Little Souls Taking Big Steps Childcare & Early Intervention Centre

PARENT HANDBOOK

1 Allied Drive, Arundel
QLD, 4214
Ph: 07 5563 1490 Fax: 07 5594 6632
Email: admin@littlesouls.com.au

Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 6.30am – 6:00pm

WELCOME …to

LITTLE SOULS TAKING BIG STEPS CHILDCARE & EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE

Our centre is a place where people are valued. Educators, children, parents, families and the community all have vital roles within our centre, and by working together we have established and promoted high quality care and education for young children.

PHILOSOPHY

"QUALITY CARE AND EDUCATION"

We believe that all children are individuals and therefore endeavour to create an atmosphere in which the children feel secure and happy whilst we cater to each child's unique wants, needs and interests. Whilst working within the guidelines of the Early Years Learning Framework.

We believe that each child's development is unique and opportunities must be provided for the child to grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically, creatively and spiritually.

We understand that in order to make both children and their parents feel comfortable, we must provide a secure, safe and well-supervised centre at all times.

We understand that within our culturally diverse society, all people have the fundamental right to have differing opinions, attitudes, life-styles and customs. We therefore endeavour to respect all of these differences and provide care accordingly.

We understand that the best way for a child to learn is through discovery, and this is best achieved by providing ample opportunities for extended play. Our programming is therefore based upon individual needs and interests, following the Early Years Learning Framework Guidelines.

We understand that as educators, we all have differing philosophies, attitudes, values and life-styles. We shall, however, strive to communicate with one another in order to provide the best team possible to care for your child.
We believe that a child's opportunities to explore the environment should not be limited by gender-based stereotypes, therefore all activities are offered to all children.

We aim to respect the special relationship between children and their families, and therefore incorporate a parental perspective when interacting with children.

We recognise Early Childhood as a unique and valuable stage of life and accept that each phase within a child's development is important in its own right.

AIMS and GOALS

We aim to provide a high standard of care and education to all children. In doing this, we strive to provide personalised service to each of our families particularly through the ways in which we cater to the unique needs of your child. We wish to convey an atmosphere of friendship and respect which will in turn positively influence the development of your child.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Little Souls Taking Big Steps Ltd operates under the Education and Care Services Regulations 2011 and the National Quality Standards. Our organisation must comply with the act and this regulation including the requirements about activities, experiences, and programmes. We program following the Early Years Learning Framework. The company is licensed by the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care.

For further details regarding the Licensing of Department of Education Training & Employment
Office for Early Childhood Education and Care
PO BOX 557
Robina
DC QLD
PHONE: (07) 5656 6677
FAX: (07) 5562 4862
Department's Child Care Information Service (1800 637 711 24 hours)

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

The staff of Little Souls Taking Big Steps Limited are qualified in accordance with the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care, and are selected for their professional and personal qualities. All staff are encouraged to further their professional development through participation in relevant courses and seminars.

PROGRAMS PROVIDED

Little Souls Taking Big Steps is a Child Care Centre and Early Intervention Centre for Typically developing children and Autistic children aged 2 years – 6 years.

We program following the Early Years Learning Framework.

The number and age ranges of children determine which rooms are running. Please check with the Director of Childcare as to which rooms are running at the time of your child's enrolment. Should room structures change families will be notified in advance.

Kindy Room: 2-3 years maximum of 7 children and 2 Educators ratio 1:5

Pre – School Room: 3- 6 Years Maximum of 21 children Ratio 1:10

Mixed aged room: 2-6 yrs maximum 21 children with a ratio of 1:5

Each group is supervised by qualified Educators. To facilitate staff lunch breaks, "Floats" (relieving staff) assist between the rooms throughout the period.

EQUALITY & ACCESS

Little Souls Taking Big Steps Ltd accepts all children and families with no discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or gender. **Every child will have equal rights of access to any available places subject to the Priority of Access.**

PRIORITY OF ACCESS

Sometimes the demand for childcare exceeds the supply available in a particular area. The Government has determined a "Priority of Access" guideline for child care;

1. A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
2. A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the Family Assistance Act,
3. Any other child.

This means that if we have a child waiting for care that is of a higher priority for care according to these guidelines, we may give families of a lower priority 14 days' notice of giving their space/s to this child on the waiting list.

HOURS

Our centre is open between the hours of 6:30am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. We request that if you are unable to collect your child prior to the official closure time that you contact the centre to advise staff as soon as possible to avoid concern. Phone 5563 1490. Please enter this number into your mobile phone upon enrolment

Please be aware that we impose a "late fee" of $ 20.00 for first 15 minutes and $1 per minute thereafter.

