



EARLY LEARNING AND LONG DAY CARE CENTRE
61 Moore Park Road Paddington 2021
Tel 9361 4369
www.gumnutgardens.com.au

GUMNUT GARDENS PARENT HANDBOOK

THIS HANDBOOK HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF GUMNUT GARDENS AND OUR PHILOSOPHY AND POLICIES

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE OUR COMPLETE SET OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, PLEASE ASK OUR DIRECTOR, JENNY

WE ENCOURAGE ALL FAMILIES TO READ THE OUR COMPLETE SET OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

WE WILL TELL YOU ABOUT ANY MAJOR CHANGES TO OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. PARENTS' FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.



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WELCOME

Welcome to Gumnut Gardens Early Learning and Long Day Care Centre. We are dedicated to providing high quality care for children from 6 weeks to six years of age in a home like environment. We aim to provide an opportunity for each child to discover the world around them in a safe and nurturing environment. Gumnut Gardens aims to provide an eco friendly environment which focuses on sustainability, health and well being, with an emphasis on fresh and organic foods in our kitchen.

We enrol children for a minimum of two days per week. We encourage older children to attend three days a week in keeping with the Government's policy that all pre-school children should have access to a pre-school program for three days per week. We offer a pre-school program for children aged 3 to 6.

This is a guide for families about the operation of the Centre. Please read it carefully and keep it in a safe place so you can refer to it whenever necessary.

A copy of the Centre's Policies and Procedures is also available for your perusal at the office.

Gumnut Gardens is a privately owned centre, providing full time or part time care. The Director and Nominated Supervisor, Jenny Green, is responsible for the day to day running of the Centre and reports to Approved Providers Catherine Shand and Chris Kimber.

1. OPENING HOURS

This Centre is open from 7.30 am until 6.00 pm Monday to Friday (except for public holidays), 51 weeks per year. The Centre will be closed for approximately 4-5 days over Christmas/New Year and will re-open on the second business day in January.

2. FEES AND ABSENCES

Payment

Fees are payable two weeks in advance through the Ezidebit system, with the first debit to be made the week before your child's scheduled start date. You must pay for every day for which your child is enrolled, including sick days, public holidays and family holidays.

When your child's place at Gumnut Gardens has been confirmed you must give us a completed and signed Ezidebit form to cover:

- (i) a non-refundable enrolment fee of \$150 (covering your child's day-care belongings including bed sheets and blanket, drink cup, sun hat and two bags)
- (ii) a bond equal to two weeks' worth of fees (which is kept until your child ceases enrolment and is not refundable if you leaves within six months; and
- (iii) two weeks' worth of fees in advance.

The Director will let you know the exact amount you need to pay, based on the following

examples:

1. If you have a baby attending 3 days per week, you need to pay:	
2 weeks bond = 2 weeks x \$160 x 3 days =	\$ 960
Enrolment fee	<u>\$ 150</u>
	\$1110
The regular debit to your account using Esidebit will be:	
2 weeks fees in advance = 2 weeks x \$148 x 3 days =	\$ 960
2. If you have a toddler attending 2 days per week, you need to pay:	
2 weeks bond = 2 weeks x \$150 x 2 days =	\$ 600
Enrolment fee	<u>\$ 150</u>
	\$ 750
The regular debit to your account using Esidebit will be:	
2 weeks fees in advance = 2 weeks x \$150 x 2 days =	\$ 600

You must give us at least four weeks written notice if you want to decrease your child's days or withdraw them from the Centre, otherwise four weeks fees will be charged.

Fees are reviewed approximately annually. You will be notified in writing of any increases.

Late Fees

A late fee will be charged after the second event of being late to collect your child. If you are genuinely delayed, please call and let us know. If you know you will be late, you should ask one of your emergency contacts to collect your child. If your child is not collected within 15 minutes of the Centre's closing time, we will ask one of your emergency contacts to collect your child. If they do not collect your child within 1 hour of closing time, DEC's will be notified and appropriate arrangements will be made for the care of your child.

