

Forbes Children's Centre Family Handbook

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Welcome

We warmly welcome your family to our Centre and look forward to a rewarding, ongoing relationship with you and your children. Our staff team consists of professionals with varied qualifications and backgrounds who have a passion for supporting children and their families. We hope you find this booklet helpful in providing information about the long day care and preschool programs offered at our Centre.

Settling in at Forbes

We understand that starting at a new Centre brings lots of emotions for both children and families. We feel strongly about making sure your child feels safe and secure here with us at Forbes. To support both you and your child, we ask that each child has two visits prior to starting care. There are no charges for these visits. Having these short visits helps your child begin to build relationships with other children and form a bond with their educators. Each child is unique in how long they take to feel comfortable in new relationships and places. We therefore offer additional visits where needed.

Building a picture of who your child is will help us to incorporate your child's interests into our program. To help us learn more about your child, we will ask you to fill out a 'My Child' form.

Getting to know your child is important to us. Understanding more about you and your child helps us to build a picture of their likes, dislikes, interests and any special needs they may have.

Working together

At Forbes, we believe working together with families is important. This is why we implement primary care giving. With this model your child will belong with a small group of educators responsible for building a strong relationship with both you and your child. They will also help your child build strong friendships with other children in their primary care group.

Your families, culture, traditions and beliefs are important to us and by building strong relationships with you and your child we will be able to recognise and reflect these in our environment, helping you feel a sense of belonging to the centre.

We highly value your input and recognise families are the first teachers of their child. Therefore we encourage you to share information, ask questions and get involved with us at the Centre.

Playspaces

Here at Forbes Children's Centre, we have introduced Playspaces. This is a way for children to start and finish their day at child care. In the morning, when you drop your child off, you will notice all educators sitting still in a particular spot - this is called their Playspace. The idea of educators being still in a familiar spot helps make them more available to your child and allows them to concentrate on your child's needs at drop off and pick up times. Being in the same space supports your child to feel secure as they know their educator is predictably available and easy to find.

Environments and Routines

Forbes Children's Centre is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to education. This means we provide beautiful, nature inspired, light filled spaces full of opportunities for children to create, wonder and express themselves in many different ways.

We see our children as a community of learners where relationships are very intentionally fostered and viewed as central to learning. Children have a strong sense of belonging and work creatively together to share and build their developing knowledge about the world around them.

Each of our rooms provide environments carefully designed to not only meet the different developmental needs of children but reflect the unique interests, cultures and competencies of the children who belong in our Centre.

As you move through our spaces you will see children enjoying a wide range of experiences including dance, drama, storytelling and using a variety of media for artistic expression including paint, clay and other three dimensional art forms.

We support children to recognise their changing needs for quiet reflective time or more active participation throughout each day and delight in their growing confidence to increasingly lead not just their own learning but their also their wellbeing.

The Early Years Learning Framework

Our curriculum is also informed by the Early Years Learning Framework as this is the current national curriculum for children from birth to five years of age.

Educators use this framework to guide their planning. Children's ideas, interests and observations are of utmost importance in developing learning experiences (both planned and spontaneous). The Early Years Learning Framework supports children in developing the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Outcome 2:** Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners.
- Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators.

Information on your child's progress

The staff in your child's room will display learning in various ways such as curriculum updates, newsletters, portfolios and Floorbooks. Each child will have a folder called a 'Portfolio' which will include learning stories, photos and artwork collected over their time at our centre.

Open door policy

At Forbes, we have an open door policy. We are always happy to make a time to discuss how your child is progressing. Please approach your child's educators to make a time should you want to discuss anything.

Services

Long Day Care

Long day care is available Monday to Friday for children from birth until the child begins school. While we develop and maintain relationships between children and staff in age specific rooms, we also aim to provide many opportunities for children to interact with older and younger children. The long day care and preschool educators work closely to ensure continuity where children access both programs.

There are 3 rooms: The Nest (0 — 2 ½ years), The Reeds (2 ½ — 3 ½ years) and The River (3 ½ years — school age). We offer an integrated childcare and preschool program.

Preschool

A government funded preschool program operates at our Centre, staffed by registered teachers. Our preschool also has access to additional support services and training to ensure the highest quality of early childhood education for your child.

Hours of operation

The long day care program operates between 7:00am and 6:00pm. Families are required to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to pick up to allow staff to share information about their child's day. All children and families need to leave the Centre no later than 6.00pm in the evening as this is when the Centre's licence for long day care finishes.

