



Our Parent Handbook

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ABOUT OUR KINDERGARTEN

Mona Vale Kindergarten is a private long day care centre, registered and approved for opening hours of 7.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks per year. We offer a program based upon the Australian Government's 'Early Years Learning Framework', an outcomes-based curriculum that is centred upon the key elements of "Belonging, Being and Becoming", ensuring that each child is supported to feel a strong sense of self-worth, of self-identity, of belonging to the community and to become confident and involved learners.

The Kindergarten contains open classrooms and a large outdoor playground. Both the indoor and outdoor areas aim to promote security and comfort for the children, as well as areas of challenge and stimulation. Through supervised play with others of their own age, and through individualised programs implemented by qualified Educators, the children are supported to develop strong personal and interpersonal skills, to explore new interests and ideas, to be curious and involved in their own learning and to develop the ability to solve problems, think creatively and communicate effectively with a range of people.

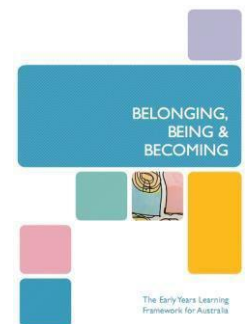
The programs for each class are planned according to the children's interests. A photo diary is sent to families each day to record and display the children's activities and learning throughout their day, showing how it links to the EYLF Learning Outcomes, teaching Principles and Practice.

The framework for the curriculum is based upon the following beliefs and understandings:

- That curriculum is what actually happens in an educational environment, not what is planned to happen.
- That everything and anything in our world that interests the children is curriculum for young children.
- That young children learn through play, inventing and organising their own learning all the time.
- That the desire to learn and to try new things comes from being interested in what we are doing.
- That young children are active learners who learn through experience and opportunity.
- That all curriculum planning is tentative and flexible, and modified by the children's response.
- That all curriculum planning relates to identity, connection with the community, personal wellbeing, confidence as a learner and effective communication.

The curriculum goals focus on:

- (a) Fostering positive self-concept and self-esteem.
- (b) Developing social, personal and interpersonal skills.
- (c) Encouraging children to think, reason, question, challenge and experiment.
- (d) Promoting language and communication.
- (e) Enhancing physical skills (fine motor, gross motor, psychomotor skills).
- (f) Encouraging and promoting general life skills such as keeping safe, making healthy lifestyle choices, and becoming part of a community
- (g) Enhancing creative expression and appreciation for the arts.
- (h) Respecting and promoting diversity and difference.



This approach enables children to become confident, self-directing and continuous learners who are well equipped to handle both themselves and society.

CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Our Centre is managed by an appointed Director, who has a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood, and a part time Assistant Director (Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care). Together they have autonomy to make decisions pertinent to the operation of the Centre and are responsible for the planning and coordination of all aspects of it. Our Staff hold various qualifications in Early Childhood Education, and hence are skilled in planning and implementing programs for young children.

Our Director, Gail Gillard, set up the Centre in 1990 and has been operating it ever since. Our Assistant Director, Sonia Spoard, joined us in 2014. Both have non-teaching roles and can devote their time to the efficient management of the kindergarten, to the overseeing of the children's programs and progress, to parent's needs and requests and to the support of the Staff.

We currently have 5 University trained Early Childhood Teachers and all our other experienced Educators either already have or are studying towards a recognized qualification in childcare. Our Cooks have a Food Handler's Certificate, Certificates in Menu Planning and are Food Safety Supervisors. All staff have current First Aid qualifications. Our Staff ratios exceed those of the new National licensing standards. All staff are appointed by, and responsible to, the Director and serve a probationary period of six months, during which time their skills and suitability for the position are assessed, prior to the offer of permanent appointment.

Our amazing team of staff work in collaboration and are all actively involved in the care and education of children. Our staff, our most valuable asset, are critical to the smooth functioning of the Centre and are highly qualified professionals who relate to children and families in a warm, caring and supportive way. A list of the Staff working in the Centre, and their qualifications and experience, is displayed at the centre and on our website www.monavalekindergarten.com.au.

FEES AND BENEFITS

Our Kindergarten fees are currently \$152 per day for all ages which includes covers the full eleven hours of care per day, all meals (morning and afternoon teas, hot lunches with dessert), all educational resource materials and all incursions that we incorporate into our program. Fees are payable each fortnight (or month) in advance, whether or not your child is in attendance, until the booking is cancelled in writing. Because our bookings are **permanent** bookings, sick days and holidays (except for our closure period of 2 weeks over Christmas / New Year) are still charged. Normal fees apply for Public Holidays, but make-up days are offered in lieu.

