



EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Family Handbook

www.maryskindy.com.au



Welcome

Welcome to the Marys Kindy Early Learning Centre. We look forward to a rewarding partnership with families as we guide and support your child's development and learning. Marys Kindy provides quality care and education for children from 6 weeks to preschool age children, the centre is licensed for a maximum of 21 children at any given time with a child to teacher ratio of 4:1 for all age groups. Marys kindy is the only childcare centre to offer this ratio in NSW.

Marys Kindy's Centre programs, daily routines and environment are designed for specific age groups:

- Our 0-2's can explore and discover everything with dedicated and patient staff ready to support their learning. Language and social development is rapid during this time, therefore staff encourage conversation to take place peers and adults throughout the day
- Our 3 – 5's balance play and fun with literacy and numeracy as they learn skills to assist them in the transition to school. School readiness is incorporated in all aspects of the daily program including routines. Children will engage in activities such as small and large group story sharing, drawing and writing, learning about colours, shapes and numbers, developing responsibility and caring for their own belongings and negotiating with peers to resolve conflicts independently.

The centre's unique design and the high level of resources and facilities, allow Marys Kindy to provide children and staff with inviting spaces, both indoor and outdoor, where learning and everyday living happily exist. We encourage fun and play throughout the day using these opportunities for both planned and incidental learning for all ages.

Our centre staffs are supported by a knowledgeable and capable management team with more the 17 years experience in the childcare industry. Marys Kindy is a family owned and operated centre which can give you a peace of mind knowing, that our heart and passion is in providing the best care for your child.

Parents are welcome in the centre at any time, and can be involved with the centre for a few minutes or hours. Your help will always be appreciated.

Child Care Benefit (fee relief) from the family Assistance Office is available at Marys Kindy. The contact phone number for the FAO is 13 61 50. Please see the centre for details including our provider number.

Marys Kindy Early Learning Centre is registered to participate in the National assessment and rating, which administers the Quality Improvement and Assurance System. Marys Kindy gladly supports the DET in their endeavours to achieve high quality care and education for all children.



PHILOSOPHY

We believe that children are resourceful learners who are capable of constructing their own knowledge of the world around them. We aim to promote relationships that support children to:

- Feel a sense of belonging
- See themselves as constructive contributors to the community
- See themselves as valued, unique and powerful
- Respect and care for each other and the environment.

As staff, we work in a collaborative way sharing our knowledge and expertise. We work with children to discover ideas, provide opportunities for learning and engage in active research alongside the children.

We recognise the importance of communication, team work and collaboration between families and us, and strive to form positive relationships with all. We acknowledge that learning is life-long and we are committed to professional development.

We work to support families in their parenting role and share with them information of benefit to their child's development. We encourage families to be active participators in the life of the Centre. Through sharing cultures, ideas, knowledge, strengths and differences, we develop a partnership with the families that are inclusive and incorporate social justice.

We aim to create a positive indoor and outdoor environment that is inviting, inclusive and rich in possibilities, one that reflects the local community and the families who use the service.

By observation and listening to the children, we question and suggest new possibilities and encourage them to search and explore meaning in whatever they do. Recording of this information leads to informed decision making about the provision of materials and future experiences for children.

We acknowledge the work of our staff and we incorporate the NSW Curriculum Framework into our centre.



Our centre has an “open door” policy which means:

Our centre is open at all times for families to drop in; you don't need to ring and tell us you are coming, you are welcome at any time

Please come and join in our programs- your participation is welcomed.

Enter by you at any time is your guarantee of continuing quality to our work practices and protection of staff and management reputation

Never feel there is a question you can't ask or a suggestion you can't make

Do come and visit us at any time

Our centre is proud of the care and education we provide

Our staffs are qualified, trained, experienced, dedicated and talented

Rather than take our word for it



Educational Programs

Positive early school experiences can be achieved through good preparation and smooth transitions to school. These will also lead to good short and long term outcomes for children. Effective school readiness and transition experiences help child care professionals and families to identify when children are ready for school and to prepare them with the skills and qualities they need for a rewarding school experience. Good school readiness and transition experiences also create links between the service, families and the school environment.

Marys Kindy Early Learning centre is an ideal environment for children to develop the qualities needed to succeed in all areas of life, including school. Marys Kindy Early Learning centre does not need to turn into a 'school environment' to prepare children for school. Supporting children's school readiness is about assisting them to develop their skills in areas such as literacy, numeracy and self-care when they are ready for this, and at their own pace. By supporting all areas of children's development and focusing on building strong, responsive relationships with them, child care professionals can provide children with the skills and confidence to continue along path of life-long learning.