We are open 50 weeks per year (closed for 2 weeks over the Christmas/New Year period), and closed for all Public Holidays.

We will require two (2) weeks' notice in writing of your intention to withdraw your child from the centre.

PAYMENT OF FEES

Your child's fees are charged 2 weeks in advance of care, we use an Ezidebit system and the money will automatically be taken out of your nominated account on a weekly or fortnightly cycle and on a day nominated by you.

FEE STRUCTURE

Little Souls Taking Big Steps Limited has developed a fee structure in accordance with operational costs and is committed to keeping the cost to families as low as possible. Fee increases are an unfortunate necessity at times, however, the management is confident that the cost to the consumer is indicative of the high standard of service offered.

As a registered Long Day Care service, Little Souls Taking Big Steps is eligible to claim the Child Care Benefit/Rebate on behalf of eligible families, hence reducing the costs at the centre level to the consumer.

CHILD CARE BENEFIT

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is a scheme funded by the Federal Government. Before you are eligible to pay the reduced fees in line with a CCB subsidy, the Family Assistance Office (FAO, formerly Centrelink) will need to assess your entitlement. To do this, you will need to accurately complete some necessary paperwork which is available at your nearest FAO office.

IT IS VITAL THAT YOU LODGE AN APPLICATION FOR CCB AS SOON AS YOU ARRANGE TO COMMENCE CARE TO AVOID DELAYS IN YOUR ENTITLEMENT.

Please be aware that our centre is not responsible for any problems that you may experience with your CCB; we must only act upon the official directives of the FAO. Due to CONFIDENTIALITY legislation, all queries must be handled by the parent through the nearest FAO office. Please be aware that if there is a delay in the centre receiving details of your CCB entitlement, you will be charged **full fees** until such time that we have this information.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:
13 61 50

ABSENTEEISM

All absentee days must be paid for, as you have made a permanent booking for the spaces that your child uses.

Failure to notify us of your child's absence may result in confusion about your care requirements. If the unexplained absence exceeds 2 weeks, we will assume that you no longer need the care and your spaces will be given to the next child on the waiting list. Due

to the fact that you have not given the appropriate 2 weeks written notice, your Deposit will be kept to cover the two weeks of fees.

CCB will be paid for OCCASIONAL absences (sick, miscellaneous or holidays) for up to forty two (42) care days per year.

CCB will be paid for APPROVED absences, including Public Holidays, for an unlimited amount of days per year. Relevant evidence must be provided to enable us to classify an absence as approved. This includes sick days where a medical certificate is provided to the centre.

HOLIDAYS

Fees are payable for all days booked throughout the year, except for when we are closed over Christmas (Excluding Public Holidays). You are able to take holidays whenever throughout the year, however normal fees will apply. Your CCB will apply for up to 42 days absent per financial year, which includes all Public Holiday's as well as any leave taken. If you have used all your absences you will be required to pay full fees for those holiday days taken.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Your full regular fee will be charged for the day if your child has a regular booking for this day. A Public Holiday is classed as an **approved absence** and CCB will apply.

CENTRE PROCEDURES

YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY:

WHAT TO BRING:

- Please dress your child in clothes that may become a little messy!
- Provide a few changes of clothes (in the event of toilet accidents, messy play or a change in the weather)
- Hat
- If you wish for your child to have a sleep provide a cot-sized sheet (top and bottom) in a bag
- Nappies, creams etc. (if required) (If creams are brought in they need to have a chemist label on, otherwise we cannot apply them.)
- Trainer pants (if required) or spare underpants, please pack at least 6 pairs if toilet training.
- Children must wear shoes to and from the Centre.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL BELONGINGS ARE CLEARLY LABELLED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME TO AVOID LOSS AND DISAPPOINTMENT.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS THE CENTRE'S POLICY THAT TOYS FROM HOME ARE NOT PERMITTED AT THE CENTRE (with the exception of security toys, show & tell items and reinforcer's).

SETTLING IN

Initial separation is never easy for parents and children, and the staff will always offer support at this difficult time. The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will assist parents to develop a procedure to help each child settle more effectively. Parents are encouraged to participate in our orientation process. This involves visiting the centre once for an hour with your child prior to commencement so that we may all get to know each other and your child may feel more secure. Feel free to talk to the Nominated Supervisor about any concerns you may have regarding your child's first day- remember, we are here to support you also!