Available sessions are below:

Preschool:	Monday and Tuesday	8:00am – 4:00pm
	Thursday and Friday	8:00am – 4:00pm
Long Day Care:	Monday to Friday	
	Full day	7:00am – 6:00pm
	10 Hour Sessions	7:00am—5:00pm OR
		8:00am—6:00pm
	Morning (Nest only)	7:00am—12:15pm
	Afternoon (Nest only)	12:45pm – 6:00pm



'Our task, regarding creativity, is to help children
climb their own mountains, as high as possible.
No one can do more.'

Loris Malaguzzi, Founder of the Reggio-Emilia approach

Fees

Child Care Bond

A Child Care Bond is charged to families when their child begins care at the Centre. The bond consists of two (2) weeks payment in advance. The full bond is required before care begins. The bond may be used to pay for the final two weeks of care when notice of cancellation is received in writing. Failure to provide four (4) weeks notice of cancellation of care will forfeit the bond refund.

The bond assists in the financial management of the Centre to allow bills to be generated one (1) week in arrears. It assists to minimise costs associated with outstanding accounts when families leave the Centre.

As a bond is not required for preschool, when children cease child care and are only accessing Preschool sessions the bond will be refunded. The bond will be credited towards your account.

Centre Closure

The Centre will be closed for a 2 week period at Christmas time. These dates will be advised when available. No charges will occur during this time or loss of allowable absences.

Cancellation of Care

A minimum of **28 days written notice**, or payment in lieu of, is required when cancelling your care. Full fees will be charged if your child does not attend in the last four weeks. Please note Child Care Subsidy is not available for these four weeks if the child does not attend.

Long Day Care Fees

Nest

\$98.00 per half day (morning or afternoon session)

\$136.00 per full day (11 hour session / 10 hour session)

Reeds/River

\$133.00 per full day (11 hour session / 10 hour session)

Preschool Fees

Children who are eligible for preschool are able to attend 2 full days of preschool sessions (three hours and 45 minutes per session). Full day sessions are made up of a morning session, lunch and then an afternoon session. Preschool sessions cannot be rebated through the Child Care Subsidy system but lunch care can. We ask all new families accessing the Preschool to contact the Family Assistance Office and have your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) sent to the Centre.

Preschool Session: \$200 per term Lunch Care (can be rebated): \$10.00 per day

Fees

Early/Late Fees

A fee of \$15.00 for the first 10 minutes or part thereof will be charged for each child dropped off early or collected late. After this initial 10 minutes an additional fee of \$30.00 per 10 minutes or part thereof will be charged.

Late fees also apply to half day sessions for all bookings (child care). These fees are put in place to cover the cost of staff working overtime.

Closures

The Centre is closed on public holidays and there are four preschool closure days per year. Public Holidays are charged at 75% of the total fee for long day care sessions and 100% of the fee for preschool sessions. Preschool closure days and sick leave are charged at the full fee. We are also closed for two (2) weeks at the end of the year. No charges apply to the two week closure.

Child Care Subsidy

Families enrolling in the long day care program are encouraged to apply for financial support from the Commonwealth Government in the form of Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Families need to contact the Department of Human Services (DHS) on 136 150, to discuss their individual entitlements and CCS assessment. DHS will determine the CCS percentage and eligible hours applicable to each family. This will be determined by the family's annual gross income.

Please provide a copy of your notice of assessment letter (CCS) to us at enrolment.

Payment of Accounts

Fees for child care will be payable from the first day of care. Accounts will be issued weekly.

We accept phone payments by credit card, cheque, cash or EFTPOS.

Accounts are required to be paid weekly, unless arrangements are made in consultation with the Director, Assistant Director or Administration.

Allowable Absences

Each child has 42 days where Child Care Subsidy is paid if the child does not attend child care. These days cover sick leave and holidays. Each child receives new entitlements at the beginning of the financial year.

If your child is sick, please ensure that you obtain a medical certificate from your GP and give this to us to ensure you still receive your CCS. Once you exceed 42 days of absence, your CCS is no longer paid and you will need to pay the full fee for Child Care sessions.

Public holidays count as allowable absences.

Policies and Procedures

Signing In and Out of the Centre

Your child must be signed in and out of the Centre each day. You will find the attendance iPad at the front desk. The Preschool sign in sheets are on the table in front of the River room.

