



Welcome to Blue Gum Early Learning and Child Care Centre

Dear Parents

The Management Committee, Director, Supervisors, Educators and Food Coordinator of Blue Gum would like to welcome you to our exceptional service.

For many children, it will be their first time away from family and friends. It is important that they feel comfortable and secure in their new environment.

Therefore, it is necessary for you as a parent and us as your child's Educators, to collaborate and share information about your child. This will ensure a smooth transition from home to Blue Gum and vice versa.

We always endeavour to achieve the highest quality of early learning and care for your child.

Please feel free to contact our Director/Supervisors on any matter regarding your child while attending our Service.

OUR AIMS & OBJECTIVES

AT BLUE GUM EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE CENTRE:

- We will provide the children with a warm, friendly, and inviting atmosphere where they will feel secure and be happy in their environment
- We will provide caring educators who show genuine love and concern for the children in their care
- The environment will cater for the needs of all children and encourage the healthy development of physical, emotional, intellectual and social skills
- We will provide a safe and well supervised service
- We will respect the rights and opinions of parents and the community and encourage parent participation and a broad interest in the community
- Throughout the day children will be exposed to small group, whole group and individual learning experiences, which have been developed from the needs and interests of each child as well as family input
- We will provide opportunities for the children to explore language, music and movement, science and arts, to help them make sense of their world
- All children will be given adequate time for meals, rest and relaxation
- We will encourage children to value and respect each other's differences while promoting the development of a positive self esteem
- We will create a learning environment which will encourage children to interact, take on roles and develop relationships with others through play
- We will encourage children to be respectful, sensitive and thoughtful towards their environment

OUR SERVICE PERSONNEL

Our service personnel are dedicated to providing you and your child/children with high quality education and care in a clean homely environment.

All our educators have, or are working towards Early Education and Care Qualifications. We consistently participate in ongoing training to further develop our skills and knowledge.

We have a team of relief educators, ensuring that children receive continuity of care while our regular educators are on leave.

Students from various universities, colleges and schools do at times attend our Service for observation work and/or work experience. These students are always supervised by one of our Qualified Educators.

CURRICULUM

We aim to provide a total learning experience where children are free to observe, question, experiment and explore.

It is important for children to experience being wet, dirty, noisy, and messy.

Children need to learn independence by knowing where to find things and being able to get things for themselves.

They need to learn to respect themselves, the needs and feelings of others and feel that they are important to a group.

An understanding of all cultures is an important part of our daily curriculum along with pictures, puzzles, manipulative equipment and play, books, dolls, dress ups and music.

Our curriculum is reflective of the Early Years Learning Framework which is part of the National Quality Standards in which we incorporate the five learning outcomes. We present our curriculum as a play based emergent curriculum and it is available for our families to view daily.

Daily curriculum incorporates an awareness of a variety of cultures that exist in our community.

Our curriculum is evaluated on a short and long term basis.

Our philosophy and policies have a strong influence on our curriculum and have been developed in accordance with national legislative law, early childhood national quality standards and committee /parent input.

Your child's room leader is happy to make an appointment to discuss with you the experiences your child/children engage in on a daily basis. Your room leader can explain the important learning processes taking place. This can be at a time by mutual arrangement or alternatively this can be a phone appointment.



AGE GROUPINGS

Centre rooms may be divided into the following groups:

Joeys 0 - 12 months
Possums 1 - 2 years
Wombats 2 - 3 years
Koalas 3 - 4 years
Kangaroos 4 - 5 years

Each Team Leader brings individual skills and experiences that enhance their unique teaching skills. Therefore, variations within rooms will occur, however we all follow the same Early Years Learning Framework.

Blue Gum has a clear set of goals based on a philosophy established from a sound knowledge of early childhood theories and practices, which form the basis of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Your child's Team Leader is available to discuss the room's programme and your child's progress with you.

Things To Bring

- A couple of changes of clothes. Sometimes they will get "messy" or just need a fresh set of clothes.
- A hat, as outside play is so much fun.
- All bottles (if required) made up ready with child's name on them.
- A special comforter's e.g. Dummy, blanket, special teddy.
- A drink bottle with your child's name on it

SLEEP AND REST

Regulation 81 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations state that:

'The Nominated supervisor of an education and care service must take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages, and individual needs of the children.'

