



LITTLE CHESTNUT FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICE



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Our mission

Our mission, in line with the National Quality Framework and the Child Safe Standards, is to provide the best possible approaches and environment for young children, to encourage, support and navigate them to make the most of their early years. This way we can contribute the upcoming generations to have a decent start for life.

Our values

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Learning and Enrichment
- Provide family day care service on areas where there has been a lack of it
- Sustainable practices: digital record taking, environmental cleaning products, recycled material for activities
- Support, trainings, recognition for educators

Our community

- Connectedness
- Responsiveness
- Trust

In embracing equal learning opportunities we create environments that are understanding and empowering for each child and their family.

Your child's early years

We partner with you to provide a safe, quality, family-centred learning environment where every child is respected and nurtured. We will continually develop our skills and explore new ways to enrich your child's early learning experience.

We respect parents as a child's primary educator and we will work alongside you on your child's early learning journey.

We are looking forward to sharing your child's early learning experience and working with you in the years ahead.

Kind regards,



Melinda Fury
Approved Provider

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

At Little Chestnut Family Day Care we handle each and every child as huge potential to become as smart, skilled and confident as possible because the early childhood years is the most momentous and spectacular time of development in life. Therefore these years give us foundation for the rest of our lives on cognitive, behavioural and many other ways. As we believe that children learn through play therefore we will provide age-appropriate opportunities for children to explore, discover, create and imagine.

At the same time we believe that all children grow, interact and learn differently and it is our job to cater for them according to their specific learning and development needs.

We will do this by providing our educators with professional development training in presenting a curriculum that best suits to the interest of each and every child.

We believe in respecting and responding to each and every child as a capable and competent individual. The relationship we have with children is very important to us and we express this by finding out as much as we can about each and every child.

We believe that parents are the child's first and most important teachers and our service values their input with the highest level of respect. Children learn best when parents are involved in their educational program because this will not only promote a great partnership between the parent, the educator and our service, but also encourage a strong parent-child relationship.

Above all we promote safety and wellbeing of children at all times by several approaches: through leadership, by high level of skills and knowledge of our educators, by providing culturally and physically safe environment, by emphasising equity and children's rights and most of all by working along continuously updated policies and procedures.

As a reflection of all the above, our mission, in line with the National Quality Framework and the Child Safe Standards, is to provide the best possible approaches and environment for young children, to encourage, support and navigate them to make the most of their early years. This way we can contribute the upcoming generations to have a decent start for life.



Building quality early childhood services throughout Melbourne

The National Quality Framework (NQF) for early childhood education and care services came into effect on 1 January, 2012 includes:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act,
- a uniform national regulatory system: Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011,
- National Quality Standards (NQS),
- a new Rating System to complement the NQS,
- a new national body- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

The NQF provides a basis for all early childhood education and care services to be assessed on equal measures and will encourage a higher level of quality outcomes for Australian children. Parents and families will also be able to view how your local service providers are performing through this assessment processes .

Licensed Children's Services are required to undertake a self-assessment and develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). In Victoria, the Department of Education is the regulatory authority. The QIP is used to inform the assessment and rating process and should be implemented by the service to continually improve the service and outcomes for the children (and their families) using the service.

Offering a consistent and uncompromising level of quality in Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service is one of the key outcomes we seek to achieve. We invite families to provide feedback and contribute to our continual quality assessment and improvement.

The importance of play: The Early Years Learning Framework

The National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF):

- "Belonging, Being, Becoming" for young children
- "My Time Our Place" (MTOP) School Age Framework.

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) were developed in 2009 and provide the foundation for professional practice for early childhood professionals working with children from birth to 8 years.

The frameworks describe the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning, with a strong emphasis on play-based learning. Play actively contributes to young children's learning, providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The EYLF also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

The Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning from birth to five years and through the transitions to school. It communicates these expectations through the following five Learning Outcomes:

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

Play provides the means for children to organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations. Children play to learn, not learn to play.

Play is a context for learning that:

- Allows for the expression of personality and uniqueness;
- Enables children to practice what they see and hear in the world around them;
- Assists children to develop relationships and concepts, that are essential stepping stones to the more formal reading and writing learning that happens at school;
- Stimulates a sense of wellbeing;
- All of our educators use these frameworks to guide their decisions around the play-based learning programs that are provided to children in our services. Our programs are based on the individual needs and interests of the children.





Family Day Care Educators

Qualifications

Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service Educators have a variety of accredited early childhood qualifications and experience that meet the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2012 and National Regulations 2011. All educators hold a current police records check and a Working with Children Check. Our educators use their professional knowledge in combination with an understanding of each child's skills and development to provide a rich learning environment.

