used to display project work, calendars, and activities and notices for the rooms. Each room is a large open area divided into smaller learning centres, with an open area for whole-group activities. The rooms feature, age-appropriate furniture, display areas for children's work, outside windows, alternating carpet and vinyl areas, and covered verandah for outdoor activities.

The playground includes play equipment for climbing and dramatic play; water and sand area; a garden; a tricycle path; a concrete game area; and easels for painting. Children have direct access to shade, water, and a bathroom from the playground.

Arrival

When arriving at the Centre with your child, you must ensure that they are left in the care of a staff member. When collecting your child, please make sure that a staff member is aware that you are leaving. This will provide them with the opportunity to say goodbye to you and your child. It is important that parents establish a healthy, short, and smooth **good-bye routine**.

All children must be escorted into and out of rooms by a designated adult. We require you to sign your child into their room. We ask you to allow enough time to encourage your child to place their belongings in their locker.

The room staff will invite the child in and help make the transition from home to child care a positive one. **Please do not expect to engage staff in long conversations during your morning drop off; as this is a very busy time and other children will require the staff's attention upon arrival.** If you need a conference with staff, please set up an appointment time. This way they are able to spend more time discussing matters in a private space.

Departure

Parents should make staff aware that the child is leaving. Children will only be released to legal guardians and persons on the authorized pick up list. It is important that you keep this list updated. We will ask for proper identification. A photo ID is required. If anyone else is to pick up the child, we will only release the child if we are notified by the parent, and given the correct identification information. **All people entering and exiting the building must do so through the secured front door.**

All children must be collected and off the premises by 6 pm. There is an automatic fine imposed on parents who are late in collecting their children. **The fine is \$15 for the first five minutes or part thereof and \$5 for each minute that you are late after 6.05 pm.** Although these fines are severe, the consequences of your arriving late are serious. Penalty rates have to be paid to staff who stay back and they may be caused considerable inconvenience. It is a licensing requirement that 2 staff stay with the child until they are collected. If a staff member cannot stay and can't contact anyone, we are legally required to contact the ACT Welfare Duty Officer however; we hope that this never happens. We would always do what we believed was in the best interest of the child

If you cannot collect your child and wish to have someone else do so on your behalf, you must ensure that a staff member is told the name of the person picking up the child. The name and contact phone number of this person should also be recorded on the sign-in sheet for that day.

This person must sign the attendance book when they come in to collect your child. If we haven't met this person before we will ask them for photographic ID. Persons under the age of eighteen are not allowed collect children from the Centre.

The Program

Our Centre aims to provide a home-like atmosphere within a caring and stimulating environment. We aim to build a secure and trusting environment in which your child can develop and enjoy themselves. We believe that children learn self-discipline through sharing and cooperation with others. We encourage and support this.

Staff plan programs and activities to meet the individual children's needs and interests. All programs are flexible and staff build on child directed activities where possible.

Each room records activities that have taken place through out the day. This is done through the room Journal. Staff appreciate it when families take time to read it. Staff in each room record information about each child's development, interests and abilities this is the core of the child's portfolio. This information assists staff in planning an overall program that is based on individual needs. Please arrange with the Room Leader to discuss this information, whenever you wish. We do send portfolios home every six to eight weeks

We welcome your comments and encourage your involvement in the activities in your child's room'. If you can assist in any way staff would love to hear from you.

Program activities include but are not limited to:

- Painting
- Pasting
- Play dough
- Puzzles
- Blocks
- Construction equipment
- Singing
- Story telling
- Books
- Dramatic play
- Sand and water play
- Other outdoor activities, including incidental excursions around the Centre

Staff provide a balanced program that will meet all the developmental needs of your child.

If you have any concerns about your child's development no matter how small, chat to your child's Room Leader

Curriculum and Assessment

Woden Early Childhood Centre's Early Childhood staff implement a responsive, emergent, and negotiated curriculum and assessment system that focuses on the development of the whole child.