At Blue Gum we have a rest period after lunch, where all children are required to peacefully relax to quiet music or listen to a story. This ensures that the needs of all children are being met. Children who fall asleep must be tired. We are unable to prevent children from falling asleep and it is against regulation for us to be waking children up from a deep sleep. All children must have the opportunity of at least 30 minutes quiet rest time. For the younger children a flexible routine is followed.

COMMUNICATION

Please read all the notices and signs when entering the centre to check for up-coming events of interest and special requests.

Everything will also be sent down Storypark for you to check out at home at your own convenience.

FEES

Your Fee Statements are emailed to you every Tuesday, and Newsletters and other information is emailed throughout the year. As emails and Storypark are our primary form of communication, we advise that you check them on a daily basis.

The following outlines the how fees can be paid.

- Upon enrolment, families must pay a security deposit of **\$50.00**.
- Fees must be paid **two weeks in advance**.
- Fees can be paid weekly, fortnightly, or monthly in advance by direct transfer or direct deposit through Xplor. Fees are payable in advance for every day that your child is enrolled at the service. This includes pupil free days, sick days and family holidays but excludes periods when the service is closed.
- Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to all families who are Australian Residents. To find out their eligibility, families must contact the Family Assistance Office.

A \$50.00 security booking fee is required once place has been accepted. This fee is **non-refundable** if you do not follow through with place at our service. This booking fee will be taken as part of your security deposit and will come off your fees once your child has commenced place at our Service.

If any changes occur to our Fee structure, parents will get a minimum of two weeks' notice.

Overdue Fees

Any family who is one or more weeks late with their fees will receive a **Friendly Fee Reminder**. Families can make appointments to speak with the Director regarding payments if there is a need to do so. Continually not paying fees will put your child/children's place/s at the Service in jeopardy.

Fees are required to be paid two weeks in advance at all times. If your child's fees are not paid, your child's enrolment may be terminated. At Blue Gum we do not keep money on the premises and fees must be paid by direct transfer.

Should you wish to end your child's place at the service, or should management make the decision to terminate your child's place, 2 weeks written notice is required from the ending/terminating party. If this does not occur, 2 weeks fees will be billed to you.

BOOKED DAYS

On enrolment you are required to inform the service of permanent days required.

Please speak to the Director if you need to change these days.

Some notice may be required as it is not always possible to change the days due to Service demand.

ORIENTATION

We encourage you to bring your child in for orientation sessions prior to commencing at Blue Gum.

This enables you and your child to become familiar with their new surroundings and Educators.

Please allow sufficient time to meet your child's Room Leader to discuss your child's integration into the group.

We understand that it is difficult for Parents to leave their child for the first time, and encourage Parents to call throughout the day to check on their child's progress.

Here are some suggestions to assist you:

- Say "Goodbye"
- Don't prolong the farewell
- Say "I am going now. I'll be back this afternoon"
- Give your child a kiss and a hug before you leave
- Always let the Staff know that you are leaving. This will signal the staff to give a little extra support to your child should they need it

Parents and children need time to adjust.

Allow time so that your child can show you things and places that interest them on arrival and departure.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We strive to give consistent loving care to your child and provide them with a happy environment.

Please feel free to look into our busy, happy rooms and see your child at play.

By working together, Parents and our Educators can help each child develop to their full potential.

We encourage Parent consultation and suggestions for our service policies, philosophy, and parent information documents.

Blue Gum has a non-discriminatory and non-biased policy.

Children from non-English speaking backgrounds and children with additional needs will not be discriminated against.

Parents can participate in our program and curriculum by sharing their special skills, also by collecting recycled materials for art and helping at social functions.

PARENT GRIEVANCES/COMPLAINTS

The service will address grievances/complaints promptly with an emphasis being placed on resolving issues in a professional and ethical manner.

All matters are considered confidential and will be handled appropriately.