The late fee is \$25.00 per child for every fifteen minutes or part thereof you are late. This covers the cost of overtime and the inconvenience for staff who may need to collect their own children or attend study courses or medical appointments.

Absences

Please tell us as early as possible in the morning if your child will not be attending the Centre due to illness and tell us as far in advance as possible about any planned absences. Fees are payable for days when your child does not attend, including absences for illness, holidays or any other reason.

Overdue and Late Fees

A fee reminder will be sent if fees are overdue. A request for payment of late fees will be issued if you are late to collect your child. You can speak to the Director regarding payment of overdue and late fees. Continuing overdue fees or repeated incurring of late fees may jeopardise your child's place in the Centre. An administration fee may be charged on overdue fees.

If a cheque payment is dishonoured, we may charge you a fee which reflects our bank costs relating to the dishonoured cheque.

3. HUBWORKS SYSTEM AND GOVERNMENT FEE RELIEF

HubWorks is the system we use to interface with the Federal Government for calculation of government fee relief for child care fees. You will be given a user name and password to allow you to register on the HubWorks system. This will let you access records of your child's enrolment, attendances, fees etc. When you have entered your family information into Hubworks, don't forget to "save" it and send an email to director@gumnutgardens.com.au confirming you have registered in Hubworks.

Families who attend Gumnut Gardens may be eligible for the Child Care Benefit and/or a Childcare Tax Rebate. Information on the Child Care Benefit can be obtained from the Director or by contacting the Family Assistance Office.

Fee relief applies only to daily fees. Late fees, cancellation fees or excursion fees do not attract fee relief. Under current government policy, you are allowed 42 days of absences for illness and holidays (including public holidays) for which fee relief will still be available.

4. ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN

To enrol your child at our Centre, you will need to complete an *Enrolment Form* or, if a place is not immediately available, a *Wait List Application Form* in which case, your child will be placed on our wait list until the days you require are available.

Pre-admission appointments and orientation are conducted before your child commences at the Centre. This enables you and your child to view the Centre, meet the staff, familiarise yourselves with the new environment, fill out the *Child's Developments and Routines Form* and any other necessary paper work.

Once your child is enrolled, it is vital that you keep us informed of any changes in:

- your child's development and routines (eg sleep routines, toilet training, allergies and general ailments)
- major changes in your child's life such as moving house, expected arrival of a new sibling, death of a close family member, friend or pet, change of job for a parent)
- either parent's phone numbers
- either parent's place of employment
- either parent's study details
- emergency contacts
- persons authorised to collect your child
- custody or access arrangements (original legal documents MUST be sighted by the Director and copied for your child's file).

Re enrolments for current children wishing to attend for the next year, will usually commence in August/September.

5. PRIORITY OF ACCESS TO CARE

Consistent with the *Education and Care National Regulations 2011* we prioritize access to care as follows:-

1. Children at risk from abuse or neglect; and

2. Workforce participants where a single parent or both parents are employed, seeking employment or studying/ training for future employment.
3. Children or parents with a continuing disability or incapacity.
4. Parents at home with more than one child below school age
5. Single parents at home.

Please note that a family's enrolment may cease for a PRIORITY 1 child under the instruction of the Department of Education and Communities.

CANCELLATION/CHANGE OF ENROLMENT

To change your child's regular attendance days by decreasing their days, at least four weeks' notice must be given, otherwise four weeks full fees will be charged. Any increase in your child's days will depend on a place being available.

Permanent cancellation of your child's regular booking must be given in writing to the Director. This must be received not less than four weeks prior to your child's last day of attendance at the Centre, otherwise fees will be charged,.

6. STAFFING

Director and Nominated Supervisor

The Director is responsible for the day to day operation of the Centre, which includes education programs and administration.