Centre Goals

We are committed to attaining these goals every day. We thought you should know what we are striving for

- We will provide an unhurried learning environment that develops each child's intellect and resists the inclination to increase academic pressures.
- Children will feel safe, secure, and accepted.
- Children will develop and expand their self-worth and social competence.
- Children will be given the opportunity to construct knowledge through repeated experiences involving people and materials.
- Children will be supported in terms of both their actual development and their potential.
- Children will develop responsibility for their immediate and personal environment.
- Content of the curriculum will be relevant, engaging and meaningful to the children, and will be developed by both the staff and the children.
- Curriculum objectives will respect each child's individuality, and will be realistic and attainable according to each child's intellectual, emotional and physical abilities.
- Children will be evaluated as they "authentically" engage in concrete, meaningful tasks that parallel the curriculum.
- Children will develop and expand in the ability to express, represent, and understand thoughts, feelings and experiences of self and others.
- Children will develop and expand in the ability to make decisions and solve problems.

Developmental Objectives

Staff achieve the centre goals effectively by incorporating experiences that challenge children at the developmentally appropriate level. We use objectives that are time-tested, age-appropriate objectives to help the staff facilitate each child's growth in developmental areas:

1. Personal, Social and Character Development
2. Physical Development
3. Math Development
4. Science Development
5. Expressive, Receptive and Representational Development
6. Higher Level Thinking

The objectives for most areas are stated as progressive stages that children are known to typically follow. These stages are not age dependent, because children develop differently and usually in spurts between the ages of 2-8. **The purpose of the curriculum is not to have the child reach the last stage but to nurture and challenge the child in his/her current stage with quality.**

Methodology

We have been inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach and its use of emergent curriculum. The focus of collaboration among staff, parents and children to develop documentation, interpretation, direction, and play envelops into a qualitative learning environment rich in context and creativity. Using the developmentally appropriate objectives, knowledge of children's developmental sequences, and an understanding of the personalities and learning styles of the children, staff formulate and hypotheses of what *could* happen and plan accordingly. Staff collects materials, pose questions and create learning opportunities that enable children to engage in analyzing the topic.

In addition to building knowledge and skills, children develop their emotional intelligence and aesthetic sensibilities because they are immersed in topics dear to their hearts. Staff guide children on the development of theories through encounters with materials, the real world, conversations, group discussions and symbolic representations in multiple forms: such as art, music, foreign language, movement, dance, drama, constructions, and writing. A typical daily routine includes small and large group times; learning centres; gross motor activities; morning and afternoon tea and lunch; rest time; and integrated specialty areas such as Music and Art. Throughout the day, staff and children continually monitor and celebrate the achievements of all children by displaying work, documenting observations and giving verbal praise.

Content

We will teach knowledge and skills through children's interests. Staff observe and reflect upon the mutual interests of the children to select content studied and to develop corresponding projects. The staff engage the children in planning activities that are purposeful and meaningful to them. With staff guidance, long term projects chosen are those that generate a sufficient amount of interest and uncertainty to provoke children's creative thinking and problem solving, and are open to different avenues of exploration. The length of each unit of study is dependent upon the interest of the children.

Environment

We consider the environment to be our "additional staff member." Careful consideration, thought and time by the staff are an essential part of planning a challenging and appropriate environment. Children's interactions with their environment combined with staff questioning and discussion is essential to meeting children's cognitive needs. From our outdoor verandah and beautiful outdoor environment to our carefully displayed documentation and learning centres, we are continually reflecting and setting up areas to engage children's minds. Woden Early Childhood Centre's rooms are organized into distinct **Learning Centres**. Our centres are **Math, Writing, Art, Library, Discovery, Sensory Table, Dramatic Play and Blocks**. Each focused centre in the room builds specific skills and creates an environment that stimulates imagination, creativity, socialization, exploration, and discovery. Children are also surrounded with supplies and resources that enable them to construct, represent, and test

theories. Large blocks of time are given to explore in learning centres so that children may fully develop their ideas and thoughts.