We are both registered and approved by the Federal Government so we are able to offer families Childcare Subsidy, to reduce the cost of childcare. Childcare Subsidy is available to all Australian families, and although the amount of subsidy you receive is income based, everyone who meets the work / study requirements (see last four pages of this Handbook) will receive a 50% rebate on all fees. For further information about these schemes, please read our information entitled 'Fees and Subsidies' at the back of this handbook.

We have written policies on all aspects of the Centre's operation, which we ask you to read. These policies are always under review and your comments, ideas and suggestions are welcome. You will find in this handbook sections from some of our policies that are absolutely imperative for you to read and understand to assist the smooth functioning of the Centre. Please note that this information highlights only some of our policies, and your assistance in reading our full Policy Handbook (always available on our website) is requested.



OUR PHILOSOPHY



Mona Vale Kindy acknowledges that we are on unceded Garigal Country of the Garigal peoples, past, present and emerging.

We celebrate the diverse community in which we live and embed the cultural histories, heritages and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our program and daily experiences.

We respect and understand our collective responsibility to embrace and promote reconciliation through continued learning, strengthening our connections to local Elders and embedding First Nations' perspectives.

Our focus is to facilitate a culturally safe, inclusive and diverse environment for every child and family.

We believe the Early Childhood years lay the foundation for all that is yet to come in life. With this in mind, we offer a holistic approach to high-quality education centered not just on children's learning, but one that prioritises child safety, health and wellbeing. This is fostered in an environment that is stimulating and challenging and in a supportive atmosphere in which each individual child can grow, learn and feel a sense of belonging.

We are committed to maintaining a child safe culture and upholding the rights of each child through responsive relationships, engaging experiences and a safe, healthy environment. We acknowledge children's voices and support them to be active participants and decision makers in matters that affect them.

We see play as being the 'heartbeat' of our program and believe that creativity is the freest form of self-expression. We provide our children with the opportunity to be actively involved in meaningful, authentic experiences where learning happens in context and in which children develop a plethora of skills in exploration, self-discovery, social interaction and problem solving. We believe imagining, trying new ways of doing things and experimenting assist with the development of critical thinking and foster creative problem solving.

Supporting children to be environmentally responsible and active participants in making decisions is firmly embedded in our practice.

Our dedicated staff, our most valuable asset, are qualified professionals who value the importance of maintaining an optimum level of care, safety and education for children through critical reflection and educational best practices.

We value the opportunity to work in partnership with families and continually strive to develop and maintain strong relationships with parents, our most important resource. We invite family participation into all aspects of our program, policies and events to assist us to meet the changing needs of our kindy community and value feedback and ideas in our continual strive for improvement.

We believe each child is an individual, whose needs, interests and family values will be respected and developed. Through the "Early Year's Learning Framework", we value and respect each child's individuality, diverse perspectives and aim to develop within each child their sense of self, of community and their desire to learn.

By immersing our children in a curriculum based around their strengths, abilities and interests and one that is planned to develop each child as an individual, we aspire to enable children to be confident, competent and capable learners who are well equipped to handle both themselves and their world around them.

OUR GOALS:

Our priority is to provide quality care and education for the children attending our kindergarten, and to be responsive to the individual needs of their families. We are committed to continually endeavouring to improve our service, our programs, and our facilities, for the children, families, staff and the community.

We aim to provide a warm, respectful and consistent environment in which the children will learn and feel a strong sense of belonging. Consistency of staffing is our priority to promote strong, continuous relationships with and between staff, children and families, and consistent class groups facilitates social continuity and ongoing friendships. We aim to help the children acquire and maintain responsible attitudes in their personal and community life, by encouraging concern and empathy for others and for the welfare of the group.

We aim to help the children acquire and maintain an appreciation for difference of ability and opinion, and diversity of culture and belief, in our society.

OUR CHILDREN:

We have 3 separate age-grouped classes, each with their own primary caregivers.

Our youngest class (of just 5 x 2 – 3 year-olds each day) is called the Joeys.

Our middle class (of 3 – 4 year-olds) is called the Koalas.

Our preschool class (of 4 – 5 year-olds) is called the Possums.

