



Parent Handbook

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Welcome

At Future Super Stars ELC (Early Learning Service) Epping, we would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your family, as you are thinking about or have already joined our community.

The first five years are an integral part of every child's life, with 80% of their brain development occurring during this time. Therefore the decisions you make, are very important ones.

We understand that today's busy and high-demanding society puts a lot of stress on parents to give their child the best of everything, that's why we strive in creating an environment that will encourage your child to develop holistically while being supported and guided by our educators.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide a loving, nurturing environment that will help your child become a confident, independent learner who has a powerful sense of self-worth, enabling them to make positive life choices.

Our Vision

Our vision is to:






- * Create an aesthetically pleasing environment that is free-flowing, calming and positive.
- * Encourage positivity, imagination, and emotional, intellectual and physical growth.





Future Super Stars Childcare and Early Learning Service Philosophy

At Future Super Stars ELC we strive to ensure that we deliver a high quality Early Learning Program and service to our families and their children.






We aim to create respectful and collaborative partnerships with our families, ensuring that their children's needs are fulfilled and assisting the children to reach their full potential.

We believe our children need to:





-  Feel a sense of accomplishment.
-  Be given a variety of choices and responsibilities.
-  Develop their creativity and exploration through many different mediums, including music, dance, drama, storytelling, art/craft, books and role play.
-  Be exposed to a rich, stimulating and natural environment that focuses on their interests.
-  Have a balance of open-ended commercial and natural resources to promote interactions, spontaneity, exploration, discovery, wonder and connection with the environment and community.

-  Be empowered to become critical thinkers.
-  Be respected as an equal member of our community.
-  Have an equal opportunity to learn.
-  Be central to their own learning.





We believe our children should be able to:

-  Pursue their own interests, revisit and build upon their own ideas at their own pace of learning.
-  Appreciate the natural environment.
-  Learn best through play.
-  Become independent, caring and active members of the community and society.
-  Develop resilience, self-confidence, a positive self-esteem and self-worth through positive encouragement and guidance.







We value our families:








-  Involvement and feedback into the development and delivery of our educational program.
-  Honest and open communication.
-  Diversity and culture.
-  Contributions to the service.

We believe our families:




-  Need to feel a sense of security and belonging at the service.
-  Need to be able to actively participate in their child's learning by sharing ideas, culture needs, knowledge and differences.
-  Should feel respected, welcomed and included within our service.
-  Play a crucial role in helping their children reach their full potential.

We believe that our educators will:

-  Respect the thoughts, rights and opinions of our families.
-  Work collaboratively with our families and create positive partnerships.
-  Acknowledge each child's individuality, potential and uniqueness.
-  Meet the needs of the child as an individual.
-  Demonstrate a positive self-esteem within the many cultures in our service.
-  Respect the diverse cultures, ethnicity, lifestyle and religion of our families.

-  Aim to achieve a sense of wonder, belonging and a love for our land, nature and animals to enable the children to develop a lifelong, respectful relationship and proactive attitude towards the environment and a sustainable future.
-  Create environments and learning experiences to enable positive trustful relationships, courage, resilience and empowerment.
-  Encourage our children to take safe risks, develop confidence and learn from their mistakes.
-  Provide a learning environment that is warm, nurturing, fun, safe and stimulating.
-  Create an educational program that is inspired by the children's curiosity and their natural ability to learn through play.
-  Seek to achieve a balance of child-initiated exploration and intentional teaching within our curriculum.
-  Are nurturing, kind and passionate.

We value our educators for:

-  Their commitment required to build on knowledge, theory, practice and research through everyday practices and professional development.
-  Their dedication to our families and our service.
-  Their dedication to the children.

'The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences.'



Our Curriculum and Program

Our belief is that children are capable beings, and we need to nurture and guide them in developing their knowledge and skills. Thus, our curriculum and program is designed around the interests of the children attending our service and their developmental needs. By designing our curriculum and program around the children's interests and needs, we can encourage more learning and interest through play-based learning. Throughout this process our educators are ensuring that the Early Years Learning Framework is still a key component of our program, and that we are achieving the outcomes set out in the Early Years Learning Framework, which are:

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

Our educators are continuously reviewing and reflecting upon their program, as well as what your child requires to further develop them holistically.

