



Crèche & Childcare

Parent Handbook

Parent Handbook for Crèche & Childcare

Welcome

Welcome to our centre. Please read this information carefully to assist you in settling your child into the Centre and to answer any questions you may have. If you require more detailed information or a copy of the activity program, please do not hesitate to consult with the Supervisor or a staff member.

Our Childcare Service is licensed for 24 children aged 8 weeks **TO** 8 years.

Philosophy

SKY Fitness Traralgon Philosophy

SKY Fitness operates according to a philosophy of open management and aims to reflect the local community by encouraging participation and discussion about all issues relevant to the running of the centre.

- All children have the right to feel safe and secure in their environment, ensuring this, children will develop a strong self-esteem and confidence, as well as a positive perception of the world around them.
- The value of play is important; children have opportunities for all types of play and physically challenging play.
- All children are treated with respect and individuality in their development domains: social, emotional, physical, cognitive, cultural and ethnic.
- All families are made to feel valued. By role modelling to children that we value and respect our families, and what relationships mean, we educate children to gain an understanding of family relationships.
- Our resources and activities are safe and developmentally age appropriate.

Parent Participation

Parents are our biggest support. Their encouragement and any assistance, in whatever way, such as coming to a special occasions celebration, collecting bits and pieces for the craft corner, help with fund raising, would be invaluable assistance.

You are encouraged to become involved with the program of the Centre and your ideas and suggestions will be greatly appreciated. We are always happy to have people come into the Centre with interesting things to show and share, sing, teach, and make with the children etc., especially activities of a multicultural nature.

You can be involved by discussing your child's temperament, strengths, likes and dislikes and any special interest with the educators. Even though a parent's life is very busy, we would appreciate a few minutes when you bring and collect your child to talk about how he/she is enjoying / participating in the program.

To give the children the best opportunity for positive involvement in our program, Centre staff and parents work hand-in-hand. We want children to gain the best that is possible from our Centre, so please do keep in touch and discuss any problems, concerns and feelings you may have with the staff.

Settling your Child into the Centre

When children first attend the centre the needs of both parent/guardian and child/ren will be respected. Children all react differently to being away from their parents, and we encourage you to remain with your child for as long as you feel is necessary to ensure your child's well being. We use a variety of strategies to help your child settle into our centre. We recommend that you bring your child for a visit, prior to beginning care at the centre. This will help to introduce yourself and your child to the staff and other children and familiarise the child with the Centre and our routines.

Please communicate the centre during the time your child is attending for reassurance that your child has settled in. The staff will always tell you honestly how your child is. Be aware that some children settle quickly and others take longer. Our staff will assess your child's emotional needs and discuss this with you. Regular attendance also helps a child to settle and make friends with other children at the Centre

The following information will help you to understand the administrative requirements of enrolling your child and the operational policies that you need to know.

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Hours of operation

Our childcare service operates Monday to Friday during the hours of 9am – 10.25am and 10.35am – 12.00pm.

Enrolment

- *Access for families and children to the centre will be non-discriminatory, will ensure the safety and care of children at the centre and will protect the rights of parent/guardians. Enrolment will be subject to the Commonwealth Government priority of access guidelines.*

Every Parent/guardian must complete an enrolment form, this form contains information regarding your child's health, custody arrangements and emergency contacts. Each parent/guardian will need to name all persons who may deliver or collect your child from the Centre. It is your responsibility to ensure your nominated people are responsible and available when required. The details required on the enrolment form are needed by our staff to help them take the best possible care of your child. Enrolment forms will be updated annually or when families' details change. Enrolment information will be kept in a confidential file. Access to this information is available only to the Supervisor, Centre Staff, parents or guardians, Commonwealth Officers and Licensing Officers.

At the time of enrolment you will be asked to purchase a creche card in order to pay your fees.

Signing In and Out Cards

Signing children in and out of the Centre is a daily requirement. The following policy applies to all families.

Accurate attendance records will be kept and checked each day. The responsible parent/guardian or authorised person who brings the child to the service or collects the child from the service must record and sign/initial the child's times of arrival and departure. Children must always arrive and depart the centre accompanied by an authorised adult.

If a child does not attend for any reason the service will enter the type of absence on the attendance record in which if cancellation guidelines are not met the parent/guardian may be charged for the usage of the session.

