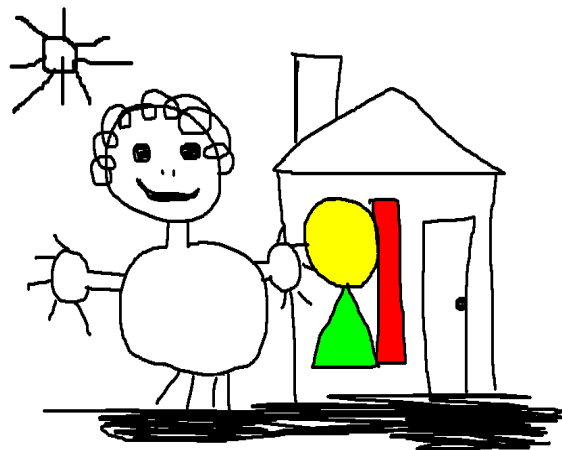


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Renmark Children's Centre

'Bright Start Bright Future'



Parent Handbook

RENMARK CHILDREN'S CENTRE INC.

Welcome

The Governing Council and Staff welcome you to the Renmark Children's Centre. We look forward to a long and happy partnership with your family.

Through our services including preschool and childcare we will provide a safe, warm and supportive learning environment that stimulates thinking and fosters growth.

We pride ourselves on being approachable and parents are welcome to visit at any time.

CONTENTS

Services.....	Pg. 4
What Do I Need To Bring?.....	Pg. 5
Fees	Pg. 5
Enrolling and Settling In.....	Pg. 6
Arrival & Departure.....	Pg. 6
Security and Collection.....	Pg. 7
Mandatory Reporting.....	Pg. 7
Programming – What Will My Child Do?.....	Pg. 7
Behaviour Guidance.....	Pg. 8
Excursions.....	Pg. 8
Celebrations.....	Pg. 8
Nutrition.....	Pg. 8
Sun Smart.....	Pg. 9
Emergency and Accident Procedures.....	Pg. 9
Medication, Illness & Immunisation.....	Pg. 9
Communication.....	Pg. 10
Staffing.....	Pg. 11
Centre Management.....	Pg. 11
Centre Policies.....	Pg. 11
Centre Philosophy.....	Pg. 11

SERVICES

PRESCHOOL

Children are entitled to access 4 terms (1 year) of government preschool in the year before they start school. This means that from 2023 children who turn 4 years old:

- before 1 May are eligible to start preschool at the beginning of the year.
- on 1 May to 31 October can commence preschool through the mid-year intake at the start of term 3 of that year.

Children who turn 4 years after 31 October will be eligible to commence preschool at the start of the following year.

Children are entitled to 4 terms of Preschool before starting school, usually consisting of 5 sessions per week (15 hours per week).

Session times are: Monday – Thursday	8.45am to 11.45am 12.30pm to 3.30pm
Friday	8.45am to 11.45am

CHILDCARE

We care for babies and children from 3 months to 5 years old in full time or part time care. Care for a baby under 3 months old will be considered depending on individual circumstances and negotiations with the Director.

Centre opening times are: Monday to Friday	7.00am to 6.00pm
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Session times are: Monday to Friday	7.00am to 12.45pm 12.45pm to 6.00pm
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Childcare is open for most of the year except weekends and Public Holidays. Any additional centre closure dates will be advised (e.g. over Christmas/New Year period).

CENTRE EMERGENCY CLOSURE

There may be occasions where it is necessary to close the centre due to a loss of power and/or water services or a significant emergency. The centre is unable to provide high quality education and care when these services have been impacted. Emergency closures are in line with the National Quality Standards and associated regulations. Parents/caregivers will be notified as soon as practical and advised of the necessary action.

BOOK LIBRARY

Our Library aims to promote the value and enjoyment of books in a young child's development by enabling parents to borrow good quality books for their children. Borrowing period is for two weeks. Book borrowing is available at no charge.

PLAYGROUP

Playgroup is great for families with children, from birth to four years, to play and learn together in our well-resourced centre.

Session time is: Friday 1.30pm to 3.00pm (school term only)

Cost: \$3 per child	\$5 per family
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SPECIAL SERVICES

Access to Special Needs Services for both children and their families is facilitated through the centre.

These services include speech pathology, psychology, behaviour management, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, dietitian, family support and other services in response to individual needs.

Access to Bilingual and Aboriginal Support staff is facilitated through the centre.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BRING

PRESCHOOL

- Named bag
- Change of clothes
- Broad-brimmed sun hat (no chord)
- Clothing that meets Sun Smart policy (shirts with collars, elbow length sleeves, longer style shorts and skirts)
- Sunscreen applied before coming to preschool
- Food as required – fresh fruit, vegetables or healthy alternative (refer to Nutrition Policy)
- Named drink container filled with water only

CHILDCARE

- Named bag
- Sufficient nappies (disposable or cloth) to last the stay. (at least 6 for full day care)
- Nappy rash cream (in original packaging and named)
- Complete change of clothes
- Comforters as required
- Broad-brimmed sun hat (no chord)
- Clothing that meets Sun Smart policy (shirts with collars, elbow length sleeves, longer style shorts and skirts)
- Sunscreen applied before coming to childcare
- Milk or water bottles (baby's own cup when required)

REMEMBER TO LABEL EVERYTHING WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME

FEES

PRESCHOOL FEES as at July 2023

\$75.00 per term for Preschool (5 sessions per week)

A \$3.00 Maintenance Levy (per child each term) applies to all families attending the centre.