Staff

At Gumnut Gardens, the selection of our staff is of the utmost importance. Staff are chosen because of their ability to care for children, which is made up of their educational qualifications, sympathy to the welfare of children, knowledge and understanding of children and families, experience in child care, ability to care for and supervise children, confidence, maturity and enthusiasm. All staff are approved by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, passing a NSW Working With Children's Check before employment. Staff members participate in regular staff meetings and throughout the year attend in-service training sessions to further their development and knowledge of child care issues.

Consistent and trusting relationships are encouraged between staff, parents and children. Our commitment to continuity of care is given by a policy of employing permanent staff members and by maintaining a current and skilled list of casual workers for relief duties.

Staff have child-free time to write their observations and curriculums. We encourage staff to undertake further study or alternative professional development to support their knowledge and assist with curriculum development.

Qualifications and Staffing Levels

Qualifications held by the staff comply with the Children's Services Regulation. At Gumnut Gardens we encourage lifelong learning and encourage our staff to upgrade their qualifications by further study.

Staff levels at the Centre will exceed the Children's Services Regulation requirements. Extra staff will be employed to assist at peak times and cover staff breaks. Volunteers and students are not counted as staff when working out child-staff ratios.

Staff names, qualifications and experience are listed in the foyer.

Students & Volunteers in the Centre

From time to time you may see additional people in the Centre. They may be university or TAFE students, local high school students doing work experience, parents or volunteers helping out at the Centre.

Students and volunteers are always fully supervised by the Centre staff. Students and volunteers are NEVER left in charge of children.

7. CURRICULUM

Each team observes the development of the children in their care, plans appropriate programs for individual children, small groups and the group as a whole and covers all aspects of a child's development – social/ emotional, physical, intellectual and language.

We have a school readiness program to prepare preschoolers for their transition to “big school”.

8. PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are welcome at all times to visit and participate in the curriculum. Your attendance can make the curriculum richer for all children at the Centre.

You are welcome to visit your child during the day, to come and breast feed or bottle feed your baby during your lunch hour and share a "cuppa" at the beginning or end of your day. Tea and coffee are available in the staff area. Hot drinks are NOT permitted in the children's areas.

We welcome you to share any special talents with the children, for example sewing, knitting, crocheting, woodwork, playing musical instruments, singing, art/craft skills, painting and sharing your cultural heritage.

You can also assist by bringing in materials such as scrap paper, fabrics and clean boxes for use in our programs and by attending educational and social parent evenings.

9. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Please read the Arrival and Departure Policy, which is summarised here.

As a matter of safety, children must be brought into the Centre and collected from the Centre by an adult, **NOT DROPPED AT THE DOOR**. The adult must sign (a full signature is required) the child "in" and "out" and notify the Group Leader that the child has arrived or is departing.

For security reasons:

- do NOT give the security access code to anyone (if a new person is authorised to drop off or collect your child they must identify themselves to staff at the gate or the door);

- do not allow any child other than your own child (who has been signed out) to leave the Centre with you;
- do not let children swing on the gates.

During the day, "sign in/out" sheets are located in the same activity areas as the children. These sheets are used for **FIRE DRILLS**, to ensure that all children are removed from the building. **AS A MATTER OF SAFETY YOU MUST ALWAYS SIGN YOUR CHILD IN AND OUT ON THE SIGN IN/OUT SHEET.**

No child is allowed to leave the Centre with a person other than their parent/guardian, unless:

- You have informed the Group Leader or Director and given staff a description of the person;
- That person is authorised on the Enrolment Form to collect your child; and
- The authorised person shows the Centre staff identification that contains a photo and full name.

If we cannot confirm a person's right to take your child from the Centre, access will be denied and the parents or emergency contacts will be notified.

PLEASE KEEP THE LIST OF PEOPLE AUTHORISED TO COLLECT YOUR CHILD UP TO DATE. If a child is not collected and staff have been unable to contact the parent/s or emergency contacts, the local police, DECS or crisis care will be contacted. Contact addresses and phone contacts may be given to them for their use.