By supporting all areas of children's growth, including their social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development, pave the way for children's optimum brain development. By using a holistic approach, we can help children to nurture the abilities needed to succeed in the school environment.

Children's social competence is at the core of school readiness and effective transition. Social skills such as sharing, turn taking and playing well with other children are fundamental in assisting children's short and long term success at school. Responsive, positive relationships between children and their teachers are also crucial in building children's self-esteem and resilience which further assist them to make effective transitions from day care to school.

At Marys Kindy Early Learning Centre we promote the following skills to support children's school readiness:

Social skills to support children to:

- positively approach other children and make friends;
- participate in play;
- express emotions and deal with conflict appropriately;
- show interest in others and form friendships;
- express their needs and wants appropriately;
- separate from parents or primary carers;
- take turns in games and activities;
- share toys and equipment;
- follow some directions and understand some rules;
- participate in groups



Cognitive skills to support children to:

- show natural curiosity and interest in learning new things;
- have confidence in learning; and
- be interested in solving some problems.

Language skills to support children to:

- use language to ask questions and communicate their thoughts and ideas;
- listen to others; and
- enjoy books and being read to.

Independence and life skills to support children to:

- cope with a small amount of supervision in a variety of situations;
- toilet and dress themselves independently;
- unpack their lunch box and use a drink bottle; and
- deal with a structured environment.

Physical skills to support children to:

- use pencils, crayons, texts and scissors; and
- balance, run, jump, and use equipment such as balls and climbing apparatus.

Meals

Marys Kind yearly Learning Centre employs a full time cook who holds qualifications in Nutrition and Menu Planning and Safe Food Handling. All our snacks and meals are freshly prepared in our own fully equipped kitchen.

We use only quality ingredients; lean meats and chicken, fresh vegetables and fruits with the minimal amount of processes or frozen foods. We do not use frozen, packaged meals which are re-heated.

The centre provides breakfast, morning snacks, lunch, afternoon snack and a late snack. We recognise children's likes are different to adults and our menus are specifically designed to reflect children's food preferences, providing child friendly foods. In addition to taking children's likes and dislikes into account, our menu is designed to meet at least 50% of children's total daily nutritional requirements. **(Please have a look at our Nutrition Policy)**

Specific dietary requirements can be discussed with the centre at enrolment. Details for each child are recorded on a whiteboard in the kitchen- please ensure any changes are advised to the staff.



Events and Celebrations

Throughout the year we celebrate and hold a number of events;

- Children's birthdays
- Centre Birthdays
- Easter and Christmas Celebrations
- Visitors to centres
- Other events and celebrations throughout the year
- Excursions
- Parents gatherings

Wait List, Enrolments, Starting Care

Wait List

Once the family has paid the application fee they will be placed on a wait list according to their date of application. Enrolment will be done according to the following steps:

1. Vacancy becomes available in the service
2. The position will then be offered to the family;
 - Whose application fee was received first,
 - Considering the age group in which the vacancy is available
 - The age of the child on the application and also the priority of access guidelines
3. Families will be offered the days available irrespective of their preferred start date or desired days noted on the application. We are unable to keep a vacancy open for extended periods.
4. If the family decides not to take the position at this time then they will remain on the list and offered the next relevant available position.
5. If the family decides to accept the position, the orientation process begins.
6. Please note we do not charge any Admin Fee.



Enroling your child

When you enrol your child you will be given an Enrolment pack from us that will contain a number of forms and information.

You will be asked to return the completed forms and pay a bond. This is a good time to confirm times for orientation visits also. There are a number of legal requirements to this process, but more importantly it gives Marys Kindy Early Learning Centre the opportunity to start building a relationship with you and your child. At any time please ask as many questions. By helping us understand your concerns, you'll be helping us help you and your child. We know it is important for families to feel secure and confident in the decision they have made, and it's important for us too.

What to Do each Day

- On arrival sign your child in immediately
- Make sure a staff member is aware that you are at the centre
- Hand in bottles to a staff member to be put in to a fridge
- Hand any medication, nappy creams to staff
- Check for notices and events
- Leave a notice in the communication file for staff, if required
- Play with your child before you say goodbye
- Arrive at the centre no later than 15 minutes before our close time
- Talk to staff about their day
- Collect bottles, dummies, toy or any other belongings
- Sign your child out

What to Bring Each Day

What to bring in your child's bag each day:

- Changes of clothing, dunnies
- Bottles with formula made up and labelled
- One special cuddly toy
- Cot size fitted sheet and blanket
- Nappies if required

Remember, no medications, creams or food to be left in your child's bag - they are all hazards, Choking, poisoning and anaphylactic shock are all real threats to children's safety.