Number of children in care at any one time

Educators may care for up to a maximum of 7 children, between the ages of birth and 13 years. No more than 4 preschool children may be in care, including the educator's own, at any one time. No more than one (1) child under 12 months of age, except in the case of twins.

The number of children to be cared for is determined by the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service Field Coordinator based on the capabilities of the educator and the physical space available in the home. This decision is based on and in accordance with the National Standard for Family Day Care.

Educator Assistant

At times regular educators may be absent for a variety of reasons such as illness, professional development or personal circumstances. Educator assistants are engaged at these times and Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service endeavours to employ familiar educators whenever possible.

The role of Family Day Care Educators

Educators are experienced in meeting young children's needs. They are professional, caring people who set up their home environments appropriately in order to encourage and stimulate learning.

They spend time making observations of each child's interests, behaviour, and development and plan a program that will meet the individual child's needs.

More importantly, they are professionals, providing a warm and loving alternative for part of your child's day, with one main goal – to provide good, consistent, quality care for your child and to complement the family unit in all possible ways.

If you have anything at all you wish to discuss with your educator in regard to the program or your child, they are only too willing to make time available.

Please remember that in order to provide best care possible we need to have a good understanding of your child. This means taking the time to talk to your educator about any changes or experiences that are, or will be happening in your child's life

When there is shared knowledge there is mutual growth and understanding in ways that benefits the child.

Concerns/grievances

Parents are encouraged at all times to discuss with educators any concerns or queries that they have about their child's development and the operations, programs and procedures of the service. If parents at anytime have a complaint or concern with the service, it is recommended that you discuss this with the educator member involved, or the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service Coordinator.

A copy of our Complaints and Grievancies Policy is available from:

- Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service Coordination Unit
- Your educator.

Handy hints for families



Here is some information that we feel families will find useful to prepare their child for family day care.

Think of any information about your child that you would like to share with the educators – interests, cultural background, fears and security items, special routines, etc.

Enrolments are completed at the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service office by making an appointment prior to your child attending care. (This is a regulatory requirement).

Written permission is required before any photographs can be taken or used for promotional purposes.

Our environments are smoke- free, inside and out.

What to bring – a checklist

- A complete change of clothing in your child's bag or backpack, including extras if your child is in the process of becoming independent in their toileting
- Nappies and wet wipes (also nappy rash cream if needed)
- From September 1 to 30 April – a wide brimmed sun hat and 50+ sunscreen
Sunglasses are also recommended for outdoors
- In Winter – a warm coat
- Suitable footwear for playing and climbing (thongs and Crocs are not recommended)
- Bring your child's meal for the day while they are in Family Day Care

- It is important to provide meals for your child that reflects a well balanced nutritional menu that is based on the 'five food groups' and the Australian Dietary Guidelines
- Please notify your educator if your child is on a special diet, or cannot eat certain foods due to cultural differences, as sometimes children may bring food to share for special occasions, for example birthday
- Breakfast, morning tea and afternoon tea can be included in the daily service
- Educators promote independence. This encourages self-feeding, allowing the children to decide what they like/dislike and how much they want to eat
- If your child would like to bring a favourite toy from home, please bring it and discuss this with your educator upon arrival (Educators cannot accept responsibility for toys brought from home)
- Within the meal routines, a drink bottle filled with fresh water. We will top it up as required

How you can get involved

- Talk to our educators, share your ideas and discuss your child's needs
- Providing regular feedback and involvement in policy review
- Consider and discuss other ways to be involved and suggest your ideas
- If you have a compliment or concern, please discuss this with your educator or contact the Family Day Care Coordination Unit



What to do on arrival



- Please sign in and out on the HubWorks software program's timesheet on the Ipad. This is a document that must be completed by the person who delivers or collects your child from our service.
- The information in the timesheet is required by our regulatory body and is used by staff to conduct regular checks of attendance throughout the day, maintain correct staff and child ratios and support evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure the educator is present at the time of drop off. Do not leave your child with the educator's family members.
- Please close the front door behind you as you enter and leave the premises to ensure the safety of all children in care.
- Consider what information you would like to share with our educators about what has happened at home prior to attending – any information that may help the educators to respond to your child's need.
- Some children may become anxious when you leave them, so please discuss this with staff to develop the best strategy for handling this situation. In most cases, the child will become calm shortly after you leave. If not, we will notify you.
- Please make sure you arrive on time to collect your child, in the nominated and agreed times.
- Children may only be collected by parents/guardians or persons authorised on the enrolment form. If another person is collecting your child, it is necessary to provide written authorisation.