10. WHAT TO SEND IN YOUR CHILD'S BAG

- at least three changes of clothes suitable for the season and ample spare underclothing;
- centre provided sheets and blanket (these will be kept at the Centre and sent home on a regular basis or when needed to be washed at home. They will need returned to the Centre);
- if your child is being toilet trained, at least five spare sets of undies and pants or skirts;
- if your baby needs a dummy, bring at least three (one to be kept at the Centre);
- if asked by the staff, a favourite book or something for a specific study module.

ALL ITEMS SHOULD BE LABELLED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME OR INITIALS

If your baby is bottle fed, enough **CLEARLY LABELLED** bottles of expressed breast milk or freshly prepared formula for the day and place this in the kitchen fridge when you arrive. Unused bottles will be emptied and returned to you at the end of the day for cleaning/sterilising at home.

Please do **NOT** send:

- food (other than expressed breast milk or prepared formula for babies); or
- toys or other personal items other than one comfort toy for sleeping if needed.

Sufficient toys, books and other equipment are provided by the Centre for your child to play with. It is difficult if children bring their own toys to as all toys are shared with the group and conflicts can arise.

We are not responsible for the safekeeping loss or breakage of children's personal toys or books.

11. CLOTHING

Please dress your children in old or cheap clothes to enable uninhibited play and keep the designer outfits for home and family outings. Young children enjoy and need "messy" play with paint, clay, sand, water and mud. Staff will take care to see that aprons are worn by children, where appropriate. However, we cannot guarantee that clothes will remain clean and undamaged.

For safety, shoes or covered sandals with a strap must be worn outdoors, except for sandpit or some water play. Thongs and "croc" style shoes are not permitted. Clearly mark all clothing and shoes belonging to your child and replace the name if it fades in the wash. Marking your child's name or initials on the maker's label with permanent pen is sufficient – you do not need to buy clothing labels.

Parents are asked to apply sunscreen to their child on arrival at the Centre. SPF30+ low allergenic sunscreen will be provided by the Centre and applied by staff during the day before children have their afternoon outdoor sessions in accordance with Sunsmart policies.

12. EQUALITY OF ACCESS AND ANTI DISCRIMINATION

Our Centre Policy is to accept and enrol all children from the waiting list, according to the priorities set out above under Priority of Access.

When children enter a childcare setting, they bring a rich variety of cultural and social backgrounds and experiences. The Centre recognises the individuality of each child and family and observes a policy of acceptance, regardless of their:

- gender
- family composition
- cultural background
- religious beliefs and customs
- abilities and disabilities.

On enrolment, children with additional needs will be individually assessed so that we can call on outside assistance as necessary to meet their needs. In all cases, we will work closely with parents and other support organisations.

13. INCURSIONS AND SHOWS

We organise shows and displays within the Centre to extend children's interests in certain areas, for example puppet shows and farm animals. We will inform you prior to these events, so that you may also attend if you wish. There will sometimes be a small charge for these events.

14. PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILMS

We take photographs and short films of the children doing various activities and on special occasions. These will be for display at the Centre and for inclusion in your child's portfolio. Please notify the Director if you **DO NOT** wish your child to be photographed or filmed.

15. NOTICEBOARDS

Noticeboards are placed at convenient locations throughout the Centre. Please read the notices and keep up to date with what is happening.

16. LOST PROPERTY

Please label all your child's belongings. Clothes or toys unclaimed after one month become the property of the Centre and will be disposed of as decided by the staff.

17. RECYCLING

This Centre is environmentally friendly and we recycle wherever possible. Please send in CLEAN plastic containers, cardboard boxes, fabrics, egg cartons, wool, ribbons, etc., as they will be put to good use in craft activities. We encourage children to look after the Centre's environment and help them to appreciate the benefits of keeping our world pollution free.