We are a little different to many other childcare centres in that we only have one formal intake each year, each January in line with schools. There are no set attendance patterns, so parents simply nominate the days that best suit their needs, with no minimum number of days that a child must attend. When choosing days, parents need to consider their child's needs and personality - consecutive days can be helpful to ensure continuity and regularity for an unsettled child, whilst split days can be better for children who tire easily and need a break between attendance to gain maximum enjoyment from the program.

OUR DAILY ROUTINE

The daily routine varies according to the age group of the children, and is of necessity flexible, to cater for the individual needs of children. However, our routine is predictable (the same each day) so that the children feel comfortable and know what will happen next. Our day is planned to take advantage of our 3 separate age-grouped classes, but also to allow siblings to be together at times.

OUR PROGRAMS

The educational programs for each class are planned according to the children's needs and interests.

Our curriculum, based upon the 'Early Years Learning Framework,' reflects our Centre's philosophy, ideals and goals for the children. The focus of learning is from the child's perspective and is based upon each child's individual interests, needs, knowledge and culture. This information about each child is collected from staff observations, children's communication, interactions and play, and from parent feedback.

The concepts of "Belonging. Being, Becoming" steer our planning, with the whole ethos of the kindy supporting each child to have a strong sense of wellbeing, become confident and involved learners and effective communicators. This is demonstrated in all processes, practices, activities and environments that are provided and promoted.

To document the children's learning activities, we use an online portfolio software system called Xplor / Playground, which allows Educators to send daily diaries to all families, showing children's learning during the day with links to the EYLF learning outcomes.



Each child also has their own online portfolio on this platform which documents their learning and planning cycle to support it. Families are able to provide feedback on activities directly onto Xplor / Playground and are also encouraged to contribute their own photos and learning stories to their child's portfolio, ensuring a shared planning and learning process. This is an invaluable way of achieving strong family input into each child's learning and participation at kindy, and in guiding future learning experiences for individual children and whole classes. Observations and participation is analysed in terms of the learning outcomes, to assess each child's learning and development in relation to their identity, connection with the community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators. Follow up activities, based on each child's observed interests and needs, are used to further a child's learning and development, and this in turn often leads to extended areas of interest and group study (projects).

SPECIALISTS, REFERRALS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Where appropriate, and with parent permission, we encourage the involvement of specialists (such as Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists) in our programs, to assess and assist children for whom there is an identified need. Parents are always invited to request the involvement of support services if they have any concerns about their child's development, and we have access to a range of excellent Early Childhood professionals.

EXCURSIONS AND INCURSIONS

We like to supplement our programs with both excursions and regular shows and performances. Excursions are usually local, and always have an educational purpose. Parent permission is always sought for any trip outside the kindy gate.

Additionally, we plan educational and cultural shows for the children on a regular basis, using well-known children's performers which are paid for by the centre.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND DAILY COMMUNICATION

We recognise that parents have many and varied talents to offer and encourage your ideas and suggestions. We welcome your skills, experience and knowledge in any given field and would enjoy incorporating them into our programs. Please chat to us about your ideas!

We welcome parents and families into our Centre at all times. We have a very open system of communication and encourage parents to chat informally with us each day. We aim to have a very warm, friendly and responsive environment and hope that you feel comfortable involving yourselves and your extended families within our kindy community. To this end, we plan many events and special days throughout the year (Mother's and Father's Day Mornings, Grandparents Day, Family Christmas Night, etc) in which we hope you will participate!

OUR POLICIES

We have formal, written policies on all aspects of our kindy, which parents are encouraged to read. Copies of policies are always available on our website as well as at the sign in desk. Our policies are under continual review and we welcome your feedback at all times.

AGREEMENTS/ AUTHORISATIONS

It is imperative that you read and sign our Agreements/Authorisations form prior to commencement at the Centre. The Agreements are either required by law or are essential to our day to day operation. Any exclusions to the Agreements need to be highlighted, for our records.

FEES:

Fees are payable in advance, either fortnightly or monthly, whether or not your child is actually in attendance. Hence sick days and holidays (apart from the two weeks per year when we are closed) are still charged. This is because we offer permanent positions (not casual or occasional ones), so if your child is booked in to attend on set days we cannot offer places to other children.

Substitute days are only available in the event of a Public Holiday.

Our Centre is both registered and approved by the Federal Government, so we are able to provide the Childcare Subsidy to all eligible families. Information about Childcare Subsidy is included in the 'Fees and Subsidies' section of this handbook.

Childcare Subsidy is available to all Australian residents. The amount of subsidy you receive is income based and subject to a generous work/study activity test but 95% of our families are eligible for this subsidy.

Applications must be made prior to commencement, through Centrelink.