What is Play-based Learning?

Children learn best when they can play freely and learn at their pace, optimizing their ability to learn and retain their new knowledge and skills they have gained.

Play-based learning is where children have opportunities to play various activities and games. These activities are specifically chosen according to the children's interest and their developmental requirements, and will help them gain various knowledge and skills through their play.

Even though children are given the freedom to choose the activity or game they wish to be a part of, they still have rules and routine to follow. Such as the times we eat and may nap during the day, and how to play a game or activity.

During these 'play' experiences the teachers are 'playing' with the children. This 'playing' time gives the teacher the opportunity to extend their knowledge and skills of those children they are interacting with.

The advantages of play-based learning are:

- Providing opportunities to develop and improve fine and gross motor skills (i.e. holding a pencil correctly and writing, or catching a ball)
- Providing an environment in which children can practice their social skills
- Long periods of uninterrupted play help build children's concentration and inner motivation to take responsibility for their own learning.

Implementation of programs and routines

Our educators plan a diverse range of activities and experiences that focus on the physical, emotional, social, sensory and cognitive developmental areas of each child. These activities and experiences can be both structured and spontaneous, and are run indoors and outdoors, allowing the children to experience them in different environments.

Routines may vary according to the age group.

All meal times are set according to the age groups, and are as follows:

	Breakfast	Morning Tea	Lunch	Afternoon Tea
All children	Till 8am	9.00-9.15am	11.00-11.15am	2.00-2.15pm

Nap times are as follows:

0 – 1 year old(Nursery)	As per the routine supplied by parents
1 – 5 year old (Toddlers to Kinders)	According to their sleep requirements.

Group times are a time where the whole age group or small groups of children will get together and read books, sing songs and discuss projects. These times may vary from each age group, and will need to be checked with each room leader.

Individual Child Portfolio

Educators will complete a checklist of developmentally appropriate milestones according to the Early Years Learning Framework and NQS. We have introduced Storypark, which is an online form of documentation of your child's learning and development. By

using Storypark we are eliminating the printing of these documents which in turn saves the environment and means we are being more sustainable.
They will include observations and records of their experiences as they grow and develop.



Fees

Method of payment

It is a policy of the Service that all fees are paid via direct debit (An Debitsuccess form is included in your pack) on either a weekly or fortnightly basis.

If an unforeseen event happens and you may be having difficulty paying your fees, please contact your Service Director to discuss the matter as soon as possible.

Late payment of fees

The Service Director has the authority to terminate an enrolment where fees remain outstanding for more than one week and no agreement to pay is in place.

Your child's placement may also be terminated where they are absent from the Service for two weeks without prior written notice given and fees are in arrears.

Continual or habitual lateness in payment of fees may jeopardise your child's placement at the service.

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is financial assistance provided by the Commonwealth Government to approved child care centres, family day care schemes, registered carers, outside of school hour's programs and occasional care services. This subsidy is 'means tested' and managed by the Family Assistance Office (FAO). Parents should contact Centrelink to discuss their eligibility.

The CCS is then subtracted from full fees owing to leave a gap fee which is the amount families pay to the centre for childcare.

CCS entitlement will be taken from the date the Centre is notified by Centrelink.

Full fees are charged if you do not have a current assessment.

Child Care Subsidy and Child Immunisations

To receive the CCS your child must meet the immunization requirements or have an exemption from these requirements.

To meet the requirements, your child must be fully immunized according to the 'National Immunisation Program Schedule' or be on a catch-up vaccination schedule. We require written proof (a 'History Immunisation Statement') that the child is immunized appropriately for his/her age prior to commencement.

My Gov accounts

Families are required to have a mygov.au account linked to Centrelink in order for them to confirm their child's place at our service and for the service to receive CCS for their child. Until families have confirmed their enrolment through their myGov account, they will be required to pay full fee

Days of Absence

Allowable Absences

CCS is paid for up to 42 absence days for each child per financial year. Absence days are referred to as 'Initial 42 days of absence' in the family assistance law.