Assessment

Staff maintain a developmentally appropriate **portfolio** for each child. The portfolio includes both written observations and original works that represent the child's thought processes. These works typically illustrate skills in specific areas, such as language and literacy, math and play development, which reflects the checklist. Portfolios are an important part of our **Authentic Assessment** process, which is a comprehensive approach to evaluating children's actual current skills, knowledge, behavior and accomplishments.

Using the curriculum objectives, the information in the portfolio, and an understanding of the individual child's learning style and interests through assessment and projects, the staff develop instructions that will enable the child to grow and develop at his/her challenge level.

Parent, staff evenings are scheduled throughout the year. This gives parents an opportunity to discuss the child's accomplishments and needs by looking through their journal and discussing their child's work with the staff. Staff and parents alike can request additional conferences at any time.

Parents are encouraged to visit and volunteer at the centre throughout the year. Parents and staff both benefit from room visits. Parents are invited to take an active role in the child's education, including viewing their child's portfolio on a consistent basis.

Journal

The day events are documented in a journal. This is a snap shot of the day and displays of the magic moments within the room and forms an evaluation of the rooms program as well as documentation for the children's portfolios. All staff are encouraged to contribute to the room journal and again families are asked to provide comment and feedback.

Portfolios

Each child's development is documented in an individual portfolio. The portfolios are sent home at the end of each term. Families are encouraged to contribute to their child's portfolio with information of holidays, family events and visitors. The portfolios are a wonderful link from child care centre to home. Staff enjoy reading the contribution that family make in their child's portfolios. When your child finishes their time with us we give you your child's portfolio as a documentation of their time with us.

Enrolment Procedure

Woden Early Childhood Centre *has an open enrolment policy. We enrol children to give them the best educational environment our resources can offer, without any discrimination in regard to race, sex, disability, religion, national origin, or ethnicity. We believe we offer quality care and want children to have the opportunity to assess it.*

Enrolling in Woden Early Childhood Centre requires you to complete and return all forms in a timely and thorough manner. Many of our requirements are a Licencing requirement. Enrolment is a three-step process that takes time and protects the best interests of your child. Children may not attend at Woden Early Childhood Centre until the ENTIRE process is completed.

STEP 1 - ORIENTATION

STEP 2 - OBSERVATION DAY

STEP 3 - ENROLMENT & ACCEPTANCE

STEP 1 - ORIENTATION

The child's family must first physically visit the centre. During this visit, the family will be given a tour of the facility, and our philosophy and approach will be described. At this time, an appointment will be set up for the child to visit the appropriate room. Children are encouraged to visit on this day so that they develop a sense of belonging.

STEP 2 - OBSERVATION DAY

In order to enrol in the centre, the child will be required to visit the room as a visiting child with a family member from 9:30 am to 10:30 a.m. on a scheduled day. The family and the Woden Early Childhood Centre staff will observe the child and address all concerns on the family's or Woden Early Childhood Centre's behalf prior to the acceptance of an enrolment package. The parent/s will also take part in a family interview.

The purpose of the observation day is twofold: First, it allows the family an opportunity to evaluate the appropriateness of the centre in light of their educational and developmental goals for the child; Second, it allows Woden Early Childhood Centre the opportunity to also perform a preliminary, informal assessment of the parent's goals and attitudes about their child's attendance at the centre. Woden Early Childhood Centre is interested in catering to families whose primary focus is the development, education, and nurturing of their child.

Generally, at the end of the observation day parents will be notified of their child's acceptance to the centre. The family will complete an enrolment form on-site if possible and leave **non refundable** registration fee of a \$100 in order to hold their child's place. Upon admission, the \$100 will be applied toward the fees. Before leaving the centre, the parents will be given an enrolment packet.

STEP 3 - ENROLLMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

To successfully enroll your child in Woden Early Childhood Centre, you must receive an enrolment pack in person from a Woden Early Childhood Centre staff member:

1) Read the Woden Early Childhood Centre Parent Handbook.