TERMINATION OF BOOKING:

Termination of a booking can be made by the parents at any time, providing that four weeks' notice is given to the Director, and that all outstanding fees are met. Bookings cancelled in November or December will incur fees up until the closing date of the centre for the year and require an 8 week notice period.

Termination of a booking can be made by the Director under the following circumstances:

- # When a child has an unexplained absence of more than two weeks;
- #When a child maintains a low level of attendance (see Government regulations regarding Childcare Benefit);
- # For failure to pay the required fees;
- #For not abiding by Centre policies / Conditions of Enrolment;
- # When a child is collected after 6.00pm on more than one occasion;
- #When the Director makes the judgment that the placement is not in the child's best interest.

LATE FEES

A late fee of \$2.00 per minute to each staff member present applies for collection after 6.00pm. Please consider your child and respect our staff by ensuring that you make alternate arrangements in the event of a delay. We are not licensed to operate after 6.00pm

IMMUNISATION:

The Public Health Act 2010 requires parents to provide documented evidence of their child's immunisation status on enrolment in schools, preschools and childcare centres.

A child's Immunisation History Statement must be sighted and a copy kept at the Centre, prior to enrolment being

confirmed. Whilst immunisation is not compulsory in Australia, current regulations do not permit us to enrol children at our Government accredited centre who are not immunized. We are permitted, however, to accept a child who is enrolled in a recognized NSW Health Catch up schedule immunisation plan, or who has an Immunisation Medical Exemption. Please see our Immunisation Policy for full details.

ILLNESS:

It is vital that the kindergarten be informed of any child contracting a contagious disease so that other children (and their families) can be protected. Information regarding common illnesses and incubation periods are on permanent display, and copies are available to all parents at any time.

We ask for your cooperation in ensuring that children who are ill are kept at home, in their own interests as well as the interests of other children. A list entitled "When Is Your Child Too Sick To Attend Kindy" is in our policies and on our website.

MEDICINE:

Medicine can be administered to children only when a written order has been made by a parent, on a Medicine Authority Form, for every day that medicine is required. The parent must specify the type, amount and times that the medicine is to be administered and must sign the entry. The medicine must be in the correct container, clearly labelled with the child's name and dosage, and stored either inside, or on top of, the fridge, in our locked medicine boxes. Medicine must never be left in a child's bag.

ASTHMA:

It is very important that we are informed of any child who may suffer an asthma attack.

For this reason, all children who have ever been diagnosed with asthma must have an Asthma Plan and an Asthma Record completed for them detailing their triggers, symptoms, usual treatment, and emergency treatment.

The Staff are trained in the use of asthmatic devices such as nebulisers, spacers, and puffers. Treatment for asthma can be administered on a daily basis or on a long-term basis as authorised by their parents.

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

As part of our program, we teach and practise Fire Drills, Emergency Evacuations and Lock downs with the children. Safety and Emergency Procedures are clearly documented in each room.

If you hear the whistle blown three times, please exit from the nearest door and follow Staff directions.

SUN PROTECTION:

All children are required to wear a hat which protects their face, neck and ears for most of the year when the UV Index is 3 or above (as per Cancer Council guidelines). Children should bring their own hats to kindy with spares available if necessary. Children who choose not to wear a hat will be required to play only in shaded areas.

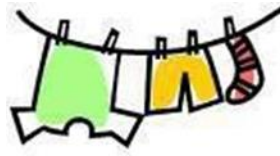
Sunscreen (minimum 50+, broad spectrum, water resistant) is provided by the Centre. Parents are requested to apply sunscreen to their child upon arrival each day. Supplies are kept at the Sign-In desk and in classrooms. Staff will reapply sunscreen as needed throughout the day. Whenever possible, outdoor activities will be programmed to make use of shaded areas, and scheduled for early morning and late afternoon.

CLOTHING:

It is requested that children be dressed appropriately for play & activities at kindy. Please consider dressing your child in clothes and shoes that fit, that are weather appropriate for the weather and that allow your child to be fully involved in all kindy activities (to get messy and provide freedom of movement). It is also important that clothes worn to kindy encourage independence and development of the child's self-help skills that are easily removed and put on. It is suggested that children wear clothes and shoes that they can substantially manage by

themselves (eg. pull up pants, dresses, velcro or slip on shoes).

Our Staff will endeavour to ensure that children are clothed appropriately throughout the day to accommodate changes in weather and for rest time. We have a selection of spare kindy clothes for emergencies, and request that these be returned to kindy for future use.