- If someone other than the regular person is collecting your child, please inform your child and the educator. Educator will ask to see photo ID, such as a driver's license.
- The person who collects your child must be 18 years old or over.
- If you are running late, please notify your educator as soon as possible. Please note a late fee will apply.
- If a child is not collected on time and we have not heard from you, we follow this procedure:
 - Educator will attempt to contact the parents/ guardians and continue to do so at regular intervals
 - If parents/guardians are unavailable, educators will attempt to contact authorised persons listed on the child's enrolment form
 - Coordination Unit will be notified to decide on further action.

Orientation of children

Educators understand that parents may feel anxious about leaving their children in care. Children can sense this anxiety and may feel insecure. We believe that a sensitive, and where possible, gradual approach to orientating families to Family Day Care enables parents and children to feel secure. Educators will support parents by:

- Providing written and verbal information about the service;
- Listening to concerns and providing reassurance;
- Encouraging them to visit their environment/home with their children informally – this is a good opportunity for parents to get know their chosen Educator and for children to become familiar with this environment;
- Encouraging them to call in, phone or email their Educator as often as required;
- Take some time to support your child during the transition from home to our care.



When we are open and closed

Operating hours and session times

Please check with your educator to organise your booking days and as per your parent/educator agreement. Little Chestnut Family Day Cares are closed for Public holidays. If care is required on Public Holidays speak directly to your child's educator in advance. Coordination Unit hours are 9.00am to 5.00pm.

Sick/annual leave

Please note that normal fees apply to any sick leave your child may have or when parents have annual leave and do not bring their child into Family Day Care If your educator is unavailable, fees do not apply.

Excursions and incursions

At times the educator may arrange excursions, such as a visit to the fire station, library, etc. Written authorisation from parents/ guardians will be required prior to the excursion. Parents will be asked to assist on these excursions to provide additional supervision. Routine Outings/Risk Assessment forms are completed by the educator before any outing Educators may also arrange incursions where specialised visitors provide educational and entertaining programs at playgroup, e g theatre groups, museum displays.

Excursions and incursions may incur an additional cost to families. Your educator will provide full details at the time of excursion/incursion



The importance of safety



Building and playground safety

Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service educators conduct daily safety inspections of the Family Day Care home and outside play area. Any hazards are removed or made inaccessible to children. The Australian Standards for Playgrounds are used to guide all outdoor equipment purchases.

Emergency procedures and equipment

First aid kits are located at each educator's home and are regularly maintained. Emergency evacuation procedures are clearly displayed at each educator's home. Educators are required to regularly practice emergency evacuation procedures with the children. During these practice drills children do not leave the licensed premises.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, the procedures outlined in the displayed information will be followed. Parents will be notified as soon as practicable to collect their child.

Child protection

Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service is an organisation and our early childhood educators, employees and volunteers have a duty of care and ethical responsibility to protect children from any form of physical or emotional abuse, risk of abuse, and/ or neglect.

A referral to Child FIRST or a report to Child Protection will be made whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child has, or is likely to suffer harm or the child's safety and/or wellbeing is at risk.

Actions and decisions taken under this policy will consider the importance of maintaining respectful and collaborative relationships with children and their family. Our early childhood educators, employees and volunteers have a duty of care and ethical responsibility to protect children from any form of physical or emotional abuse, risk of abuse, and/ or neglect.

Fee Information

Parents will be provided with fee information once an appointment has been made with the educator of their choice.

- Please note fees will apply for all booked days including days of non-attendance, e.g. for illness, holidays, etc
- Please note fees apply for all public holidays

Fee bond

Some educators may require a refundable fee bond before your child commences care to hold your child's place.

Fee payment

Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service has set fees for care services. Fee Schedule Agreement will detail the amounts. All fees are to be paid to the Service at the end of each fortnight.

Payment method

Payments can be made by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) method as discussed with the Service.

Allowable absences

Childcare Benefit is paid for up to 42 absence days for each child per financial year without the need to provide documentation such as medical certificates

Absences exceeding the first 42 days will only be paid for 'additional absences' if parent/guardians provide the following documentation and evidence, such as certificates for:

- Illness of a child, parent or sibling supported by a medical certificate
- Non-immunisation
- Rostered days off
- Rotating shift work
- Temporary closure of a service
- Periods of local emergency
- Exceptional circumstances



Your child's health and wellbeing

Your child's health and wellbeing is of particular importance to us. Please refer to the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service *Policies and Procedures* available at your Family Day Care home for details of health policies and procedures. Below are a few tips that you may find helpful:

Medication

If your child requires medication while at the Family Day Care, please inform your educator of the administration requirements and give permission by completing an Administration of Medication Record form.