Please discuss minor concerns with a Supervisor of the service as soon as possible, so that they can be dealt with immediately.

If the grievance is more serious, parents need to put their grievance in writing and discuss with the Director. The Director will investigate and complete the grievance register, keep the parent informed of the action being taken and the outcome.

If the parents are not satisfied with the outcome, or they feel that it has not been properly addressed, they should contact a member of the committee, either in writing or verbally, who will conduct their own investigation and assess how it should be handled.

NEWSLETTERS

Every 2 months you will receive a newsletter by email.

The main aim of the newsletter is to keep you informed of current events at Blue Gum, the work that is being done by your child in their room and current topics or areas of interest to the children.

CELEBRATIONS

We encourage Parents to let their children share special celebrations with us at the service.

If you would like us to celebrate any occasion with your child, please talk to your child's Team Leader.

BIRTHDAYS

As **no food or drinks may be brought onto the premises** (other than babies' formula) because of allergies and intolerances, you are welcome to order a birthday cake with our Food Coordinator at the additional cost of \$10. However, a birthday cake can only be ordered if your child's birthday is on the same day that they attend Blue Gum. Please give our Food Coordinator at least two weeks' notice and your request must be placed in writing and addressed to the office.

PERSONAL TOYS

It would be appreciated if children did not bring toys or valuables from home unless they are required for a special event.

Toys from home can become lost or broken and it saves a lot of heartache if items are left at home.

We encourage children to bring nature items and other items of general interest.

Comfort toys are always welcome.

LOST PROPERTY

Please label all items including socks, shoes, and underwear etc. in order to assist the educators to locate the owner.

CHANGE OF DETAILS

Please ensure that you notify the service of any changes to your child's information, though these changes can also be made within your Xplor app.

It is important for our service to always maintain up to date contact details.

OUR POLICIES

The service policies and procedures can be found in the front foyer.

We recommend that you take the time to read these policies.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak with the Director

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

It is the policy of this service to focus on encouragement and self-regulation through positive guidance, rather than discipline.

We try to recognise why a child behaves in a certain way and encourage more acceptable forms of behaviour.

Children will be offered reasonable choices when guiding behaviour, which may include redirection and alternative play choices.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Immunisation

The service is required to maintain up-to-date immunisation records for all children attending.

Parents are requested to supply proof of immunisation.

Please advise the service of any updated immunisations.

SUN SMART

We aim to promote a positive attitude towards skin protection and take effective measures to ensure the children's safety from the sun.

We will ensure that each child is covered with sunscreen and have a suitable hat on before going outdoors.

Please provide a wide brimmed or legionnaires hat for your child each time they attend.

Should your child be allergic to common brands of sunscreen, we ask that you send specific sunscreen for your child.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

During the day your child will participate in many different experiences, and it is important that they are dressed in appropriate clothing.

Remember, children are hard at "work" while they are with us and often the most beneficial learning comes from messy play.

We encourage children to wear aprons when painting or participating in other messy experiences.

Older children are encouraged to wear sensible footwear, and comfortable casual clothes, which are suitable for an active day.

Overalls and braces are not recommended as children find them difficult to handle and will not be able to get in and out of them easily when they go to the toilet.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND AT LEAST ONE CHANGE OF CLOTHES EACH DAY

MEDICATION

If your child requires medication while at the service, you must complete the Medication Administration Form detailing the following important information:

- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Reason medication is needed
- Time medication is to be administered
- Time of last dose
- Parent signature

The responsible Educator will sign the form to indicate that the medication has been administered.

Under no circumstances will the Service administer higher than the recommended dose.

The Medication Administration Form must be completed on a daily basis, even if the medication is required for more than one day.

The medication must remain in its original named container.

If the medication is prescriptive, please ensure that the container is clearly marked with the Doctor's instructions.

Any medication must be handed directly to an educator in charge of your child's room, so that it can be stored in an area inaccessible to children.

Parents are requested to collect medication from this area on departure.

Please ensure that no medication, creams etc. of any kind are left in your child's bag.

Please speak to the Director for further information on the Service's Medication Policy.