LOST PROPERTY:

We request that all clothing and belongings sent to kindy is clearly named to minimise loss.

All unclaimed property is collected at the end of the day, and stored in the Lost Property box on the veranda. Please check this regularly for any missing items. Every three months, unnamed and unclaimed Lost Property will be donated to charities.

Please encourage your child to pack his/her own bag in order to develop a sense of responsibility for their own belongings. If your child inadvertently brings home toys, pieces of puzzles, books or clothes that do not belong to you, please return them promptly. This is very common practice with young children!

Please do not send along any toys from home - it causes such a problem with sharing, and there are always traumas when the toys are lost or broken.

FOOD AND NUTRITION:

We provide all food and drinks for the children each day. There is no need to send along any extra food or drinks unless it is for a special purpose (eg. birthday cake or specifically diet related).

Our menu reflects a nutritious plan that promotes the health, strength and well-being of growing, energetic children and follows the guidelines set down by the NSW Department of Health in their 'Caring for Kids' publication, and "Get Up and Grow". Our menus are planned to provide a balance between red meat, white meat and vegetarian meals, with a combination of fibre, protein, carbohydrate, fat, green and yellow vegetables in each menu plan. Fruit is provided for dessert and children are encouraged to rinse their mouths (with water) after eating.

Daily morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea menus are clearly displayed at the sign in desk and staff maintain records of how much each child has consumed.

We endeavour to cater for children with special dietary requirements due to allergies, religion or health. Mealtimes are used to reinforce suitable nutrition habits, manners, socialisation and self-help skills and are learning experiences in themselves. The Staff eat with the children and encourage good manners and appropriate social interactions.

Our centre is a nut-free environment (please no peanut butter, peanut oil, many brands of biscuits/cakes, muesli bars and chocolate). Increasing numbers of children have potentially life-threatening anaphylactic reactions to peanuts and other foods so it is essential that children DO NOT BRING FOOD TO KINDY unless staff are notified.

QUIET LISTENING / REST AND RELAXATION TIME:

A quiet time is offered each day, for all children, and differs according to each child's age and needs.

The atmosphere for quiet time is restful and calming, and the Staff endeavour to ensure that quiet time is a

pleasant, relaxing time for the children and that they take the rest appropriate to their individual needs. The purpose of quiet time is reinforced with the children, emphasising the need to have some time in their busy day, away from the noise and stimulation of activities and interactions.

Children who do not wish to sleep are offered alternate activities in a separate area.

Children's need for rest or sleep will always be respected, and children who choose not to sleep, or to sleep early, or who need longer sleeps, will be able to do so. Records of sleepers and non-sleepers are maintained each day, for parent information.

BED SHEETS:

All children who choose to sleep must bring to kindy each day their own bed sheet and blanket. The sheet should measure 65 cm x 130cm and should be stored in a soft bag or a pillowcase (no drawstrings).

A fitted cot sheet is perfect. For hygiene reasons, sheets and other bedding must be brought to kindy and taken home each day. It is important that they are clearly named.

NAPPY CHANGING:

Please provide an adequate supply of nappies for the day, any special creams or wipes that are to be used, and **your own vinyl nappy change pad** (for use exclusively when your child is changed).

Children should be brought to kindy in a clean nappy or changed upon arrival by their parent.

ADDITIONAL NEEDS:

Our Centre is open to all children and families without discrimination. Where appropriate, and with parent permission, we encourage the involvement of specialists (such as Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists) in our programs, to assess and assist with children for whom there is an identified need.

Where the additional needs or disability of a child are profound enough that their integration or participation in our Centre requires one to one supervision or additional staffing, our ability to accept the child would be based around the provision of funding for a separate additional needs teacher. Consideration must also be given to the needs and interests of the other children and families using our Centre, to the Staff, and to the Centre as a whole.

Our programs in all areas reflect an anti-bias perspective, in which additional needs, disabilities and differences between people are actively taught in a positive manner. Our Staff treat all children equally and are conscious in all that they say, do, imply, assume and expect that all children are treated without bias, and that they promote positive, accepting role models for the children.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE:

We emphasise positive behaviour management and incorporate positive reinforcement techniques as disciplinary measures. These encourage the children to cooperate, enhancing their self-esteem and interaction with others.

Discipline needs to help the children know what to do rather than what not to do. When a child is redirected, stopped or reprimanded, we explain why. This helps the children make judgments about what they can and cannot do (limits) and facilitates the development of self-control. Such self-discipline can only be achieved if the children are aware of consistent limits within the Centre, so these limits are reinforced by all of the Staff.