On arrival at the Centre we ask that you:

- ◇ Sign your child in
- ◇ Help your child to apply sunscreen
- ◇ Help your child to put their belongings away
- ◇ Take your child over to an educator to support them to settle into their day

When you come to collect your child we ask that you:

- ◇ Sign your child out
- ◇ Come in and greet your child
- ◇ Collect your child's belongings
- ◇ Share in conversation about your child's day with their educator
- ◇ Together with your child, say goodbye to their educator.

Food and Nutrition

Forbes Children's Centre employs a qualified cook who is onsite each day preparing all meals that children eat at the centre. The monthly menu is displayed in each room and provides 50% of your child's daily nutrition needs.

Xap

Our billing software, Xap, has a number of features that can be accessed online or via an app. We highly recommend the use of the app, as we are always utilising new features of the software and this allows you to more easily check your account and communicate with us about absences, excursions and news from the rooms.

If you haven't already downloaded Xap it can be found at play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.xap.guardian for Android devices and apps.apple.com/au/app/xap-smile-for-guardians/id1500375099 for Apple devices. Xap can also be accessed via the internet at <https://www.xap.rocks>

This is the way we intend to pass on information as invoices and notes do not display as well in email as they do in the app.

Once downloaded, please check with the front desk that they have a valid email address to contact you (this should be an email that you check regularly!) Your Xap password will be sent to this email. Resetting your password can be done through the app.

Policies and Procedures

Emergency Contact

Emergency contact names must be included on the child's enrolment form (local contacts are preferred). Families will be given a new enrolment form annually to update this information. A notification of changes form can be accessed from the family information hub. If your child is not collected by 6:00pm, educators will call the listed emergency contacts. Failing this, Crisis Care will be contacted.

Custody and Access and Absence Order

Where a Court Order has been issued regarding custody and access to a child, this must be sighted and noted by the Director at the time of enrolment or issue (if it occurs later). Staff will be informed of all court orders and a copy will be stored on-site confidentially.

If a Court Order has not been obtained and family circumstances are such that one person requests that another does not collect or have contact with their child, the Centre will inform them that their request is not legal and the Centre has no legal right to withhold the child from another guardian without a Court Order.

Medication Policy

All medications brought to the Centre must be accompanied by a Medication agreement. Agreements are not required for unmedicated items such as nappy creams, sunscreens, lip balms etc. For some medications, relevant paperwork will need to be completed with a medical practitioner and returned. All medication must be supplied in its original container with the child's name, date dispensed, name of medication, strength of medication, dose required, when the dose should be given, other administration instructions and expiry date appearing on the prescription medication label. Families must also administer the first 24 hours of a prescribed medication e.g. antibiotics.

Please see staff to discuss further information and refer to our Policy Folder or the Department for Education website.

If a child is unwell and is not collected within 1 hour of their family being notified by an educator, an extra fee of \$15 per 15 minutes will be charged to cover the cost of a staff member providing 1:1 care for an unwell child.

Behaviour Guidance Policy

The belief that all children have the right to safe, secure and trusting relationships with primary carers that foster wellbeing and support the development of positive behaviours is fundamental to our behaviour guidance policy. Our full behaviour guidance policy can be found on-site in the Family Information Hub or online at forbescc.sa.edu.au/policies

Policies and Procedures

Grievance Procedure for Families

Children experience quality care and education when staff work in partnership with families. We support families with diverse expectations and priorities in the care of their children and therefore communication between staff and families is very important. A copy of our grievance procedure can be found in the Information Hub or online.

Transitions

When transitioning between rooms your child will be provided with many opportunities to visit and become familiar with their new room first to form relationships and secure attachments. This is a really important time for us to maintain connection with you about your thoughts and our observations throughout the changes this time brings.

Health and Sickness

Our illness and exclusion policy is informed by the guide 'Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services' (5th edition) published by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council. Our Health and Safety policies can be found in the Information Hub on-site or online at forbescc.sa.edu.au/policies

If you require any further information our policy folder is available in the Information Hub or you can discuss this with a staff member.

We look forward to sharing in the journey with you and your family.