When would families expect staff/centre to contact them

You may receive a phone call from the centre when:

- Your child has had an accident which may require medical attention and they need to be collected from the centre ASAP
- Your child has had an accident or has been upset and the staff would like to let you know what's happened
- Your child is unwell
- Your fees are outstanding
- Your contact details need clarification
- There has been a change in your Child Care Benefit
- You have forgotten to sign-in or sign-out your child
- We need to clarify authorisation for another adult to collect your child
- Informing you that your child is having a great day

Administration

Hours of Operation

Marys Kindy Early Learning Centre is open from 7:30am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday. The centre is closed on public holidays, as well as times to be nominated by the centre's management. Families will be notified of any changes to the hours of operation.

Days of attendance

We encourage families to select from the following attendances patterns for their child's attendance. These patterns are suggested to provide children with a higher level of consistency and quality of care than children attending in ad hoc patterns.

Families who are able to select from one of these patterns will have a greater chance of being offered a place at our centre. Should these patterns not be suitable, please discuss with our Director so we can meet your needs.

- Monday to Friday – 5 days
- Monday & Tuesday – 2 days
- Thursday & Friday – 2 days
- Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday – 3 days
- Wednesday, Thursday & Friday – 3 days
- Any combination of days – 4 days



Fees charged per day

Haberfield:

0 to 2 years - \$130

2 to 3 years - \$99

3 to 5 years - \$97

CBD:

Flat fee if \$150 for all ages

1 week's bond will be required on enrolment. This will be used as your last week's fees or refunded, provided that two (4) weeks' notice is given when you wish to withdraw your child.

Fees are paid 1 week in advance on a **MONDAY** at all times via Direct Debit. Every week a Direct Debit is made to the account nominated by the families for all outstanding fees.

If you are having difficulties paying your fees, please do not hesitate to see the Mary or Bobby. We understand circumstances can change and are more than happy to help our parents in any way we can.

Please note that the fees can be changed at any time with 4 weeks notice to parents.

Child Care Benefit & Rebate (CCB)

Child Care Benefit (fee relief) is available. Now your child is starting child care you need to make sure you register for Child Care Benefit. The telephone number for the Family Assistance Office is **13 61 50**.

Calculating your daily fee is done by a formula set by the Family Assistance Office. The FAO will advise you by letter what percentage you will receive off child care fees. We can also inform you of the CCB and/or CCR percentage once we submit your child's enrolment through our new system. Please keep in mind that it's the **FAMILIES RESPONSIBILITY** to apply for these benefits and to inform the centre if at any time they receive a letter from the department advising them of any changes.

Notice to Withdraw or Reduce Days of Attendance

The centre requires two weeks written notice from families should they wish to withdraw their child or reduce the days of attendance.



Late Fee

The centre closes at 6:00pm each night. Parents who arrive late will incur a fee of \$20.00 for the first fifteen minutes and \$2.00 for every minute after for each child. If you know you are going to be unable to reach the centre by 6:00pm, please call and notify the staff so they can reassure your child of the situation and make any necessary arrangements.

We value our staff and know they need to leave the centre promptly each night, sometimes relying on public transport.

We suggest to families you plan to arrive at the centre no later than 5:45pm; this allows time to collect your child and also for the staff to finalise checklists and secure the centre prior to the end of their shift at 6:00pm.

Absences

If your child is absent due to sickness or family commitments, fees must still be paid to the centre. Parents are to phone and advise staff if their child will not be attending the centre. It is important to let us know if your child is sick, so we can identify if we have a contagious illness and inform other families.

Public Holidays

The centre will be closed on all public holidays and these must be paid for, if it is your child's regular day of attendance:

- Australia Day (26th Jan)
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Anzac Day
- Queen's Birthday (June)
- Christmas
- Boxing Day
- New Years Day
- Labour Day

At Marys Kindy we always strive to better ourselves by understanding our parents, their needs and requirements, therefore any feedback on how we could improve our current system would be greatly appreciated by management.

You can send your feedback to comments to mary@maryskindy.com.au