Parents should notify the Centre if their child will not be attending during their booked time, as soon as this is known or at the very latest by 9.00 a.m. of the morning of attendance. Telephone 03) 5174 2111

Arriving at the centre

We request that children be brought to a staff member upon arrival. There are two staff on duty at all times. ***Please note; parents/guardian must NOT leave the premises at any time whilst their child/ren are attending the creche.***

Authorised Persons

The Centre's primary concern is for the safety and welfare of your child and will therefore only release your child into the care of the custodial parent or authorised persons identified on your child's enrolment form. Any changes to these authorities must be advised in writing to the Centre by the responsible parent/guardian as soon as possible. If the centre has not been notified and someone other than the responsible parent arrives to collect the child the supervisor will contact the responsible parent to obtain his or her authorisation which will be in writing wherever possible. The child will not be released until the responsible parent's authorisation has been obtained. If the authorised person is not known to the centre, the responsible parent will be asked to provide a description of the person concerned, who will also be asked to provide proof of their identity, preferably with a photo ID. You must ensure your child's collection from the centre is reliably organised, as uncertainties and irregularities can cause anxiety for your child and the Centre staff.

Late Collections

Parents/guardians who are unavoidably detained and unable to collect their child at the negotiated collection time must notify the Centre to advise of their lateness and expected time of arrival. If a parent/guardian is unable to collect their child prior to closing time they should arrange for another responsible adult to collect their child and advise the centre of this arrangement if other than the person named on the enrolment form. This advice should

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be in writing if at all possible, and must include a full description of the individual if they are unknown to centre staff.

If you have not contacted the centre and your child has not been collected 10 minutes after closing time, the centre will attempt to telephone the parent/guardian, or if this is not possible telephone the emergency contact people listed on your child's enrolment form, to arrange for their immediate collection. If no-one can be contacted and your child has not been collected 30 minutes after the centre's normal closing time Crisis Care will be contacted and asked to take responsibility for your child.

Family Access

We will work in partnership with families at all times and welcome your input and access to the service according to the following guidelines:

- *Access for families and children to the centre will be non-discriminatory, will ensure the safety and care of children at the centre and will protect the rights of parent/guardians. Other members of the community, professionals and students will be provided access to the centre where it enhances the quality of the program, protects the welfare and rights of children and staff and provides training and experience to members of the children's services field.*

Communication with Parents

Staff will communicate with parents/guardians in a positive and supportive manner that encourages the parent-child relationship. Every effort will be made to treat both parents/guardians equally. Without legal documentation, staff cannot act as though one parent is more fit than another to the legal rights of their child. Parents may visit the centre at any reasonable time whilst their child is in care. Parents/guardians will have access to centre staff to enable them to discuss any concerns they may have regarding their child, at any reasonable time. Information with regard to family issues and personal lives will be handled confidentially.

Custodial Issues

Where a child attending the Centre is not living with both parents, or where disputes arise in relation to responsibility for the child the following will apply:

- Parental responsibility remains with both parents jointly and individually except where it is altered by an order of the Family Court of Australia. In the absence of such an order the child will be released to either parent who is the authorised person to collect the child.
- Where a non-enrolling parent cites an Order of the Family Court giving him/herself lawful access to the child, the order needs to be produced for inspection by the Supervisor. The enrolling parent will be telephoned both to check the existence of the order and to be informed about the situation.
- The child will only be released into the care of the parent/guardian with parental responsibility for the child, or other person specifically authorised by that parent/guardian, except when Department for Community Development or the Police specifically direct otherwise under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act.

In the case of a parent/guardian with parental responsibility for the child arriving at the Centre to collect the child in a visibly intoxicated or unfit state to drive, the parent/guardian will be encouraged to contact an alternative adult to drive them and their child home, or the Centre will offer to call a taxi. If the parent/guardian insists on taking their child, the police will be informed.

Termination of Care

In extreme circumstances it may be necessary to terminate a child's care.

Exclusion of children from the service will only occur after all other avenues of communication and support have been exhausted and when:

- Professional advice confirms a child is in psychological danger as a result of an unusually prolonged inability to settle into care away from the parent.
- A child puts the majority of children at risk through inappropriate behaviour.

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- The parent continually fails to observe Centre hours of operation or fails to pay the required fee.

Complaint Procedures

Please let us know if you are not satisfied with any aspect of the service we provide for you and your child.

If you have a complaint or concern you may discuss your problem with the relevant staff member. If you still feel action is necessary after discussion with relevant staff then take the matter up with the Supervisor.

If you feel the problem is not resolved you may take the matter to the Centre Manager for resolution, either through the Supervisor or by writing directly to the Centre Manager to explain the problem. You may request a meeting with the Centre Manager to discuss the matter further and you'll be advised in writing of the outcome of the meeting.

All confidential conversations or discussions with parents will take place in a quiet area away from children, other parents and staff who are involved.