Our Regulatory Authority is:

Education & Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board of South Australia

Website: www.esb.sa.gov.au

Email: esb.earlychildhoodservices@sa.gov.au

Phone: 1800 882 413 (toll free)

The regulatory authority's primary responsibility is to:

- ◇ Administer the National Quality Framework
- ◇ Assess approved education and care services against the National Quality Standards and National Regulations, and to determine the ratings of those services
- ◇ Retrieve and investigate complaints
- ◇ Support and promote continuous improvement in education and care services, in collaboration with ACECQA
- ◇ Undertake information collection, reviewing and reporting

With the National Quality Framework we are required to have a nominated supervisor at all times during the day. This person is in charge of the day to day operations of the service. You will see a photo on the administration desk displaying who is the nominated supervisor for the day.

The National Quality Framework also stipulates the Centre has an Educational Leader. Educational Leaders of the site are experienced educators who are pivotal in leading the development of strong pedagogical beliefs and a curriculum that is reflective, spontaneous, child initiated and teacher initiated.

At Forbes Children's Centre our Educational Leaders are:

Roslyn Usher and Amy Morgan

Statement of Principles

The statement of principles outlines the values and beliefs that are important to children, families, educators, staff and management which guide everything that happens at the service.

CHILDREN

We believe each child is unique, has great potential, is competent, capable and an active participant in the organisation of their identity, ability and sense of autonomy. We aim to:

- ◇ Advocate in the best interest of each individual child.
- ◇ Provide safe, secure and trusting relationships through primary caregiving that fosters wellbeing and active involvement in the learning environment.
- ◇ Support the health of every child and their family through the provision of services, programs and educational opportunities.

FAMILIES

We believe in a partnership approach where families are considered every child's first educator and the diversity of each family including culture, family structure, lifestyle, language, beliefs and kinship systems is valued. We aim to:

- ◇ Engage in a partnership by listening to, supporting and learning from families in order to acknowledge and build upon their strengths, competencies and abilities in their role to nurture children.
- ◇ Create opportunities for family involvement and participation in the Centre.
- ◇ Maintain confidentiality and respect the right of the family to privacy.

COMMUNITY

We believe in building community capacity to enhance health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families. We aim to:

- ◇ Gain knowledge about our community using varied data collection methods in order to provide relevant access or pathways to a wide range of high quality services, programs, events and experiences that support families in their parenting journey.
- ◇ Build relationships with and between families to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to the Centre and community.
- ◇ Facilitate opportunities for parents and families to share their strengths, skills and talents within the Centre and community.
- ◇ Create partnerships with families and community, empowering them to engage with decision making processes within the Centre.
- ◇ Be an active community service and information hub for families by promoting, networking or partnering with other agencies and services within the community.
- ◇ Provide an environment in the Centre that reflects and respects our community.

Statement of Principles

COLLEAGUES

We believe in collaborative partnerships with colleagues to generate a Centre culture of continual reflection and renewal of high quality practices in care, learning, health, community and social services. We aim to:

- ◇ Share knowledge, build on strengths, be solution orientated and reflective in our everyday practices.
- ◇ Provide opportunities for professional development that foster shared understandings and continuous development of best practices.
- ◇ Be open and honest in our communication and have regular opportunities to be involved in shared decision making.
- ◇ Work collaboratively in order to provide holistic seamless services for families and children from birth to eight years of age.

CURRICULUM

We believe curriculum development is a continually evolving reflective process based on current research and the voices of children and families in our community. We aim to:

- ◇ Acknowledge the quality of relationships between children and educators as fundamental to the quality of the learning environment.
- ◇ Provide a play based curriculum and honour play as both a process and context for learning.
- ◇ Provide opportunities for each individual child to develop holistically through intentional teaching and spontaneous learning experiences.
- ◇ Use contemporary theorists and a Reggio Philosophy to shape our understanding, practices and curriculum.
- ◇ Develop shared planning and assessment practices that engage families in their child's learning journey.
- ◇ Provide a curriculum that is inclusive and believe in all children's ability to succeed.

National Quality Framework

In 2009 the Council of Australian Government (COAG) agreed on a partnership to establish a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care.

As a site we have developed a quality improvement plan (QIP) in consultation with the staff and families to drive reflective practice and continuous improvement across the site. This covers all 7 National Quality Standards including:

1. Educational Program and Practice
2. Children's Health and Safety
3. Physical Environment
4. Staffing Arrangements
5. Relationships with Children
6. Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
7. Leaderships and Service Management

"Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water. Through an active, reciprocal exchange, teaching can strengthen learning and how to learn."

Loris Malaguzzi, Founder of the Reggio-Emilia approach