All medication requires parent/ guardian authorisation including prescribed eye drops, asthma pumps, nappy rash creams, etc.

- No medication will be administered unless prior written authorisation has been given
- Your Family Day Care educator will not administer over-the-counter cough or cold medication to children 2 years of age or younger. Exceptions are made for children 2 years of age or younger with a temperature (38°C or above), where Panadol or Nurofen may be administered with written parent authorisation.

Medication must not be left in children's bags or within reach of children. Please refer to the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service Medical Conditions Policy and Procedure available at your Family Day Care.

Illness and infectious disease

Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service follows legislated procedures to promote children's health and minimise the spread of infection. Please keep your child at home if he/she is

unwell. Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service requires that children with the following symptoms or illness must be kept at home until they are completely well:

- High temperature (38°C or above)
- Vomiting (24hrs after last episode)
- Loose bowel motions (24hrs after last episode)
- Rashes – any irritation that cannot be identified
- Red, swollen or discharging eyes
- If a child seems sick without obvious symptoms, for example unusually tired, irritable, lethargic, not eating or drinking
- Any of the infectious diseases listed in the Children's Service Exclusion Table that can be accessed the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service *Policies and Procedures*.

Parents/guardians will be asked to collect their child if the child shows any of the aforementioned symptoms of the illnesses or infectious diseases. Please refer to Children's Services Exclusion Table for minimum exclusion periods.

An ill child will be kept comfortable and under observation until the parent/guardian, or authorised person collects the child from the service.

Educators will complete the details of your child's illness in the Illness Record. You will be required to read and sign this record.

Please inform staff as soon as possible if your child is diagnosed with an infectious illness. Educators are required to alert all families at the children's service. Confidentiality will be respected at all times.



Immunisation

Please complete your child's immunisation details on their enrolment form and provide Service with details of any changes to your child's immunisation.

In the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease, a child or adult who has not been immunised in accordance with the National Immunisation Schedule (refer to enrolment form) will be excluded from the children's service for the recommended period of exclusion. Please refer to the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service Infectious Disease Policy and Procedure available at your children's service.

Allergies and other health issues

Please inform your educator of your child's allergies and any other health issues your child may be experiencing. The educator will be supportive and share our recommended procedure for safe and effective management of these matters.

Ongoing communication between parents and educators is critical to ensure the health of all children. If your child has been diagnosed with a health issue or allergy, you may be required to complete one or more of the following Medical Management action Plans (MMP):

- Action Plan for Allergic Reactions
- Care Plan/s for Eczema
- Asthma Action Plan
- Action Plan/s for Anaphylaxis (see below for further details on Anaphylaxis procedures)
- Action Plan for Epilepsy, Diabetes etc
- Anaphylaxis (Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction which can be life threatening. If your child has been diagnosed as anaphylactic, it is very important that you complete an Action Plan/s for Anaphylaxis)

This plan must be signed by your child's medical practitioner. If your child has an auto-injection device (e.g. EpiPen®) it must be available at Family Day Care at any time your child is in attendance. Please refer to the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service's Medical Conditions Policy and Procedures available at your educator's home or discuss your child's requirements at any time with your educator.

To maintain a safe environment for all children it is important for all families to be 'allergy aware'.

Please contact your educator before bringing food, drink or recycled materials (e.g. cereal boxes) into the Family Day Care home. Some children may have allergies to food that are potentially life-threatening. Some foods may be excluded as a strategy to provide a safe environment.

Asthma

Asthma is a chronic condition which can be life-threatening. If your child has been diagnosed as asthmatic, it is vital that you complete an Asthma Action Plan. This plan must be signed by your child's medical practitioner. If your child has prescribed asthma medication, it must be available at the Family Day Care at any time your child is in attendance.

Please refer to the Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service's Medical Conditions Policy and Procedures available at your educator's home or discuss your child's requirements at any time with your educator.

Accidents and injuries

Under the regulations, Little Chestnut Family Day Care Service is required to follow specific procedures in the event of a child sustaining an injury. All educators hold current first aid qualifications. At enrolment, parents are required to sign an authority for educators to seek emergency medical or ambulance assistance if necessary.

Please contact Melinda for further information
and enrolments

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