Children's Activity Program

Our staffs are supportive and encouraging, and communicate with the children in a friendly, positive and courteous manner to establish a warm and caring relationship with each child in their care. Educators are happy to discuss your child's participation in the program with you, and we encourage you to stay for a chat prior to taking your child home at the end of the day.

Centre Routines

The activities that happen at the centre are built around the daily routines.

Routines are built around the regular events of the day, for example on arrival, taking the attendance record, snacks/drinks, hand washing, and departure. We also take into account the developmental needs of individual children, children's attendance patterns, climate and physical environment, the numbers and ages of children within a given group, children with special needs, new children entering the group and parents expectations.

Snacks

- *Snack and meal times will provide positive learning experiences for children who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits.*

Parents are asked to make sure that any food allergies, strong dislikes and special dietary requirements their child might have are recorded on the enrolment form and discussed with the Supervisor.

Nuts and Nut products are banned from the Childcare service at the centre

The centre does not provide food for children, parents are to pack food for children **excluding any nuts or nut products as other children in the centre may have a severe allergic reaction to these products.**

Children will be supervised by a staff member at all time while eating food to ensure that they do not feed their food to other children or fall into trouble eating their own food. Parents will be encouraged to only pack healthy food to encourage healthy eating

The importance of good healthy food, and hygienic and safe food handling and storage practices will be discussed with children as part of their daily program.

Snack and meal times will be treated as social occasions to encourage good eating habits and an appreciation of a variety of foods.

The staff will always sit with the children during snack times to interact with them, provide help where needed and set a good role model for the children.

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What should your child wear?

It is important that children are in comfortable clothes that do not restrict their enjoyment or participation at the Centre.

We do provide aprons but clothes can still get stained when children are involved in messy activities

Children are required to wear enclosed shoes.

Personal Toys

The Centre provides a wide variety of sports equipment, games and toys for all children to play with, and would appreciate children leaving their personal toys at home.

We understand that many children would like to bring toys to the Centre, however if toys get damaged or lost at the Centre it can cause great distress for the child. We request therefore that all personal toys be left at home.

Activity Program

Children who attend our Centre may participate in a range of activities that have been planned to reflect the children's interests and meet their developmental needs.

The Supervisor and staff members will be responsible for the development of a program of activities and creating an environment which is responsive to the needs of each individual child and to the group as a whole and reflects the philosophy and goals of the service. The program will be balanced and varied i.e. Provide for: indoor learning experiences; quiet/active times; individual/small group/large group times; time for individual staff/child interaction; children's individual and group interests; including physical, creative, exploratory, dramatic, cognitive and activities involving construction; and be flexible enough to allow for spontaneity and the unexpected.

Children will be asked for their input into the program to ensure it is suited to each child's skills, interests and cultural needs. The program will allow children to experience a variety of materials. There will always be alternative choices when a child does not want to participate in a particular activity.

Programs will be displayed in a position where parents/guardians and children are able to see them and can discuss any aspect of the program with staff.

Children with special needs

Our Centre caters for children with special needs

Children with special needs that cannot be catered for within the usual Centre routine will be integrated into the whole group with additional support from a supplementary (SUPS) worker. Referral to the SUPS worker or other professionals is made either directly by the parent/guardian or by the Supervisor after permission is given by the parent.

Special Events

We consider that special events that happen during the year provide an excellent learning and socialising opportunity for the children.

Programs will reflect the cultural differences of all families using the service. The Centre will celebrate special events with the children that reflect the cultural heritage and ethnic origins of children attending the service. The following events are celebrated at the Centre each year:

- Special Persons' Days (i.e. Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day etc.)
- Christmas
- Easter

The Centre understands that some parents may not wish their child to participate in some celebrations and therefore notice will be given through discussions of forthcoming celebrations, so that parents may choose whether their child will participate.

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Birthdays

Children's birthdays are a special day that children like us to celebrate.

If parents wish the Centre to celebrate their child's birthday they may provide a cake (only). The staff will encourage the children to sing "Happy Birthday" and will take a photograph to enable parents to share in this special treat. Parents are invited to join the occasion if they can

Supervision

The Centre will maintain high levels of supervision of children at all time.

The staff: child ratios contained within the Standards of Operation Guidelines will be strictly adhered to at the Centre.

There will be a minimum of two staff on duty at all times. This is to ensure children are appropriately supervised at all times. Staff will position themselves where they can see all the children under their supervision, listen carefully to what is happening and know the children individually so they can anticipate their needs. Staff will join in the children's play and encourage them to try new experiences.