Remember- we are only a phone call away. If you are feeling anxious throughout the day, or you are just curious to find out how things are going- GIVE US A CALL! Our contact number is (07) 5563-1490.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

A child will only be allowed to leave the centre in the company of a parent or another authorised adult (an individual over the age of 18 years and with personal details noted on the official Enrolment Form. Please make sure that you also update the details of all emergency contacts and authorised people to collect as they change.). If you require someone other than an emergency contact to collect your child, please let us know with a phone call or a signed letter for us to keep on file. Please be aware that in the event that a staff member is unfamiliar with the adult collecting your child, identification will be requested. This is to protect the safety and peace of mind of all individuals involved, and we are sure that you can appreciate our concerns with this regard, if you do not notify us that someone other than a parent is collecting your child we will not allow your child to leave the Centre until we have spoken to you.

SIGN IN / OUT REGISTER

Due to regulations, we are required to have the person delivering and collecting each child to the centre to sign the child in and out using the electronic roll.

Upon enrolment you will be guided through the process during which you will be able to set your own personal access pin. If your child is absent you will be automatically prompted to confirm the absence before being able to sign your child in for that day.

AUTHORISED PERSONS

No person, with the exception of staff, children, parents and pre-arranged visitors, are to enter the centre while the children are in attendance.

All staff, students and volunteers are required to have a current "Suitability Card" issued by The Queensland Government Blue card Services.

At the time of enrolment, parent/s must provide the centre with the names and details of persons authorised to pick up your children. It is the parents or guardians responsibility to ensure that this list is kept current, particularly if there are difficulties within the family. In the interests of your child's safety we do ask that we are informed of any changes to your circumstances in order to prevent any unnecessary confusion or embarrassment.

EXCURSIONS/ INCURSIONS

Throughout the year we endeavour to provide a range of stimulating experiences for the children, and this may occasionally mean that we plan to have visitors come to the centre. Your input into possible events and your help with the organisation are welcomed.

LANGUAGE

Parents, we request that you choose your language carefully whilst at the centre. Remember, that little ears are listening to everything that you say- the words you use and how you express them. You are a model to your child and the children of others, so please try to set a good example in everything you say and do.

Please remember that physical or verbal abuse of any kind to your child or another person or child will not be tolerated in our centre.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

There is a current notice of 'information about staffing' displayed in the hallway. Parents are welcome to ask staff about the centre philosophy, the program goals and activities and general information about their child's care. Please don't hesitate to approach the staff with any questions or concerns you may have.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We welcome involvement from all members of the community, but most importantly the parents of our children. There are many ways in which you can become involved with the centre- here are just some suggestions, but maybe you have your own unique contribution to share with us!

- Interactions with individual children or small groups; storytelling, talking, listening, cooking, art and craft… any routine aspect of the day!
- Contributing ideas and/or resources to the program.
- Interpreting or translating stories, songs or posters into other languages.
- Sharing hobbies, interests or skills.
- Putting forward suggestions for ways to enhance or improve the program.
- Helping and giving support on committees, e.g. fundraising
- Attending Parent information sessions and other social events organised at the centre.

- Familiarise yourself with the Centre Philosophy and the various policies that the philosophy translates into.
- Communicate your child's daily needs and developmental progress with centre staff whenever possible.

The centre is unable to take responsibility for any non-enrolled children within the centre. Children visiting the centre must remain under your supervision.

It is a priority to help the families of our children as much as possible. If you are experiencing any difficulties within your parenting role- WE MAY BE ABLE TO HELP! Please just ask.
"You Are Always Welcome!"

PARENT/ TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Appointments may be arranged to discuss your child's developmental progress. Please ask the Nominated Supervisor to arrange a mutually convenient time for both you and your child's Educator and the Nominated Supervisor to quietly share information.
On occasion, Information Nights will be scheduled so that all parents may attend to learn about The Early Years Learning Framework, and the directions the program will be taking in the months to come.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As a registered children's service, we are required by law to collect and keep a great deal of information about individual children and families. Records that we maintain include enrolment forms, medical histories, custody agreements, Child Care Benefit details and daily observations and checklists. All information is used only for the purposes we require it for and records are stored carefully to ensure your privacy is protected. Unauthorised persons- including students, other parents and staff not directly responsible for your child's care- are not permitted access to personal information.

We ask that parents understand our commitment to maintaining the confidentiality of our staff and clients with respect to our inability to provide personal contact details.