Please note that each child receives a new quota of 42 absence days at the beginning of July. Public holidays are included in these 42 days.

Additional Absence Days

Once initial absence days have been used CCS will also be payable for absences taken for the following reason where supporting documentation is supplied:

- Illness
- Rostered days off
- Rotating shift work
- Temporary closure of a school
- Periods of local emergency
- Shared cared arrangements due to a court order, parenting plan or parenting order
- Exceptional circumstances

Holidays

Please note we have reviewed our Holiday Discount Fees Policy and have amended our 'Holiday Discount Fee' period.

Families will still be entitled to a 50% discount on their gap fee, but you will now be entitled to 4 weeks instead of 2 weeks. There are certain conditions to be granted the full 4 weeks of holiday discount.

These are:

- Your account needs to be paid up-to-date
- We require a minimum of 2 weeks' notice before you commence your holiday
- Leave is required to be taken in a full week block, and may not be a day here or there
- To be entitled to the full 4 weeks of discount your child needs to be enrolled at the service for at least six months. There is a pro rata system for those enrolled less than six months.

Public Holidays

It is our policy that fees are payable for the days that your child is booked into our service. If a public holiday falls on one of the days your child is booked in, fees are still payable even though the service is not open.

Please refer to the Childcare Handbook at www.deewr.gov.au

Late pick-up fees

We request all our families' co-operation in dropping off and picking up their child/ren within our operating hours, and that parents arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the Service closing to ensure you have sufficient time to collect your child's belongings and exchange any daily communication.

If at any time, you have an emergency and are going to be delayed, please contact the service to inform them. This will allow educators to reassure your child's concerns and make plans for their own commitments.

A late fee of \$20 for the first 10 minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter will apply if your child is left at the service after closing time.

The late fee is not subject to Child Care Benefit and is payable on collection or will be added to your next account.

Children who are left at the Service 30 minutes after closing time will be taken to the nearest local police station if we have not received any communication from the parents.

When you start Child Care

What to bring

Please provide the following for your child:

- A family photo
- At least one complete set of clothes to change, more if your child is toilet training
- Drink bottle for water only
- A comfort item if your child has one

If your child is still having a bottle, please also supply the following:

- If they are on formula please bring all bottles completely made up and labelled with your child's name.
- You may choose to bring a tin of formula which can be left at the service. Please ensure educators are aware of how much formula the child requires in each bottle.

Please ensure all clothes, bottles and comfort items are clearly labelled with your child's name.

What to wear

Please dress your child in accordance with the climate, in non-restrictive clothing that is easily removed for toileting and suitable for running, climbing, painting and playing in areas with sand and water. Please avoid skinny straps and thongs are not permitted due to the dangers to the children climbing and playing safely.

We recommend comfortable safe shoes to be worn that can be easily managed by your child to encourage their independence.

Items not to bring

The following items are strictly prohibited to be left in children's bags:

- Plastic bags
- Medication
- Sharp objects
- Mobile phones
- Precious items
- Items made of glass
- Food of any kind

Lost property

A container with lost property is placed in each room. It would be appreciated if parents check this container regularly. The items not collected after one month will be disposed of.

Settling In

Settling in may be a difficult time, both for the child and parents. A few recommendations we have to help your child settle are:

- To ensure your child has their comfort item, if they have one.
- Always say 'good-bye' to your child, this helps develop feelings of trust that you will return to collect them.
- Speaking to your child's educators if you have any concerns or apprehensions, and for suggestions to help you and your child cope with this new transition.
- To feel free to call the service to see how your child is settling in.

Comfort Items

Comfort items are things that help your child feel more relaxed and calm such as a blanket, dummy or teddy. These items help children feel little more at ease with this new change in their life.

Please ensure all comfort items are clearly labeled with your child's name.

Treasures from Home

Please refrain from bringing toys and activities from home, except for comfort items, as we do not wish for any items to be broken or lost.