The handbook gives you information about the policies and procedures of the centre. We hope that all your questions will be answered by reading this handbook. However, please do not hesitate to ask us any additional questions that you have.

2) Fill out and sign the Woden Early Childhood Centre Enrolment Form.

The Woden Early Childhood Centre Enrolment form must be completely filled out. The information on this form is needed to comply with the ACT licensing regulations. In addition, emergency information given will keep your child safe and secure. Please be sure to note all allergy and medical conditions on this form. After your child is enrolled, it is our expectation and your responsibility to please keep the requested information current.

3) Read and sign the Woden Early Childhood Centre Policy and Parent Agreement Form.

This form is the contract between the parent and the centre. Fees are listed on this form. Fees must be paid in advance before any child can attend.

5) Read the "Choosing Quality Child Care" brochure.

This is a useful brochure produced by the NCAC National Childcare Accreditation Council. It provides families with useful information about child care centres. (www.ncac.gov.au)

6) Provide Immunisation Records.

To satisfy health regulations, all children must show a current record of immunisation. We will need a record of your child's immunisation records. **We are happy to make a copy for you** These forms must be submitted to the centre each time your child is immunised.

Families who choose not to have their child immunised must complete a letter with Centrelink in order to still gain Child Care Benefits. Please note children who are not immunised will be excluded from the Centre during outbreaks of diseases that are currently immunised for. This is to protect the unimmunised child as well as reduce the risks to other children in the Centre.

7) Complete the Child Profile.

Our curriculum is directly based on the interests, personalities, and experiences of the children who attend. Please take the time to fill out the profile which will be sent home with your child's portfolio so that staff can better plan for children in the room.

8) Complete the Woden Early Childhood Centre Emergency Detail Form.

While you may have already provided some of the information on the enrolment form, we ask you to please repeat it on the Emergency Details Form so that we may keep it in an easily accessible place. We take these forms in an emergency and use them to quickly obtain pertinent information when children are unwell.

***ALL FORMS ARE DUE 3 BUSINESS DAYS PRIOR TO THE CHILD'S STARTING.**

9) Payment of fees

Upon admission to the centre, families will need to pay for the first two weeks in advance. Each fortnightly payment is due, in advance, fees can be paid by credit card, debit card, direct debit or cheque we do not accept cash. Fees remain payable for days that children are absent due to holidays or illness. See the current policies for late payment and late pickup fees and other useful policies. Fees are re-evaluated annually by the Management Committee. All families are encouraged to be part of this process.

Discharge and Withdrawal

Woden Early Childhood Centre Early Childhood Education Centre reserves the right to **discharge** any child from the centre for any of the following reasons:

- Non-observance of centre rules and guidelines as stated in the parent agreement and parent handbook
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by family members or child
- Non-payment, or excessive late payment, of fees.

Two weeks advance, written notice to the Director is required when withdrawing a child from Woden Early Childhood Centre. If two weeks notice is not given, the family is financially responsible for 2 weeks fee following the last day of attendance.

Positive Behaviour Guidance

One of the most common questions families have is, "How do you guide children's behaviour in the room?" Firstly, we provide a demonstrative atmosphere for children, one that exhibits encouragement, consistency, and mutual respect. Second, we like to use the most powerful influences children can have in the room - their peers!

Children develop self-respect, self-discipline, and cooperative behaviours by being an active participant in resolving their conflicts. Together, staff and children create ways to prevent conflicts, learning techniques used to resolve conflicts (with peers), and given *natural and logical consequences* when conflicts arise.

Our goal is to prepare children for school, and to impart skills to enable them to become responsible for themselves and gain an understanding of others. *Non-punitive* guidance helps children to: Set clear, consistent, fair limits, Value mistakes as learning opportunities, Redirect to a more acceptable behavior or activity, Talking about their feelings, behaviors and frustrations.