\$10.00 Lunch Care (per day if required)

Parents are responsible for preschool fees and are required to sign and return the 'Preschool (Parent Contribution) Fees Policy'.

CHILDCARE FEES as at July 2023

Fees are determined by the Management Committee. They are for half day or full day sessions.

As we are a Community Based Centre (non-profit making and government subsidised) the fees collected are to pay staff salaries and to cover operating costs. ***Therefore it is vital that fees are paid regularly and on time.***

You may be eligible for Childcare Subsidy, from the Commonwealth Government and the Family Assistance Office, which is assistance to help with the costs of childcare. To enquire about or apply for this benefit call the Family Assistance Office.

Childcare fees (without benefit)

\$ 110.00	per day
\$ 63.00	for morning session
\$ 56.00	for afternoon session

A \$3.00 Maintenance Levy (per child each term) applies to all families attending the centre.

Breakfast is available until 7.30am. Children will be required to be signed in prior to 7.25am.

Parents are responsible for childcare fees (less any eligible benefit) and are required to sign and return the 'Fees Policy'.

ENROLLING AND SETTLING IN

We encourage all families wishing to enrol their child to visit the centre when the Director or delegate will show you around and explain all functions, routines and policies. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions and you are invited to spend time with your child in the centre and meet the staff before your child starts care or preschool.

It will help your child and the staff if you share your child's special routines, comforters, food preferences etc. when enrolling.

You must inform the Director when enrolling about any special needs, allergies, asthma etc. and the appropriate management strategies.

It is often an emotional strain for children and parents to adjust to a new environment and even if things appear to be going well, your child may feel uncertain for the first few days or weeks at the centre and also feel very tired. It may be necessary for you to stay for a short while at the start of sessions to establish a settling-in-routine. Staff will be very happy to help you during this phase and you are encouraged to phone the centre and speak with the staff caring for your child to check on progress or any other concerns that you may have.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

On arrival we ask you to bring your child to a staff member, who will directly care for your child, so that we can greet you. Please say "Goodbye" to your child even if this is difficult for you. It is important that your child knows that you are leaving and that you will return. We are here to help you should you need help at separation time.

If you are going to be late collecting your child please telephone the centre.
A late collection fee applies to childcare.

On arrival please:

- Help your child to place their belongings in their locker and their drink bottle in the tray.
- Make sure that all doors and gates are closed securely when entering.

On leaving we ask you to:

- Help your child collect their day's work and their belongings.
- Take your child to farewell a staff member.
- Make sure that all doors and gates are closed securely when leaving and please make sure that only your child goes with you.

For preschool and childcare please sign the attendance register, including time of arrival and time of departure. This is a requirement of the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services and failure to sign in and out will result in the withdrawal of Childcare Subsidy.

SECURITY AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

The safety of children in our centre is paramount. Only parents and authorised persons nominated on the enrolment form may collect your child, unless you have advised the staff beforehand, preferably in writing. If staff are unsure about an unfamiliar person collecting a child, identification such as a driver's license, may be requested.

CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO UNAUTHORISED PEOPLE

If at any time a Family Court Order is made, the Director must be advised immediately and be provided with a copy of any such order.

No information will be given to persons over the telephone if their identity cannot be established by staff.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Our centre is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. You are encouraged to come and talk to the Director about any concerns you may have as the needs and care of young children is paramount.

The staff at the centre are mandated notifiers and are obliged by law to report any suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect.

PROGRAMMING – WHAT WILL MY CHILD DO AT THE CENTRE?

Children grow and learn best in a safe and caring environment. We believe that children learn and develop skills best through play and staff will continually support and challenge children through interactions of the highest quality. Staff will use the routines, planned activities and child initiated play as the basis for learning experiences.

Staff will meet regularly to discuss and plan for each individual child and for their group. Developmental records are regularly updated for each child and staff will welcome the opportunity to discuss your child's progress. Staff will plan with parents to meet any special needs of the child, this may include referral to support services.

Routines include times for group play, individual play, eating, sleeping, toileting and cleaning up.

Planned activities will include times for problem solving, creative and imaginative play, music, stories, physical activities etc.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

We believe that children need guidance and assistance in a caring way to help them learn to become responsible for their own behaviour and realise the consequences of their actions.

Each child will be supported by appropriate and positive guidance with clear, consistent and realistic limits and rules.

We will discuss our policy with you when you enrol your child.

EXCURSIONS

Excursions and neighbourhood walks are an important way to extend children's experiences. They provide variety, fun and interesting opportunities for learning and are planned as part of the developmental program.

There are prescribed guidelines for excursions to ensure appropriate supervision for young children.

You will be asked to sign a general consent form for us to take your child on spontaneous local walks. If you do not want your child to participate on these walks, you must indicate this at enrolment.

