



Family Handbook

At Stepping Stones Preschool & Child Care Centre we are proud to say that we are based in a small community, running a small centre that is owner operated. We pride ourselves with having strong, valuable relationships with all of our families.

Overall we aim to create an environment that allows children to reach their full potential and become enthusiastic and inquiring long term learners. An environment where the children are supported, comfortable and have the opportunity to ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking with confidence. We ensure that all of our children have the knowledge and understanding that their thoughts are valued and respected

Updated: 08.07.2020

We welcome you and your child to our centre. We hope that your time with us will be a happy, worthwhile and fulfilling experience for both families and children. If at any time you have any concerns or questions please talk to us. We are always trying to improve the service we offer to families and we are always eager to hear your thoughts or suggestions. We value your input about your child and the centre. We know that parents understand their child best and we appreciate any information you have regarding your family practices and what is of interest to your child.

A few things you need to know about us:

- Please feel free to visit at any time. We have an open door policy.
- We are a privately run centre, Kerri is the director and owner.
- We are open 52 weeks a year, only closing for Public Holidays.
- We are open from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. There is no set time for you to drop your child off or pick them up. *Please note we do charge for the full 10 hour session.* We try to be obliging with swap days if need be and only if we have the space and staff available.

Our fees:

- \$110.00 per day for children aged between 0-2 years
- \$103.00 per day for children aged 2-3 years
- \$100.00 per day for pre-school age children.

Upon enrolment, prior to the first day of care there is **\$200.00 bond** that will need to be paid to the service. This will secure your child's position here with us. This bond will be refunded at the end of your care period, only on the terms that all outstanding fees have been paid and two weeks' notice for the end of care has been given.

CCS is the system the Government uses to subsidise your child care fees. You will need to submit a claim via your Centrelink app/ webpage. To find out an average on what percentage of fees you will pay, please visit the Australian Government website page and complete the Child Care Subsidy online calculator.

Payments are accepted at the Centre in cash or payments by bank deposit. When doing this please follow these requirements:

- Please put your child's name on the deposit.
- Please deposit payment into BCU.
- Name of account: SSPS URUNGA PTY LTD
- BSB: 082 551
- Account number: 92 673 2504

Our contact details:

- Address: 12 Hillside Drive, Urunga NSW 2455
- Telephone: 02 66 556 955

ABN: 99 549 435 620.

In our office you will find our Administrator Teagan who will help you with any enrolment queries / fee/ other information you would like to know about the centre. You can also contact Teagan via Email at: steppingstonesurunga@hotmail.com No question is too big or small!

In our office we keep a copy of the National Quality Framework, the current Regulations and our updated Policy Manual for Stepping Stones Preschool & CCC. Please feel free to ask any of the staff to photocopy any sections of the Regulations or any policies you would like to read. We value your input and appreciate your feedback.

We are following the EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK as the basis for our curriculum teaching.

At Stepping Stones we believe:

- Children are competent, capable and resourceful learners.
- All children are individuals and learn at their own pace and have unique learning skills.
- Each child is respected and valued for the wonderful person they are.
- We believe children learn best with a mix of what is interesting to them and teacher initiated experiences. Together this is the perfect combination for individual's learning.

Please take the time to read our Philosophy which is located in our front foyer, this reflects our views and beliefs as a centre.

Educator to child ratios:

- The Government Regulations for 0 months to 2 years is 1 staff to 4 children.
- The Government Regulations for 2-3years is 1 staff to 5 children.
- The Government Regulations for children over 3 is 1 staff to 10 children.

These regulations reflect the fact that we believe higher ratios of educators to children gives the best outcomes for children to grow and achieve both emotionally and educationally.

Our centre: In 2020 we have 4 rooms:

- The Gecko Room (Nursery) for 0-18 months.
- The Lorikeet Room (Toddler 2) for 24-36 months.
- The Bunyip Room is for 3+ years, this is the Preschool Room. Within the Bunyip Room we run a pre-school program tailored for each child's level of development.

We spend a lot of time together in a family-like situation but also like to have separate times where we can follow the different interests and further develop pre-existing skills of the children.

Outside play: We have a large outdoor environment with a sandpit, a huge deck area and have 2 soft fall areas for the obstacle course. Each day we add lots of other resources for a variety of play/learning activities. We have lots of shade outside and set up most activities in the shade in the hotter months. Every child **MUST** wear a hat outside- broad brimmed hats are best and we apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside each day. We have spare hats and these hats are washed daily.

Please note: Our Sun Safe policy says shoulders must be covered while we are outside, so please send a T shirt with sleeves for outdoor play, otherwise your child will be provided with some of our spare clothes to wear. Singlets are fine for indoor play.

Indoor play: We offer free access to resources for the children. We believe that children have to be able to revisit and practice their skills to learn and we respect the fact that the children developing independence requires the children to be able to choose freely what they want to do and take as much time as they need at each station to develop their skills.

We also have a side veranda to give the children more spaces to play and this is a wonderful addition to the centre. We use it all the time but especially in rain or when the sun is too hot to be outside.