Chronic Disruptive Behaviors

We make every effort to work with the families when children are having difficulties in centre. At the same time, we are here to serve all children. Therefore, we will require the following course of actions when any child displays chronic, disruptive behavior that is determined to be upsetting to the physical and emotional well being of any child (including themselves)

1. **Initial Consultation**

The director and staff will ask the family to meet for a conference. The identified problem will be discussed, evaluated, and defined on paper. The individual plan will contain goals to resolving the problematic behavior will be jointly established with families, staff and professional support people. The family will be actively involved in creating approaches toward solving the problem, and in carrying out these approaches. The family and Centre will reinforce each other in what is said and done while the child is in the sole care of either party.

2. **Second Consultation**

If the initial plan for helping the child does not adequately address the identified problem(s), the family will again be required to meet with the director, staff and professional support people. Another attempt will be made to further define, or redefine, the problem. Additional avenues for addressing the problem will be discussed. Together, the family, director, staff and professional support people will outline refined approaches to solving it. A timetable with specific goals for progress will be documented, along with consequences if the behaviours do not show improvement.

3. **Suspension or Discharge**

In very rare cases, when agreed-upon approaches have been followed and sufficient progress has not occurred, the child may be discharged at the sole discretion of the director. **The director may**

immediately discharge a child at any time if the child exhibits a behaviour which is extremely harmful to themselves or others. This would be a last resort.

Illness

Children who are ill with a contagious disease or a high fever should not attend the centre. If a contagious disease develops at home. Please notify the centre immediately. At Woden Early Childhood Centre, we pride ourselves on a clean and healthy, safe environment.

Families will be notified of any injury that occurs at the centre. The centre will also notify affected families, such as those of children, if a child becomes ill at centre with a **contagious disease** (e.g. **chicken pox or head lice**).

We cannot admit an ill child for care if one or more of the following exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in group care activities including outdoor play;
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care;
3. The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care centre's activities:
 - a) Oral temperature of 37.3 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
 - b) Armpit temperature of 37.2 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
 - c) Ear temperature of 38 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or
 - d) Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill; or
4. A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.
5. Communicable diseases that exclude a child from care, defined by Staying Healthy in Child Care and ACT Centre Based Children's Services Conditions - August 2000. You can access this information from the Office of Child Care. An infected child may not be readmitted until the exclusion period has finished.

With other contagious and **non-contagious** illnesses (e.g. **ear infection**), children **must be free from symptoms and able to cope in group care. If your child is not well enough to play outside, he/she**

should be cared for at home. This is to allow your child ample time to recover and stop the spread of illness to the other children.

Children needing to go home due to illness or injury will be removed from the group and placed in a quiet spot in the room. They will have constant supervision until an authorized person arrives to take the child home. **We ask that families pick up their children from the centre as soon as possible or within the hour, this help reduce the spread of infection and diminishes the stress to your child.**

Woden Early Childhood Centre staff will call you if we feel your child may be coming down with an illness or generally not coping. This communication allows you to be prepared in advance if possible and alleviates the time the child will have to wait for their parents.

Staff consult the Room Leader if a child appears unwell. The Room Leader will decide if the child is well enough to remain at the Centre on 2 criteria: whether the child has an infection which may spread to other children; and if not, whether the child is well enough to cope with group activities.

Upper respiratory tract infections are the most common illnesses in babies, toddlers, intro and pre-school children. All children in childcare are at obvious risk of contracting infections. Parents need to consider suitable back-up support to enable them to keep their child at home when appropriate. If you are unsure whether your child should attend sometimes it is best to bring them, if they aren't coping we will ring you. The notice board in the foyer displays the guidelines for exclusion from the Centre in compliance with the Children's Services Act 1986. The length of exclusion and symptoms to look for in common childhood ailments are also on the notice board.