We actively teach conflict resolution skills and encourage the children to 'use their words' instead of actions to deal with conflict. We use stories, discussion, role plays and role modelling to promote these important skills, and to help build an understanding of other people's needs, rights and feelings.

CHILD PROTECTION:

All teachers and childcare workers are mandated by law to report any concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child, or any suspicion that a child is at risk of harm, to the Mandatory Reporters Hotline. If you, as a parent, have concerns about a child's safety, welfare or well-being, you are able to make a report to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111. Detailed information about our child protection policies and procedures are provided in our Policy Handbook, which is always available at the front desk.

PARENT GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINTS:

Concerns and grievances should be aired and resolved. This can happen either informally, if the issue is minor and can easily be resolved by discussing the matter with the Director (and other teachers, if necessary), on either a personal basis or via the telephone.

We pride ourselves on the quality of our close, interactive relationships with families and are always seeking your ideas and suggestions. Equally, we need to know if you have any concerns or complaints. We always listen carefully to any issues and endeavour to clarify and resolve your concerns. Minor grievances are recorded.

In the instance of a more formal verbal or written complaint, the details will be recorded and an investigation will be formally instigated and reported by the Director. This permanent record will be registered with the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate, Department of Education and Communities within 7 days of notification.

If parents are not satisfied with the result of such investigation, a further formal complaint can be addressed to: NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate, Department of Education and Communities

Address: Locked Bag 5107, Parramatta NSW 2124

Phone: 1800 619 113 (toll free)

Fax: (02) 8633 1810

Email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

It is our hope and expectation that there will never be a situation in which a parent feels that any issue warrants the mediation of an outside agent or office. This is your kindy, and we always listen to your suggestions and welcome your comments. Your feedback at all times is essential to our commitment to providing quality care.

PRIVACY:

In order to provide you with the highest standard of service, and to ensure the safety and well-being of your child, we are required by law to collect personal information about you and your child. This information includes basic details such as your name, address and phone contacts, but also information about your child's health, likes and dislikes, routines, needs and interests. Information regarding your entitlement to Childcare Benefit is also provided to us. All of this information is vital in assisting us to provide the best possible individual care for your child, and for processing payments. Some of the information we collect is to satisfy our legal obligations under our licensing legislation. Privacy of your personal information is important to us, and our staff are committed to respecting confidentiality.

VALUES AND RELIGION:

Our Centre is not affiliated with any religion and aims to meet the needs of all families in the community, irrespective of religious beliefs. Religion is not taught in any part of the curriculum, and no religious beliefs are imposed on the children, families or staff of the Centre. Instead, all children will be encouraged to develop respect for themselves, for their friends and families, and to appreciate an awareness of the difference and diversity of other people in our world. We aim to help the children acquire and maintain sound habits and responsible attitudes in their personal and community life, by encouraging concern and empathy for others, and for the welfare of the group.

STARTING OUT AT KINDY / HOW TO ENROL

The enrolment process starts with completion of our waitlist form, available on our website www.monavalekindergarten.com.au, or details can be taken over the phone or by email by our staff. Wherever possible, it is recommended that you make an appointment to meet mid-morning with Sonia (our Assistant Director), so that she can spend time with you and show you around.

Placing a child's name on the Waiting List does not guarantee availability or placement. Each application is dated, and offers of enrolment are made in chronological order. Availability of places is also determined by the provisions set out in the Childcare Benefit regulations, and priority is given to siblings in all classes, especially our youngest 2-3 year old class of Joeys.

Offers of enrolment for the following calendar year begin in July each year, when first round offers are sent out by email. Parents will have three weeks in which to reply if they wish to confirm a place, nominating days of attendance and a starting date. When you confirm a booking, a deposit of \$75.00 and a holding fee equivalent to two week's fees is requested to secure your required days, and hence preclude us from offering these days to another child.

Further letters of offer will be sent to subsequent wait-listed children, if vacancies remain. It is very important that you let us know if your contact details change at any time, so that you will receive our letter of offer.

Whilst the Centre tries at all times to be flexible, changes in the confirmed days of attendance can only occur if a vacancy on those days exist.