What your child needs to bring:

- Please send a hat, we all must wear a hat outside and while we have spare hats, many children like their own hat best.
- Please send your child in sensible clothes, they will be busy all day and will often be involved in messy play, e.g. finger painting, water play, active play or sensory play.
- Please send spare clothes as accidents can happen. During the warmer weather the children play with the water trays each day and often get wet. Please label everything so nothing gets lost.
- Please send food for morning tea, afternoon tea and lunch. We can warm up food for your child or cook simple things like noodles for lunch. We can make sandwiches or fruit in case your child is extra hungry or there is an accident e.g. dropping lunch on the floor. We encourage all children to drink water, they can access the water dispenser at all times but we also encourage the children bringing their own water bottles also. We have bubblers outside. All staff model drinking water.

We encourage healthy eating. Staff eat with the children to model good eating habits. Please don't send chips, CC's, nuts, rollups (as these are a choking hazard) or chocolate and lollies for health reasons. Many of the products that are in the health aisle look like lollies but claim to have 'real fruit' etc, this causes problems as other children (and staff) see them as lollies.

Settling in

Some children settle into the centre straight away but some take a few days or even weeks to feel comfortable. Often, even when they feel settled they will still cry when it's time to say good-bye. This is hard on parents but generally it is only momentary and as soon as they have waved goodbye they will start to play. **If you are concerned please ring the Centre 66556955**

If you can, we suggest that you visit the centre during operating hours to meet with the nominated supervisor/responsible persons and educator/s that will be with your child and become familiar with the centres environment. The pre-enrolment visit often helps your child to become familiar with their surroundings before enrolling. This lets both of you become familiar with the teachers and the general environment. Each child is different in the amount of time they take to be comfortable saying goodbye to you, some settle into childcare instantly and others take much longer.

Once you decide it is time for you to go, we suggest you confidently say your goodbye's before leaving. If you dither, it can upset your child more as they think you don't feel confident leaving them with us. All staff are trained/ training Early Childhood professionals and will spend as much time as needed reassuring your child that everything is fine. **Please feel free to ring and check on your child at any time.** We have the same staff in each room so they can form a special bond with your child. Please remember: **We will always ring you if your child is very upset and will not settle.**

Things you must do upon enrolment.

- Fill in the enrolment form. MOST IMPORTANTLY—**dates of birth for children and parents and your CRNs. (customer reference numbers)**
- Advise Centrelink you are using Stepping Stones Preschool & CCC for your childcare.
- Complete a Child Care Subsidy claim via your Centrelink account.
- Tell us if you are using another centre as well (it makes a difference to the forms we fill in).
- Please let us know if there are any special issues regarding your child, e.g., custody or court orders or food allergies.
- WE MUST SIGHT IMMUNISATION RECORDS FOR EACH CHILD
- **It is EXTREMELY important that we know your child's medical status, particularly if he/she has Asthma, Anaphylaxis or Diabetes or any other serious medical condition.**
- **We request that you and your family's information be kept current and any changes noted when they occur so that we have all valid and relevant information when we need it. This is very important so please ensure you have notified us if and when any changes occur.**
- Please pay your accounts promptly. We issue an account each week. If you are having trouble paying your account please see Kerri or Bron promptly. Failure to make regular payments may result in your child's position being revoked.

Extra information about our centre:

- We will try to be obliging to fit in with your schedule and swap days if possible for your child. Please note we can only do this where there is availability for your child to come. If we are at full capacity we are able to decline to your request to swap a day. We do understand that circumstances occur where you will need to swap and we will try to be obliging.
- We can suggest visits to access other support teams such as Occupational therapist, speech therapist, Early Intervention, The Northcott Foundation, Inclusion Support and Brighter Futures.
- As a centre we aim to have at least 2 big “special events/visits” per year.
- Each child receives a Birthday book on their birthday or the next attending day after their birthday and a book as a gift from Santa at our Christmas Party. We pride ourselves with no additional charge for these extras.

We are mandatory reporters and are legally bound to report any concerns we have about children in our care.

Children's Behaviour:

We have a duty of care to all the children and staff to ensure they are in a safe environment. Very rarely a child's behaviour is unacceptable. We will not tolerate physical violence or intimidation towards other children or the staff. We will ring parents and ask them to collect their child. If this happens 3 times we will discuss other options with the parents. **If at any time you have questions or concerns please speak to Management.**

Staff at Stepping Stones Preschool and Child Care Centre. TO BE CONFIRMED

- **Kerri** is the Director & Nominated Supervisor and has her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Bron** is the ECT. Bron has a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education.
- **Teagan** is a Responsible Person and is working towards her Bachelor of Education- Early Childhood and Primary.
- **Donna** is a Responsible Person and is working towards her Bachelor of Education- Early Childhood and Primary.
- **Eddie** is a Responsible Person and has her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Claire** is a Responsible Person, holds a Certificate III and is working towards a Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Ruth** is working towards her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Brittney** has her Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Taylor** is working towards a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Brooke** is working towards a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Georgia** is a school based Trainee that attends the centre 1 day a week.
- **Charlotte** is a school based Trainee that attends the centre 1 day a week.

Please note we will have Casual staff working from time to time they will either be Diploma or Certificate 3 trained. We also cater for work placement students from TAFE and local high schools.