The Centre plan, which clearly defines the boundaries and areas where children may safely play, is displayed in the entrance to the Child Care Service area. Parents are asked to become familiar with the plan and reinforce with their child that they must stay within the boundaries.

Guiding Children's Behaviour

Learning appropriate behaviour is part of your child's social development. Our staff aim to help children to be responsible for their own behaviour and to develop an understanding of what is appropriate in different situations.

- *The Centre will provide a secure, caring and stimulating environment which encourages children to cooperate enhances their self esteem and encourages their ability to interact with others, and where acceptable behaviour is promoted and any recriminations are kept to a minimum. The staff will endeavour to build relationships with children based on mutual respect and trust. Where a child continues to behave in an unacceptable manner, parent/guardians will be consulted and asked to work with the staff to ensure discipline techniques are consistent and clear.*

You are encouraged to discuss your child's behaviour with Centre staff to ensure consistent behaviour expectations between home and the Centre. Limits to children's behaviour will always be clearly expressed in positive terms and reinforced consistently in a developmentally appropriate way. Children will be encouraged to settle their differences in a peaceful manner. The staff will focus on positive behaviour, providing praise and encouragement where appropriate. Wherever possible problems will be prevented before they arise by using methods such as diversion and providing enough equipment for all

Limits

We find the following limits/rules necessary to protect the safety and well being of every child and ask parents to reinforce these with their child:

- We respect the centre and the equipment
- We respect other people's feelings and their property.
- We use our manners at all times
- We listen to all staff and children
- We walk inside
- We all help clean up the centre
- Please stay within the boundaries.

Developing a supportive relationship with the children encourages them to learn skills in self-discipline. Punishing a child stops the negative behaviour for a while but does not teach the child self-restraint. When "Time Out" is used as a consequence of negative behaviour the reasons will be discussed with the child and "Time Out" will be no

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longer than 5 minutes. A “cooling off” period may be needed so the child can calm down before discussing what happened and sharing their feelings with the educator, who will in turn talk about their own feelings and responsibilities with the child. Educator’s will always talk to the child quietly and as an equal. No further punishment will be given and the child will be reminded in positive terms of the expected behaviour. **At no time will a child receive any form of corporal punishment e.g. smacked, or be placed in a room alone, made immobile, frightened or humiliated in any way, verbally or emotionally punished, nor will food or drink be withheld as a form of punishment.**

If children consistently display unacceptable behaviour the Supervisor will ensure:

- The expectations of the child’s behaviour are realistic and appropriate to their developmental level and culture.
- The child understands the limits.
- There is no conflict between Centre, school and home expectations.
- The child’s needs are being met.
- The child has no impediments, which may cause the unacceptable behaviour e.g. dietary problems, poor hearing, poor co-ordination, communication difficulties, illness or emotional distress.
- The child is not copying observed behaviour.
- Events at the Centre have not encouraged the behaviour.
- Consequences of the behaviour do not encourage it to persist
- Strategies are consistently followed by all educator’s in contact with the child.

When children exhibit recurring behavioural problems the staff members will complete a ‘Behaviour Support Plan’ form. The parent/guardian will be made aware of how the Behaviour Support Plan works. The child will be given reasonable time to respond positively to new strategies and the parent will be supported in this as far as possible.

Members of staff are always available to discuss and assist with any concern a parent may have in respect to a child’s behaviour or participation in the program, and will work with parents to address any persistent behaviour problems.

Alternative care

After the child has been given every chance to respond positively, and parents have been consulted by Supervisor and/or educator’s with the ‘Behaviour Support Plan’ reports regarding the strategies used to improve their child’s behaviour, and if all methods fail to result in a positive change. The Supervisor will discuss alternative care with the parent, in consideration of the health and safety of other children in care.

Health & Safety Issues

- *SKY Fitness Traralgon aims to provide a healthy environment in which children grow and learn about the world around them. The application of preventative measures through an infection control process aims to prevent the spread of infections and will be followed by all staff at all times*

Hygiene

In-group cares situations one of the most troublesome problems is to control the spread of infections among the children and staff.

The application of universal hygiene procedures will be followed at the Centre at all times to control the spread of infection within the Centre. Staff role models a high level of personal hygiene at all times, and place emphasis on the children learning and understanding why hygiene is important. Hand washing is central to this system and children will be asked to wash their hands before all clean tasks (i.e. snack time) and after all dirty tasks (i.e. after using the toilet). Children will be provided with their own eating and drinking utensils for their individual use.

Immunisation

Immunisation of children who attend the Centre will help to limit the spread of infection.