PUBLICITY & PRIVACY

At Little Souls Taking Big Steps Limited, many of our observations and memories of special events are captured through photography and/or video footage. Only staff and other authorised individuals will be responsible for taking these photographs. We may choose to display some of these photos on our noticeboard, in our newsletter, on our website and on social media to show what we have been doing. We also take video footage of the children at play. We also occasionally have film crews from various TV stations here running stories on the Centre. If you do not wish to have your child's media displayed, please notify the Nominated Supervisor and a notation will be made on your child's file. If any media containing images of your child will be used outside the centre environment, permission will be obtained from you before doing so.

SAFETY AND SUPERVISION

All play equipment within the Centre is developmentally appropriate and safety checks on the equipment are carried out on a regular basis. All children are supervised on any outdoor equipment and limits and guidelines are reinforced to promote the safety of all children. Safety gates at the centre must be closed at all times.

CAR PARK SAFETY

Please hold your children's hand at all times in the car park area. If you are having trouble taking your children to and from the car, please ask a staff member to help you. NEVER leave children in the car unattended.

STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Our centre feels obligated to help train future educators, so we therefore accept students from recognised training institutions in the area. Students will be expected to participate in many activities while at the Centre, and will be responsible for many duties. Students and all other volunteers must always act in a professional manner, and are expected to adhere to staff guidelines. Students and volunteers will never be left unsupervised with children whilst at the centre.

CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES

If a parent has a concern or grievance with regards to any aspect of the centre and its operation, they are welcome to discuss the matter with the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider of the centre. In many instances the problem may be a result of miscommunication or misunderstanding, but in any event, we must be aware of it in order to prevent further distress to you and others. Dealing with these matters promptly will avoid an escalation of a problem before a solution may be devised. Awareness is also a vital component of our future policy planning and development, enabling us to devise procedures which will benefit the maximum number of parties.

If consultation with the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider fails to remedy your concern or grievance, it is the right of every parent to contact the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care to discuss the matter.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

Any child who becomes sick in any way at the centre will be sent home at the discretion of the Nominated/Certified Supervisor, or Approved Provider. This may include children suffering from any illness which may be contagious (as per the table following) and therefore a health risk for other children and staff, or a child who is ill to the point that they are unable to participate in or enjoy the program. We ask that parents make arrangements to have their child picked up within one hour of being contacted, as it is very difficult to give a sick child the appropriate level of care when there are other children requiring attention also.

In cases of a child running a temperature, the Nominated Supervisor will contact you to advise you of your child's temperature, and with your permission will authorise the administering of one dose of Panadol to your child, you will be asked to give verbal permission to 2 staff members who are trained in first aid. At this time you will be requested to make arrangements for the collection of your child as per Centre policy. Your child will not be allowed to return to the Centre until they have been free of a temperature and Panadol for 48 hours.

An Incident Report Form detailing any injury sustained by your child is filled out by staff. This form will remain in your child's file as a record of the incident and the actions taken by the staff in that situation.

It is essential that the staff are aware of any allergies or medical conditions associated with your child. Any illnesses which provide a potential risk to the health of others will be notified to the parents via foyer displays. This will allow you to not only be aware of possible symptoms in your child but will also provide you with the option of withholding your child from care if you should wish to do so.

Certain illnesses and conditions have an official "EXCLUSION PERIOD" as nominated by the Health Department. This refers to the period of time which the child is required to be excluded from the centre (until the threat of cross-infection has passed). Many conditions may require the provision of a Medical Certificate from your GP prior to your child being re-admitted to care. The Director must be informed if any child has contracted an infectious illness according to the following list;

Influenza type cold	Admit when patient feels well
Diarrhoea (Rotavirus, Shingella, Giardia,Salmonella, Campylobacter, Cryptosporidis & Viral Gastroenteritis	Re-admit when diarrhoea/vomiting has ceased for at least 24 hours and the patient is feeling well.
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until the infection is treated and cleared.
Impetigo (school sores)	Re-admit once appropriate treatment has commenced. Any sores on exposed surfaces must be properly covered with occlusive dressing, eg: gauze
Ringworm, scabies, headlice	Exclude until the day after approved treatment has commenced.
German Measles (rubella)	Exclude until fully recovered or at least four (4) days after the onset of the rash.
Measles	Immunised contacts not excluded. Non-immunised contacts should be excluded until fourteen 14 days after the first appearance of the rash in the last case. If non-immunised contacts are vaccinated within two 2 hours of their first contact with the index case, they