ILLNESS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

We are committed to providing and maintaining a healthy environment to safeguard children and staff from infection.

The service reserves the right to send home, or refuse attendance to, any child that is considered not well enough to attend.

If your child is unwell or showing signs of an infectious or contagious disease, we will contact you immediately and you may be required to collect them from the service.

We will only administer Panadol in case of emergency where a child has a high fever and the parent is on their way to collect them from the service. We will not administer Panadol for any other reason without written authorisation from a medical practitioner.

Please do not send your child if they are unwell. If your child has experienced vomiting, diarrhoea or had a temperature, please do not bring them into the

service until 24 hours from the last episode of vomiting, diarrhoea or temperature has occurred.

It is the policy of the service not to admit any child who has a communicable disease.

We will advise parents of an infectious disease at the service by email and placing a notice in each room, please keep your email address current and up to date.

HYGIENE

Strict hand washing procedures are implemented at Blue Gum.

Children are encouraged to wash and dry their hands before and after meals, after using the toilet and after messy experiences.

SAFETY

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

An emergency evacuation plan is displayed in each room.

Once every 3 months, the service conducts a drill. The aim of these drills is to ensure that in the event of a real emergency, the children can be evacuated as quickly as possible.

If you are present at the service during the drill, you are legally required to participate in this procedure.

ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS, INJURIES AND TRAUMA

Any accidents, incidents, injuries or trauma which may occur at the service is recorded on the relevant report form. If your child has been injured during the day you will be required to sign the relevant report, indicating that you have been informed.

If necessary, you will be contacted to collect your child.

If you cannot be contacted and your child requires medical attention, we will take the necessary required steps.

Any medical expenses incurred will be the parent's responsibility.

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

We will only allow parents or persons stated in writing on the enrolment form to collect your child/children from the service.

Please take your child into the service on arrival and acknowledge your arrival and departure to educators.

Under no circumstances is your child to be left in the foyer or at the front door.

If you are unable to collect your child from the service, you will need to ring, or notify the service in writing.

This person must be at least 16 years old, and an authorised person on your child's enrolment form.

Photo identification will be required.

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

If you have a legal agreement outlining custody or restraining arrangements, please provide the service with a copy for our records.

Parents are requested to notify the Director immediately if these legal circumstances change.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

To get Child Care Subsidy you need to meet certain criteria, please see Centrelink and take part in their Activity Test to check your eligibility.

This subsidy is paid directly to Blue Gum Early Learning & Child Care Centre to reduce the fees you pay.

Your child must also:

- meet immunisation requirements, and
- not be attending secondary school

Each person that is liable to pay child care fees will need to apply for this subsidy. To be eligible, each person needs to meet these criteria.

Full fees will apply until the centre receives notification stating that you are eligible for Child Care Benefit.

Parents are required to inform the FAO of any changes that may affect their assessment.

More Information about the Child Care Subsidy can be found on www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy

HOLIDAYS

Please let us know in writing if you are taking holidays. We request if you decide you can no longer take the holiday, that you are to please give us 48 hours' notice.

ALLOWABLE ABSENCES

Each family is entitled to 42 days of absence per year while claiming Child Care Subsidy.

An absence may be identified as: a sick day, holiday, occasional absence, or a public holiday.

Once the 42 days allowable absence have been taken, full fees will apply for subsequent absences, as Child Care Subsidy cannot be claimed for these additional days.

If your child is absent due to illness and has a medical certificate, these absences will not count towards the allowable absence total after you have reached the total of 42 allowable absences.

SICK DAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Please notify the service if your child is sick or unable to attend. If your child has been absent for more than two weeks without notification, we are unable to hold the position.

Public holidays and absences must be paid for and there are no make-up days.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

You are required to sign your child in and out each time they attend the Service.

This is a legal requirement. You will also need to confirm any absences on the Kiosk System to qualify for the CCS on those days.

LATE FEE

If a child is left at the centre after 5.45p.m, a late fee of \$20.00 for the first five minutes and then \$15.00 for each 5 minutes thereafter (or part thereof) will be charged.

Reviewed and updated: May 2023