WHEN YOU START

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- * a kindy bag containing spare clothes (this is especially important in summer when we have lots of water play, and for children who are toilet-training), and a broad brimmed sunhat.
- * a soft bag or pillowcase containing a small bed sheet (a fitted cot sheet is perfect) or a light sleeping bag, and a security item (soft toy, blanket, etc) if required.
- * a photo for your child's locker. (This is not only helpful for identification of lockers by other children, but also provides some security from home).
- * a drink bottle (easily identifiable by your child, and clearly named).
- * an adequate supply of disposable nappies (or pull-ups) if required, plus a vinyl change mat and any special creams or wipes you would like us to use.

All items brought to kindy must be clearly named to prevent loss.

SETTLING IN:

Most children take between 6 and 8 weeks to settle in at kindy. Some children who are used to separating from their parents or who have existing friends within the centre may settle more quickly; others (particularly children who have never been left with non-family members, or who only attend one day a week) may take longer to adjust. Even the children who appear to settle in immediately may experience some instability a few weeks or months later. Getting to know the other children and making a friend is the catalyst to success, so the more frequently and regularly a child comes to kindy, the quicker it is to settle. Be assured that most children settle within minutes of mum or dad leaving and we will always text you to let you know how they are going.

There are some things that parents can do to make the transition to kindy easier. Firstly, always be positive about starting kindy and emphasise that it will be a fun and enjoyable experience with lots of new friends to play with and lots of exciting things to do. Give your child a purpose in coming to kindy, a focus for the day, e.g. make me a special painting for my office. Tell your child exactly what will happen, e.g. I'm going to work (or shopping, etc) but I'll be back to pick you up after afternoon tea. Use the child's time markers (like lunchtime, rest time, afternoon tea) to reassure them, and always stick to your promises. Sending along something familiar from home (a photo, keys, a handkerchief) can also be comforting in the early days.

ALWAYS SAY GOODBYE or '**SEE YOU THIS AFTERNOON**', no matter how tempting it seems to sneak away when your child is occupied or distracted. This experience could break your child's sense of trust and security and make them clingy, feeling that if they move away from you or become involved in play that they'll be left.

Our Staff are always available to assist your with any separation anxiety and it is equally important to be decisive when saying goodbye. Lingering can be further distressing, so when you are ready to go, leave quickly. Try to be loving, but firm. And **ring us as often as you wish** to check how your child is settling, even if that is every ten minutes...We will always call you if we are considered that your child hasn't settled.

Our staff are experienced, compassionate and very honest and will always tell you truthfully how well your child is coping, give advice or suggestions of different ways to approach the early days, and work with you to make sure kindy is a happy, positive and fun experience.

DAILY PROCEDURES / REMINDERS:

- Please call the front bell on arrival and a staff member will come out to greet you and accompany your child into the centre
- Please ensure your child is signed in each day when they arrive, and signed out upon departure, using the Xplor ipad.
- A daily photo-newsletter is emailed to all families every day for your information, detailing the day's activities and learning. Please ensure you accept your emailed 'invitation' to join Xplor / Playground to enable this
- If your child requires medication to be administered, please ask staff for a Medication Authority Form for each day that it is required and complete it, stating the type, amount and frequency of medication to be administered. If it requires fridge storage, please advise staff.
- Please check that you take home all of your belongings every day, and check for any lost property. Please also check your child's Art Folder each day for their art work.
- Please inform Staff if someone different is picking up your child or if your child is sick or going on holiday.
- Should any enrolment details change or your child has any current special needs (physical, emotional, cognitive, social) please let us know!

FEES AND SUBSIDIES

Our kindy fees are currently \$152.00 per day, but the Australian Government's Childcare Subsidy is available to all eligible families to reduce fees. This is an all-inclusive fee that covers all aspects of our service.

Fees are paid regularly, either fortnightly or monthly IN ADVANCE, to enable us to meet our ongoing financial obligations to staff, resources, insurances and necessities for the day to day running of the kindergarten. Fees are payable for each day of booked attendance regardless of sickness or absence with the exception of our 2-week closure period over Christmas and New Year. Any other holidays taken throughout the year are subject to fees.

Normal fees apply for Public Holidays, but a substitute day may be taken in lieu. Due to our restricted numbers, this is the only situation in which we can give make-up days, and you will need to check availability for the day that you choose.

We have received the highest possible level of accreditation under the National Quality Standards and have been rated as "exceeding regulations" across all 7 quality areas. We offer all parents using our service **CHILD CARE SUBSIDY** to reduce the cost of childcare. All Australian residents are eligible for these benefits, and all families using our service should at least register for a Customer Reference Number through Centrelink.