Birthday Celebrations

If your child has a birthday coming up and you wish for them to celebrate it a care, we request that you fill in a Birthday Cake request form and we will arrange for the cake. This is to ensure that it is safe for all the children to eat in your child's room, due to some children having allergies to certain food. There will be a cost of \$10.

Special Cultural Celebrations

We value and respect all cultural diversity and differences at Future Super Stars ELC, and would love to teach all the children about your celebrations. If there is a Cultural Celebration coming up please could you inform our staff, and maybe tell them a bit about the Celebration too, so that we could make it part of everyone's learning and environment too.

Parent Responsibilities

Arrival and Departure

On arrival and departure please ensure that an Educator is aware that your child has arrived or is leaving. It is also a requirement that your child is signed in and out.

Please also check if there are any notices on the notice board for all the parents.

Persons to Collect a Child

Children may only be collected from the service by those people who have been nominated on their 'Enrolment Form' or by prior notice by the parent directly to the Nominated Supervisor or Director. If it is the first time the person is collecting your child, we will request identification from them to confirm who they are.

Please note it is a legal requirement that educators do not release a child to people who have not been authorized to collect a child.

The person collecting a child from the service must be over 18 years.

Parents with custody orders must provide a copy to the Director. In the case of a non-custodial parent arriving to collect a child, the Director or Nominated Supervisor will contact the police and provide a copy of the order for the police to enforce. At no time will a child be allowed to leave with a parent/guardian in contravention of a custody/court order held at the Service. However, in the event of a non-custodial parent gaining access to a child, the Service cannot be held liable.

Changes to your regular days

When a parent wishes to change, increase or reduce your child's days at the service, the parent needs to give two weeks written notice.

If you are wishing to change your days or increase your days, the Director will try their best to try and give you the days you have requested, but if the room is full to capacity then your request will be delayed until such a time that the request can be made.

If you wish to decrease your days, and your child does not attend the Service during this the two-week notice period, your fees are still payable for this period.

Cancellation of Care

If you wish to cancel your child's care at any point, we require two full weeks written notice. Please note if your child does not attend the last day/s of care then you will be charged full fee (government policy). If your child is withdrawn without notice, two weeks' full fees must be paid regardless.

If fees have been paid in excess of the 2-week notice period, then the balance will be refunded.

Health and Safety

Emergency Contact

Parents are required to supply the Service with at least 2 other emergency contacts including their names, contact numbers and addresses. They are only contacted in cases of emergency where the parents are not available and must be able to collect your child.

Child Health

If your child becomes unwell while at the Service, the Service Director or their delegate will contact you and request your child be taken home as soon as possible. Parents will be contacted if the child exhibits any of the following:

- A need for medical attention
- Educators suspect the child may be contagious
- The child is not participating in the daily routine and expresses a feeling of being unwell
- The child is running a temperature of 38° or above

Exclusion Due to Illness

It is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections or viruses within a Service, however some can be prevented.

We request that parents to keep their child home if they are showing any signs of illness until they are well enough to participate in the daily routine or at the discretion of the Director. This is for the health and wellbeing of all children, educators and families within our Service community.

A child will not be able to attend the Service for any period of time during which:

- The child is suffering from a disease or condition which is contagious through normal social contact
- A medical practitioner has recommended the child not attend childcare
- If a child requires paracetamol four hourly
- If a child has been unwell prior to arriving at the Service, this includes a temperature of 38° or above, vomiting or an upset stomach.
- During the first 24 hours of receiving an antibiotic
- If a child has been hospitalized in the last 48 hours

Children who have had a contagious illness or an unspecified rash must produce a doctor's certificate stating the details of the illness and they are no longer contagious and fit to return.

'No Jab, No Play' Legislation

If your child is not immunized, you are no longer eligible for family assistance unless you have an approved exemption.

We also hold the right to exclude your child from the Service if a condition usually prevented by immunisation occurs within the Service.