We plan to compost vegetable waste matter and to use the compost on our gardens and for growing herbs and vegetables to use in our kitchen.

18. SMOKE FREE ZONE

Under **NO** circumstances will smoking be permitted inside or outside the Centre.

19. SETTLING IN

"Settling in" is traumatic for some parents and children. Your child may be confused by new surroundings, new routines and profusion of playmates. Children are very adaptable. It may take from one day to over a month for them to accept this change in their lives, but it is rare to find a child who does not "settle in" to day care.

Parents may take longer to accept leaving their child in the care of others. It is not unusual to see a child happily settling down to the morning's activities, while the parent leaves the Centre feeling apprehensive.

Establishing a good relationship with the Centre staff - especially your child's primary caregivers - is essential to "settling in". Discuss your worries, everyday things your child does/does not like, his/her behaviour and sleeping patterns, and your child's day at the Centre. Try to collect your child a little earlier some days, especially when just settling in. Stay and watch them at play, to help put your mind at ease.

Sometimes a child can be reluctant to come to the Centre in the morning. This can be for a variety of reasons, much as it can happen for adults going to work - a greater attraction at home, lots of changes going on in their life, feeling unwell or tired, not wanting to leave what they were doing at home and difficulty with peers. If this occurs, please consult with staff.

Often children's ways of protesting are very dramatic, leaving parents feeling emotionally drained when they leave the Centre. **You can ring any time to be re-assured of your child's well being.** In most instances, protests are short lived and have ceased by the time the parents are out of sight, so please take heart.

Please do not extend the separation period - leave the moment you have said goodbye.

As it takes some children longer than others to settle into unfamiliar settings, parents need to persevere with bringing their child to the Centre and make it as positive an experience as possible. If a child is too distressed, staff will discuss strategies with the family.

20. REST TIME

Rest time is an essential part of the daily program. It allows children a quiet time to restore their energy after a busy morning. Babies will be given sleep time to fit in with their routines **which** for older babies will, as far as possible, match the Centre's routines for babies' sleep, feed and play. Older children who do not sleep will be encouraged to rest quietly for a short time and then allowed to do quiet activities, such as reading books, drawing or completing puzzles.

A child who has learnt to relax will become an adult who is able to deal more adequately with the stress and strain of normal living.

21. NUTRITION

Nutrition education is an important part of our Centre's philosophy. The menu will have a focus on organic produce, and food that is low or free of preservatives and sugar.

Meal times will be planned to be enjoyable, social events. Staff will sit with the children to encourage positive interactions and promote socially acceptable behaviour (e.g. manners, sharing, waiting turns).

Cooking activities will be planned with the children to allow them to explore textures, tastes, mixing and to develop maths and science concepts.

We are a NUT FREE AND SESAME SEED FREE Centre. You must not bring any food containing nuts or sesame seeds to the Centre (i.e. packed in your child's bag for a later snack).

22. HEALTH

Immunisation

There are many vaccine-preventable diseases. Immunisation is a powerful tool in improving the health standards within the community. On enrolment, you will be required to give us details of your child's medical records, a copy of your child's immunisation history statement issued by Medicare (the original must be sighted by the Director), allergies and any special needs. It is vital that we have accurate health and medical information and that you tell the Centre staff of any changes.

Illnesses

If a child is ill a staff member will complete an *Illness Form*, which a parent must sign.

Children in group care have a higher risk of contracting infectious diseases such as colds, gastroenteritis, diarrhoea, measles, chicken pox and mumps. Parents and children are asked to wash their hands on arrival at the Centre to drop off or pick up their children. Staff will do everything possible to minimise the spread of infection within the Centre. Disposable gloves are worn when dealing with bodily fluids. Rooms and surfaces are cleaned regularly.

If your child displays signs of infection and/or has a temperature over 38 C, they will be excluded from the Centre until well. If your child is already at the Centre, you will be contacted to take them home.