If we have to send your child to the hospital for emergency care, a staff member will accompany and stay with your child until you arrive. *Please note that we reserves the right to send a child home based on our observations of the child's illness as it pertains to centre activity or spread of illness. It is your responsibility to ensure you have ambulance cover.

Medications

Because of the great responsibility involved in giving medication to children, we ask that parents, rather than staff, to give any necessary medication to their children whenever possible.

Each day, medications must be signed in on our medication form in your child's room. The medication is be stored in a fridge out of children's reach. Medications will be dispensed by room leaders or senior staff, as instructed by the family on the medication form. Only over-the-counter medications, and those prescribed by a physician with a pharmaceutical label and instructions, will be administered. All medications will be given according to the stated label directions, or as amended by a physician. All medications must be in original container. For prescription medication the container must be labeled with the child's name, date, pharmacy name, and administration directions (dosages and times). Any prescription medication without this information will not be given to children by the staff. On the enrolment form, we provide a section where you may give the centre blanket permission to give your child Panadol® if their temperature reaches 38° C or above. This service is provided in order to ease your child's condition while they wait for an authorized person to pick them up from the centre. If the

child has been in the Centre for less than four hours then we will ring and ask if they have had Panadol® within the last four hours. Please let staff know if you have given your child Panadol® prior to care.

Immunisation

It is a licensing requirement for the Centre that all children who attend be fully immunised and up to date for age. The Centre must have copies of current immunisation records for all immunised children. Copies of immunisation records are kept on file and must be provided to the Centre after each vaccination. Children who are not immunised will be excluded if the Centre has an outbreak of a communicable disease. If your child is unwell, we reserve the right to exclude them from the Centre. This policy is required to comply with health regulations and also to minimise cross infection.

Excursions

All children will occasionally attend excursion that are directly related to and part of the curriculum or the children show a strong interest in. Parents will be notified of excursion in advance and will be required to sign a permission slip unless it is an incidental excursion in the local area. An additional notice of each excursion will be posted in the front foyer as well. *Parents are strongly encouraged and welcome to join their children on excursion.* A mobile phone, first aid kit, a copy of children's emergency numbers will be taken on each major excursion.

Outdoor Play

Our playground is also designed to be a place for children to learn, explore and stretch their imaginations. We will take every opportunity to extend our learning to the outside. Children will be taken outdoors, daily weather permitting. We will limit outside playtime during the summer on high ozone days and during high temperatures. It is extremely important to dress your child appropriately for outdoor activities as children will be taken outdoors, daily weather permitting. Layered clothing is a good idea during the winter. When weather does not permit us to go outside, the children will be able to use their large muscles indoors.

Birthdays

If a birthday is being celebrated away from the centre and the entire group is not invited, please ask staff to quietly put the invitations in the selected children's bags. If the entire group is invited, please feel free to bring invitations to centre or display one large invite in the room.

Children are invited to celebrate their birthdays at centre. If parents choose to bring a birthday treat, we prefer a treat that can be eaten by every child and that is appropriately child-sized. Please notify us ahead of time so we can plan snack or lunch around the treat and inform you of any allergies.

Parents are able to donate a book, puzzle or game to the class on the child's birthday. This way, the birthday child has the honor of giving, not just receiving, on their special day. If you wish to donate an item, the staff can give you ideas of an appropriate item that the class would enjoy.

Meals and Snacks

It is our belief that children at this age have a variety of likes and dislikes and that nutrition plays a key role in a child's ability to participate and learn in centre. In order to ensure that each child is well nourished and content, we provide morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. We also believe that young children need to be taught food habits which will continue throughout their lives. Food supplied by the Centre will be nutritionally sound, with variety in colour, textures, and tastes as well as being culturally diverse. We want to make meal times an enjoyable, healthy learning experience for all.

The Centre employs a cook to provide healthy, child friendly meals. A weekly menu is displayed in the front foyer. Meals and snacks are served on a regular rather than rigid schedule. We have fridges and microwaves to ensure that food is stored and served at the appropriate temperatures.