Medication

If your child requires medication the following procedure is to be followed:

- The parent/s must inform the Director or child's educator
- The parent/s must complete 'An Administration of Medication Form' which includes the name of the medication, expiry date, time it was last administered and when to be administered next, dosage and how to administer this dosage, and to be signed by the parent
- All medication is required to be:
 - Labelled with your child's name and instructions given by your doctor
 - To be in its original bottle
- This medication is to be given to the Director or your child's educator to be stored either in the Fridge or in a safe place

Please note:

- Medication will not be administered if:
 - The form is incomplete or not signed by a parent/guardian
 - If a child becomes distressed about receiving the medication, parents will be notified of this
 - If it is paracetamol (Panadol) or Nurofen as these may mask more serious issues
 - If it is not clearly labeled

Emergency Paracetamol

It is our Service's policy that if your child is running a temperature above 38°, then with telephonic permission from either a parent or emergency contact we may administer only 1 dose of emergency paracetamol, only if you are unable to pick up your child within 1 hour. Parents will still be required to collect their child as soon as possible thereafter.

Medical Action Plans

Children who have been declared to have asthma or any allergies by a medical doctor are required to have an action plan completed by their doctor. This plan will outline actions to be taken if a reaction occurs and what medication to use during these reactions. The director will also create a Medical Communication Plan with the parents, which outlines what may cause reactions and ways to prevent reaction, as well as any communication that may occur between educators and parents about the child and their medication.

These medications are required to be clearly labeled and at the Service whenever your child is in attendance or it may be left here.

If your child has asthma, the medication may only be administered every 4 hours. If they require it more than this, they should be home as they are not well enough to be at care.

If the child has an attack (asthma or allergic), parents or emergency contacts will be notified immediately and an ambulance called at your expense.

Accident/Incident

In the event that an accident or incident occurs, first aid will be administered to the child. If the accident or incident occurs above the shoulders, then parents will be notified as soon as practical about the injury.

All accident/incidents will be recorded on an Accident/Incident report form and will require parents to sign upon the collection of their child.

If at any time, you seek medical attention due to an incident incurred at the Service, please notify the Director as we are obliged to notify the Department.

Sun Protection

Future Super Stars ELC is registered as Sun Smart.

We promote sun safety and request all parents to follow the sun safety protection advice given by Sun Smart. This advice requires your child to follow the following during Sun Smart times:

- Wearing a broad brimmed hat, that shades their face and neck.
- Preferable wear short sleeved tops during this time, this means no tops with straps.
- Have water resistant sunscreen with a SPF30+ applied at home, and throughout the day at care
- May bring sunglasses for outside, but must be clearly labeled with their name
- Will not be permitted to play outside if the UV ray levels are a 7 or higher.
- If UV ray levels are between 4 and 6, then the child will be allowed to play in shaded areas.

Evacuation Procedures

Educators practice the Service's 'Evacuation Procedure' with the children on a regular basis.

The educators and children evacuate the service and assemble in a designated area. The daily roll is marked to ensure all children have been identified as present. The group would wait until the building is deemed safe to enter or in case of a real evacuation, educators would ring families to notify them of the emergency.

Governance Issues

Confidentiality and Privacy

Future Super Stars ELC respects every family's right to privacy of their personal information. Our educators are required to follow policies and procedures to ensure that all personal information, is handled sensitively, securely and in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

Child Protection

All forms of child abuse are an act that endangers a child's physical and emotional health or development. Should an educator have reason to suspect abuse of a child they will work with the Service Director to determine the validity of the concern. If the situation identifies that abuse may be taking place, the Director is required by law to refer the situation to the appropriate authorities.

Exclusion Policy

At all times the rights and dignity of each child is respected. Educators will endeavor to offer positive guidance to children with behavioral problems. However, Future Super Stars ELC reserves the right to refuse or withdraw a child from care, temporarily or permanently, for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of account
- Inappropriate behavior on the part of a parent or representative
- Inappropriate behavior on part of a child
- Child with contagious or communicable disease
- Child who has not been immunized
- Child who is visibly unwell or has a temperature of or exceeding 38°
- If it has been less than 24 hours since a child has been vaccinated

Complaints and Grievances

If you have any concerns whatsoever regarding the Service or the actions of educators, please do not hesitate to contact the Room Leader or Director.

If you feel the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction please contact our Operations Manager at headoffice@futuresuperstars.com.au.