You will be given details of any other excursions and your written consent must be given for each excursion.

CELEBRATIONS

Celebrations are an important part of the life of our children, families and community. They promote a sense of belonging and positive self esteem and can be celebrated in a variety of ways. Food is often a focus of cultural and family celebrations and has enormous learning potential. The centre embraces this but must always maintain a focus on the Nutrition Policy for health and safety reasons.

NUTRITION

Food provided is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (NHMRC 2003). All foods provided are prepared for individual age-groups, appropriate to their eating capabilities. All foods prepared and served take into consideration children's allergies. Our menus are varied, nutritious and culturally diverse. We encourage menu suggestions and feedback from parents. Tap water is the main drink offered to children and is available at all times.

Please refer to the Nutrition Policy.

We ask parents to provide:

for preschool

- A small snack as detailed in Nutrition Policy in a named container
- Named water bottle

for childcare

- Sterilised bottles and/or individual formula, either prepared or measured out portions and clearly labelled
- Named water bottle

Please ensure that all food/drink brought to the centre has been hygienically prepared and transported/stored.

Cooking is an important part of our program and will occur regularly in our centre, please notify staff of any food allergies, intolerances or restrictions. You will be asked to provide qualified medical evidence and direction on management of food allergies or intolerances.

SUN SMART

As part of our Sun Smart Policy, children and staff are required to wear a suitable hat and sunscreen whilst outside throughout the year.

We also ask that your child wears clothing that protects their shoulders. The Anti Cancer Council recommends sleeves to elbow length and a collar and longer style shorts and skirts.

Parents need to apply sunscreen prior to attendance. Sunscreen will be applied as required by staff. If your child requires specific sunscreen, you will need to supply it.

We encourage play in shady areas, especially between the hours of 11am and 3pm.

Children who forget their hats will be reminded to only play in shaded areas outside. Childcare children are supplied with a spare hat if needed.

EMERGENCY AND ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

Our centre has a detailed policy, which sets out procedures in the event of an accident or emergency. Evacuation/invacuation procedures are displayed in prominent places throughout the centre. Emergency drills are practised on a regular basis when children will be kept together in a designated and protected area.

It is most important that telephone numbers of parents and emergency contacts are kept up to date.

Any variation in contactability for you, or your emergency persons should be reported to a staff member.

MEDICATION, ILLNESS AND IMMUNISATION

The centre does not have facilities to look after sick children and if your child becomes unwell, we will inform you or your emergency contact, and will isolate your child until he/she is collected.

If a child is sick and unable to attend Preschool or Childcare, you are asked to telephone the centre and inform us about your child's illness.

We realise from time to time that it will be necessary to give your child medication.

All medications brought to the centre must be accompanied by a Medication Agreement.

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

Details of all medication to be given **MUST** be referred to a staff member and recorded in the presence of a staff member. This information will be checked by a staff member to ensure all details are clear.

Medicine will only be administered by an authorised staff member and will be checked by a second staff member prior to administration.

Analgesics (pain relief such as aspirin, paracetamol or ibuprofen) are NOT permitted in education and care services.

Parents are encouraged to immunise their children against all diseases appropriate to their age. A record of the child's current immunisation status will be kept at the centre. Children who are not immunised may be excluded from the centre during outbreaks of some infectious diseases in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council Exclusion Guidelines, even if a child is well. These guidelines are available on request.

The above information is referenced from the Department for Education, Health support planning: Medication management procedure (May 2019).

COMMUNICATION

The notice board in the foyer will be used for general information and a regular newsletter will be distributed to all families using the centre. We also use the app Seesaw to share photographs and information. Other information will be placed in the children's pockets.

If you have any concerns with or about any aspect of the centre or you would like to talk about your child's participation or development, you are encouraged to make a time to chat with the Director or other senior staff.

You are also able to write to the Governing Council or Management Committee – preferably through the Director.

We also like to hear about things we are doing well.

We treat all information regarding children and their families with the utmost confidentiality. Personal information of staff and families is not given out to anyone without prior consent.

STAFFING

The centre's most valuable resource is the staff team who have a range of qualifications and experience in working with young children. They love and respect children and in our warm and caring environment they are able to identify and respond to individual children's developmental and learning needs.

The required adult/child ratio will always be maintained.

Ongoing professional development for staff is actively encouraged, and regular relievers are employed whenever possible to provide continuity and stability for children, staff and families.

CENTRE MANAGEMENT

The centre has a combined Governing Council/Management Committee of parents from preschool and childcare together with interested community members, preschool and childcare staff representatives.

The combined centre Governing Council/Management Committee makes decisions about financial management, staffing, fundraising and centre facilities. It also has an important role in developing and reviewing the centre philosophy and policies.

No experience is necessary to join the Governing Council/Management Committee, just interest, enthusiasm and commitment. The Director or any member of the current council will be happy to give more information to any interested parties.

POLICIES

The centre policies are available in the Entry Foyer for parents and visitors to read or obtain a copy of.

PHILOSOPHY

Renmark Children's Centre is an integrated services site that is committed to the wellbeing, health, care and education of all children, families, staff and members of our community.