We ask if you provide you child's food (due to allergies), that all foods come **fully prepared**, in child-sized portions (cut-up/sliced/peeled) and packaged in non-breakable and easy-to-open containers. All lunch boxes, bags and drink bottles need to be **labeled** on the outside. Lunches need to be refrigerated, it is the family's responsibility to put the lunch in the refrigerator. Remember that space is limited in the refrigerators. This is only for families choosing to provide their child's lunch.

We provide a well-balanced lunch that meets dietary guidelines.

- Protein sources
- Either 2 vegetables and 1 fruit, or 2 fruits and 1 vegetable
- Grains such as savory biscuits, pasta, or bread
- Dairy products such as cheese or yogurt
- A healthy drink such as, milk or water

Excessive treats will be limited at the staff's discretion. **We do not allow soft drinks, gum or lollies at the Centre.**

Each snack will be served with fruit and water or milk. The children participate in serving their snacks as much as possible.

You are welcome to bring cakes etc, to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays. Occasionally we cook special treats with the children.

Guidelines to meal times in the different rooms are as follows

Room	Morning tea	Lunch	Afternoon tea	Late snack - if appropriate
Nursery	9.00 am	11.15 am	2.30 pm	4.30 to 5 pm
Toddlers	9.30 am	11.30 am	3.00 pm 5.00 pm	5.00 pm
Intro	10.00 am	11.30 am	3.15 pm 5.00 pm	5.00 pm
Pre-School	10.00 am	11.30 am	3.30 pm	5.00 pm

Safety and Security

Fire drills are routinely practiced with the children. In the event that an emergency does occur, we hope the practice drills will help children handle the situation with little panic or distress. In any emergency situation, parents will be notified as soon as possible. If the building becomes unsafe for children to stay, the children will be transported a safe venue.

The Centre continually takes part in providing a safe and secure place for your child by consistently carrying out our safety policies and procedures, educating the children and staff, and routinely maintaining, and inspecting the building. However, should an accident occur, we hope your patience and understanding will make the accident less traumatic for your child and the centre's other children. All accidents will be documented on paper and presented to the families. In the event of a serious accident, emergency procedures will be immediately taken. The parents will be contacted immediately and your authorization for medical attention on your child's enrolment form will enable us to swiftly attend to your child. The centre will contact ACT Ambulance Service for the safe transportation to hospital in emergency situations.

Only parents and the people you have noted on the Emergency Details form will be allowed to pick up your child. By law, we must release the child to any parent unless we have a court order preventing us from doing so. Photo ID's will be checked.

Clothing

Dress your child in washable and sturdy play clothes. Messy activities are planned everyday, and your child will want to participate. We buy washable art supplies and we hope this will help.

Dress your child in shoes that are sturdy and well fitted. The children will run, climb, jump, etc.... Being able to fully engage in these activities will build your child's self-confidence and keep him/her happy.

Runners are a good idea because they can be easily cleaned and easily dried in case they accidentally get wet. Staff agree that gumboots, and thongs, should not be worn to child care. They are awkward for running and climbing and can hurt another child or your child may trip during active play. If your child is toilet training, he/she should wear clothing that is easy to pull on and off by themselves.

All children need an extra set of seasonal clothing left in their bag clearly marked with the child's name. Younger children will need at least two changes of clothes and extra training pants. We recommend bring a jacket to child care during the autumn, winter and early spring since cold weather changes can occur unexpectedly. Lost clothing can be a problem, so please help us and help yourself by clearly marking your child's name on jackets, sweaters and other layered clothing.

We use a nappy service, so you need only bring 2 clean nappies for going home. However if you would like your child to use disposable nappies through out the day then you will need to supply them. We provide and apply 15+ sunscreen and sunhats.

Rest Time

Most children need sleep during the day; a few may only need to rest their bodies. Each child needs to bring a blanket for rest time. The licencing requires that all children be offered an opportunity to rest. Children who cannot go to sleep but have shown that they can rest quietly for approximately 45 minutes are given an opportunity to participate in quiet individual activities while others are sleeping. See your child's staff for specific times. In the Nursery there are 3 sleep rooms with cots and babies sleep when they need to.