To be eligible for this subsidy, both parents need to meet the activity test as detailed below. This test is one of the three factors that will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy.

In two parent families both parents, unless exempt, must meet the activity test. In the case where both parents meet different steps of the activity test, the parent with the lowest entitlement will determine the hours of subsidised care for the child.

Step	Hours of activity* (as shown below) per week	Maximum number of hours of subsidy per child* per week
1	Minimum of 4 and up to 8 hours per week of 'activity'	18 hours (1.7 kindy days)
2	More than 8 hours and up to 24 hours of activity per week	36 hours (3 kindy days)
3	More than 24 hours of activity per week	50 hours (5 kindy days)

A broad range of activities will meet the activity test requirements, including:

- paid work, including leave
- being self employed
- doing unpaid work in the family business
- training courses for the purpose of improving the individual's work skills or employment prospects
- an approved course of education or study
- volunteering
- actively looking for work.
- paid parental leave, including maternity leave

Recognised activities can be combined to determine the maximum number of hours of subsidy.
Time taken to travel between the child care service and the parents/carers place of work, training, study, or other approved activity will also be included.

Activity hours do not need to coincide with child care hours. For example, an individual undertaking work on the weekends will be eligible for child care subsidy during the week

Receiving Child Care Subsidy is conditional upon you complying with the published “Allowable Absences” (copy attached). Each and every absence from kindergarten must be notified by you and documented by us, in our computerised records. A running tally of your child’s absences will be kept by us and by the Family Assistance Office.

It is important that you apply for Child Care Subsidy as early as possible, before your child starts at kindy, and that you provide us with both the Customer Reference Numbers (CRNs) that link you and your child to Centrelink. If you already have CRNs issued by Centrelink please provide that to us BUT ALSO ring Centrelink on 136150 to ensure that your details are activated on their system.

When you initially apply for Child Care Subsidy, Centrelink will ask for copies of your child’s Birth Certificate and Immunisation Statement. They will also need to verify your work / study status to determine how many hours of CCS you will receive. Being eligible for 18 hours of CCB, for example, means that your subsidy will be limited to 18 hours per week, regardless of the number of days that you are actually booked to attend.

Please remember when filling in your application that it is OUR OPERATING HOURS, NOT YOUR ACTUAL HOURS OF USAGE that Child Care Subsidy is based upon. The longer we are open, the more subsidy you can claim. We are open for 11 hours per day, so if your child attends for 2 days per week you are claiming for 22 hours, not the actual hours that your child is actually in care. This is important to receive the full CCS to which you are entitled.

PROCEDURES FOR PAYMENT OF KINDY FEES

We use DebitSuccess, in conjunction with our software provider QikKids, to provide a direct debit payment facility for our kindy families. The direct debit form is available under downloads on our website. DebitSuccess and QikKids are very reliable providers for childcare and make recording and reporting all CCS information easy. Statements and other reports are provided on an ongoing basis.



ABSENCE FROM KINDERGARTEN

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT ALL ABSENCES FROM KINDERGARTEN BE REPORTED TO THE CENTRE as early as is practical to do so.

We are required to record on our Sign-In Sheets and our Xplor/Playground software, any absence, and the reason for absence. You **MUST** notify us when your child is absent and let us know why.

There is a limit to the number of days that a child can be absent from kindergarten and still be eligible to receive their Childcare Subsidy. The parameters are quite broad and cater well for normal absenteeism.

Childcare Subsidy will still be paid for absences:

- up to a total of 42 separate days per financial year, for holidays, outings, sick days that are not certified by a Medical Certificate, public holidays, or for any other reason. (So, if your child attends kindy 2 days per week, they are entitled to 21 week's absence per year; if they attend 3 days per week, they are entitled to 14 week's absence per year, etc).
- without limit, if due to illness (of either the child, their parent, or a sibling) as long as a Medical Certificate is produced
- due to non-immunisation of the child, for the period of time that the child is excluded due to an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable infectious disease. (Medical Certificate required).
- without limit, due to a parent taking a rostered day off or working a rotating shift, provided that the parent provides a statement verifying this as a reason.
- without limit, due to a sibling's pupil free day from school or due to the temporary closure of the school (this needs to be recorded as the reason for absence on the form).
- without limit, due to a period of local emergency (as determined by the FAO). #without limit, due to a Court Order.

A register of all absences for each child is maintained by the kindergarten and notified to the Family Assistance Office on a weekly basis. Absences are also recorded on all Invoices/Statements and Receipts, or a tally can be provided for parents at any time.