We encourage parents/guardians to immunise their child/ren against all diseases appropriate to the child’s age. Children who are not immunised will be excluded from care during outbreaks of some infectious diseases in

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accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines, even if the child is well. This is to limit the spread of infection and protect unimmunised children.

Exclusion

As a protection for all children and staff the following exclusion policy applies to all children enrolled in the Centre

Children with infectious diseases will be excluded from the Centre in accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines. A medical certificate is required after contracting diphtheria, hepatitis A, polio, tuberculosis, typhoid and paratyphoid before your child can be re-admitted to the Centre.

If your child is unwell at home please do not bring him/her to the Centre. Children who have more than a slight cold should not be brought to the Centre and may not be accepted at the Supervisor's discretion. Fevers, vomiting, diarrhoea or unexplained rashes are indications that a child should not be brought to the Centre.

Unwell Children at the Centre

The Centre is not able to care for children who are ill. The following policy has been developed to protect your child and the other children attending the Centre.

It is important that the Supervisor be notified if your child has been unwell or received an injury since last attending the Centre.

In the case of your child becoming ill at the Centre, every effort will be made to contact you to ask you to take the child home. Your child will be separated from other children and made to feel as comfortable as possible until you arrive. The Supervisor has the prerogative to call an ambulance or doctor if urgent medical attention is required. Every effort will be made to contact you or you're nominated emergency contact people as soon as possible. All medical and ambulance costs are the parent's responsibility.

Medication

The giving of medication to children will be strictly monitored to ensure the child's safety and welfare.

Centre staff will only administer medication if:

- It is prescribed medications or medications accompanied by a letter from the child's Doctor and has the original label detailing the child's name and required dosage this includes cough mixtures, eye or ear drops, medicated creams, insect repellents and herbal remedies.
- If it is an over the counter medicine that it has been authorised by the parent, has the child's name clearly printed on it and is not passed its expiry date.
- The parent has completed and signed the Centre's authority to give medication form.

Medication must not be self administered by a child without the direct supervision of a staff member except in the case of a non-prescriptive asthma inhaler. The centre must have received a doctor's letter advising of the need for the child to carry an inhaler.

Children with allergies require a letter from their doctor that details what the child's likely reaction will be and what action staff should take in the case of an allergic reaction occurring.

Please never leave medication in your child's bag, give the medication to the Supervisor with the signed centre's authority 'To Give Medication' form. The Supervisor should also be notified if your child is receiving medication at home that is not required to be given at the Centre and advise the supervisor of the nature of the medication, its purpose and any possible side effects it may have on the child.

Wherever possible, medication should be administered by parents at home. Please consider whether your child/ren who do require medication are well enough to be at the centre and that is preferable for the child to be kept at home until they are well enough to return.

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Occupational Safety & Health

Our Centre is concerned to protect the health and safety of children and staff at the Centre.

- *The Company recognises its moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy work environment. This commitment extends to ensuring the organisation's operations do not place the local community or environment at risk of harm.*

In the interest of Occupational Safety and Health and the well being of the children, the Centre is a smoke free zone. All equipment, toys and play areas are checked regularly to ensure they are clean and safe for children's use.

Safety drills

Safety drills will be practiced to ensure that children and staff are familiar with the procedures should an emergency occur.

Emergency evacuation and safety drills will be practiced at the Centre with staff and children at least four times a year. Evacuation procedures are displayed on the Child Care Service Area and in the activity room. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with these procedures.

Accidents

Despite every precaution accidents will occur at the Centre from time to time. The following policy will be implemented to protect your child and keep you informed should an accident occur.

You are required to provide written authority (included in the enrolment form) for staff of the Centre to seek medical attention for your child if required.

In the case of a minor accident staff that are qualified in First Aid will attend to the injured child and apply first aid. Depending on the injury you will be contacted at the time of the accident or informed about the incident when you arrive to collect your child.

If a serious accident occurs which requires more than first aid treatment you will be contacted immediately or if you cannot be contacted your emergency contact person will be phoned (please ensure you are stating your where about on the sign in sheet). Your child's injuries will be assessed and either an ambulance will be called or your child will be taken to a local clinic or medical practitioner for medical treatment. A staff member will accompany your child until you are able to be there.

First Aid Qualifications

It is a requirement that all staff members have a current First Aid, CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma qualification.

Staff with First Aid qualifications will only administer first aid. A fully equipped and properly maintained First Aid Kit is maintained at the Centre.

***Thank you for taking the time to read our Parent Handbook.
Please speak with the Supervisor if you require any further clarification.***