A copy of the 'Recommended Minimum Periods of Exclusion from School, Pre-school and Childcare Centres for Cases of and Contact with Infectious Diseases' is available at the Centre. To minimise the risk of infecting other children and staff, you may be asked to provide a Doctor's clearance before your child returns to the Centre after an infectious illness.

Having a sick child can inconvenience parents, but a sick child needs individual care at home. **IT IS SUGGESTED THAT YOU HAVE ALTERNATE CARE ARRANGEMENTS TO COVER THE TIMES WHEN A CHILD IS ILL.**

Medication

MEDICINES MUST NOT BE LEFT IN YOUR CHILD'S BAG.

All medication must show your child's name, a recent date, doctor's name and dosage instructions; and must be in the original container in which it was dispensed.

Other medication including nebulisers, herbal remedies, non-prescription medicines (including tablets, syrups and creams) will also only be given if the following conditions are met:

1. The medication is to be written up DAILY in the medication folder and the medicine given to a staff member.

Medication belonging to one child will not be given to another child including a sibling.

If a nebuliser is used, parents **MUST** instruct staff of their usage.

If a child is known to have severe asthmatic attacks or severe allergic reactions, then you must supply appropriate medication and equipment to be kept at the Centre at all times. Parents will be requested to fill in an "Emergency Medication - Plan of Action" form and to supply a Doctor's letter stating the emergency medication to be given.

ALL CARE WILL BE TAKEN WITH ALL MEDICATIONS BUT NO RESPONSIBILITY CAN BE ACCEPTED FOR REACTIONS THAT MAY OCCUR.

Accidents

While every care is taken to ensure that serious injury does not occur, from time to time children have accidents. We will endeavour to contact the parent should an accident occur, so it is a MATTER OF EXTREME IMPORTANCE that we have an up to date contact phone number, at all times.

If an accident occurs we will seek emergency medical attention, if necessary and a staff member will complete an *Accident Form*, which a parent will be requested to sign when they collect their child.

The Centre does not have ambulance cover. Parents are encouraged to have this type of cover for their children as you will be required to pay the cost of any ambulance transportation for your child.

23. FEEDBACK

We are constantly updating and improving the routines and procedures within the Centre and we greatly appreciate any input from parents. If you have any concerns, queries or suggestions, we would like you to voice them verbally or in writing in an email to director@gumnutgardens.com.au

If you have queries to do with the running of your child's Group, please speak to the Group Leader or other member of their team. If you feel you are unable to speak to a staff member, please see the Director. All formal concerns, queries and suggestions are noted and passed onto the Director and to the Approved Providers of the Centre.

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of a concern or query, you may submit your thoughts in writing to the Director or to the Approved Providers Chris Kimber and Catherine Shand.

24. A FEW WORDS FROM YOUR CHILD

1. Please plan the beginning of the day so I don't have to be rushed to the Centre, or I may get confused or worried.
2. Don't push me in the door and run - it makes me feel unhappy, as if you want to get rid of me. Come in to look with me at all the interesting things I can do and tell my teacher about how I am, especially if I am a bit tired or upset or have some special news to share.
3. Please don't slip away without saying goodbye, or I will be afraid that you may leave me for good.
4. Praise my work efforts. It is the process, not the product, which is important.
5. Please don't talk about me when I'm in earshot. I don't miss much and worry about what I hear.
6. When you come for me, please don't ask my teacher if I've been good. I try to do as I am asked, but sometimes things go wrong and I don't want to be reminded of my mistakes.
7. Please arrive to collect me with enough time to look at what I have done during the day, read my daily diary and talk to my teachers about how my day was.
8. Remember that it makes me feel good if you show that you are pleased to see me and ask me about my day.

REVIEW

This handbook will be reviewed annually by management and employees.

Reviewed: Reviewed: 3 March 2017

Date for next review: September 2017