In the Toddlers room the children sleep on stretchers during rest time.

Children in Intro and Pre-centre are also encouraged to rest after lunch.

Some children have a special cuddly toy, dummy or blanket, which helps them settle during rest periods. It may be helpful to bring this with your child. For rest time your child will need a warm blanket for winter and a lighter one for summer. Pre school children also need a small pillow.

Every effort is made to accommodate parent's wishes, but sometime the children have other ideas.

Toys and Personal Items

Each child has a specially marked cubicle space in the room for bags, jackets, extra clothes, blankets, and treasured art projects. *Please check your child's locker each day to take home all items.*

Sometimes children need to bring special toys or newfound treasures to centre to use as a "bridge" between home and centre. Children may want and need the security of something of their own in a centre situation. Help the staff bridge your child's security level from home to centre by placing such toys in your child's cubby (a safe haven) and bring out under the supervision of the staff. We do not want any special toys or items lost or broken.

Items that directly relate to topics of study (such as a photo or book from home, items found in nature, or an unusual family item) are appropriate for sharing and discussing. On these occasions we will work with you and your child to make it a positive sharing experience. Past experience has shown us that lots of toys from home create many problems at centre. We encourage you to encourage your child to leave personal belongings at home. There are five personal items we will **NOT** allow the children to bring to centre: **violent play items (i.e. toy guns), gum, hard candy (choking hazard), books and movies with inappropriate language or violence, and personal money.**

Parent Requirements

The participation and involvement of every family at our centre is one of the key elements of our centre's dedication to the children.

We ask that every family strive to meet the following requirements to maintain the high level of education for every child:

1. Volunteer in our centre. Please contact your staff or the director for specific ideas on ways you may volunteer. Suggestions are:

Making and organizing materials for children.

Fundraising and social events

Sharing an expertise

Listening and reading to children

Gardening

Providing items that relate to study areas

Planning and guiding a special activity for outdoor play (i.e., painting, bubbles).

2. Have a home environment that encourages the child's ideas, develops the child at his or her own pace and spends meaningful, rich, hands-on time with him or her in experiences instead of activities.

3. Read every night to your child.

4. Follow the recommendations and guidelines of the staffs for child achievement in all areas of development.

5. Abide by the Woden Early Childhood Centre Guidelines in the Parent Handbook.

Parent Library

A parent library is located in the foyer area of the building. We take time to research hints and tips for parents on discipline techniques, child development, and ways you and your child can more effectively grow together. We encourage parents to check out materials, and hope that these materials will enrich your lives. Please take advantage of this free and valuable source. If a book is damaged or lost, please report it to the director so we can replace or repair it.

Parent Communication

Other than newsletters, emails, parent staff evenings and social days, parents are encouraged to keep an ongoing communication with their child's staff. When picking up and dropping off your child, make communications short. Feel free to schedule a meeting if you need a longer time to converse. Please send important messages in writing; verbal statements sometimes get lost.

When you have questions or concerns, we ask that you first communicate with your child's staff. If the staff's response is inadequate or unsatisfactory, please contact the director. Remember, parents are encouraged to ask questions and make suggestions. You are your child's first teacher. Open communication is the key to providing the children with best environment possible. Children know and pick up on cues from the adults in their lives. Establishing a healthy parent-staff relationship makes children feel loved, secure and happy.

Parent Evaluation of Centre

At any time you are welcome to provide us with an evaluation of the centre, we provide a communication box located in the foyer of the Centre. Please place ideas, concerns or questions in the box so the director may have them and respond promptly. If a response is required, the director will follow up with you.

The Centre has a policies on different area within the Centre these are available to families

Again welcome to our Centre. We hope you and your child enjoy the wonderful experience that is Woden Early Childhood Centre