	may return to the centre.
Chicken Pox	Exclude until lesions have dried- at least five days after the beginning of the illness.
Hepatitis A	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate of recovery, but not before seven (7) days after the onset of jaundice.
Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection	Exclusion not necessary.
Hepatitis Non A,Non B (Hepatitis C)	Exclusion is not necessary, but children will need a period of recuperation and be admitted on the production of a medical certificate.
Mumps	Exclude until medical certificate of clearance is finished, otherwise, exclude two weeks from onset (swelling should have subsided).
Threadworms	Exclude until completely cleared.
Herpes (cold sores)	Exclude until completely cleared.
Thrush	Exclude until rash and symptoms treated.
Glandular Fever	Exclusion not necessary.
Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS)	Exclusion is not necessary until the child has a secondary infection.
Whooping Cough (pertussis)	Exclude for 14 days from onset of coughing or until child has taken five days of a seven day course of antibiotics.
Bronchiolitis and Bronchitis	Exclude until appropriate medical treatment is given and the child is feeling well.
Meningitis (bacterial)- includes Meningococcal infection	Exclude until attending doctor feels the child is well and non-infectious. Re-admit on receipt of medical certificate.
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease	Exclude child until the blisters have dried.
Parvovirus(erythema infectiosum,"slapped cheek"	Exclusion not necessary.

For further advice and information on any of these conditions, contact the QLD Health Ph: 3234 – 0111 Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm Or PH: 13432584 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

HYGIENE

Universal Precautions provide essential hygiene procedures. All staff are aware of the precautions and adhere to the strict guidelines necessary to eliminate the threat of infectious disease. Children are encouraged to implement healthy, hygienic practices. Our

Centre is cleaned on daily bases, and several staff has also undergone Workplace Health and Hygiene training which ensures an awareness of appropriate actions regarding the prevention of the spread of disease.

IMMUNISATION

Parents are encouraged to have their children immunised by a medical practitioner. Alternative methods will need to be discussed with the Nominated Supervisor upon enrolment. We will be required to take a copy of your Immunisation Record to keep on record. Your CCB entitlement may be effected if you do not maintain your child's immunisation.

Children must not attend the centre for the 48hr period after receiving their immunisation injections.

Parents of children who are not immunised and are attending the centre will be informed of any outbreaks of illness and may be required to withhold from sending their child to the centre until the threat has passed.

NHMRC Recommended Immunisation Schedule (0-5yrs) from January 1, 2004

AGE	DISEASE
Birth	**Hepatitis B**
2 months	**Diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis; Polio; Hib; Hepatitis B**
4 months	**Diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis; Polio; Hib; Hepatitis B**
6 months	**Diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis; Polio, Hib; Hepatitis B (or at 12months)**
12 months	**Measles, mumps & rubella, Hib, Meningococcal C, Hepatitis B (or at 6 months)**
Prior to school entry 4-5 years	**Diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis**

MEDICATION

All medication must be prescribed by a doctor and be in a pharmaceutical bottle with the child's name, dosage, doctor's name and date on the container. Parents are required to fill out a Medication Administration Form- without a signed form staff will not administer any medication to your child. All medications, creams asthma puffers etc MUST be given to the Nominated Supervisor upon arrival at the Centre. Please do not leave medication in your child's bag.

EMERGENCY / EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Fire drills and emergency evacuations are conducted regularly to prepare children and staff in the event of an actual fire or emergency. This involves the children making their way from the Centre to our meeting point in the far corner of the carpark. Fire Drills are fully supervised at all time and precautions are taken to ensure the children's safety at all times whilst in the car park. All staff are proficient in the evacuation drill exercise.

All emergency exits are clearly marked within the Centre. Fire evacuation maps are located in each room with routes to a safe meeting point clearly marked.

In cases of extreme emergency, the children may be escorted from the premises to a designated area in order to protect them from danger. If deemed too dangerous to stay on site at Little Souls we will walk the children to our safety house located at 13 Allied Drive, Arundel. If you require any additional information in regards to this procedure please speak with the Nominated/Certified Supervisor.

FIRST AID

All staff at Little Souls Taking Big Steps hold a current Senior First Aid, CPR Certificate and asthma/anaphylaxis management certificate. A First Aid box is located in the Kitchen, Pre School and Kindy rooms to handle minor incidents. An Incident, Injury, Trauma, Illness Report Form will be completed if your child has been injured in any way. In some instances it may be necessary for us to contact an ambulance to assist us in the medical care of your child.

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook- we trust that it will be a handy reference guide for you over the time that you are attending our centre. Please do feel free to discuss any issues with Educators as open lines of communication are the best way possible to facilitate high quality care for your child!