



2024

**PARENT
HANDBOOK**



Woden Valley
Early Learning Centre

YUMALUNDI AND WELCOME TO WODEN VALLEY EARLY LEARNING CENTRE



About Us

At Woden Valley Early Learning Centre, we are more than just a typical childcare facility; we are a warm and welcoming community dedicated to nurturing the growth and development of your child. As a Community-Based Non-Profit centre managed by a Parent Committee, we've served families with care and excellence since 1992.

We take great pride in being an approved service, providing high-quality care and education for children from 0 to 5 years old. Our team of dedicated early childhood professionals is committed to creating an environment where your child can thrive, learn, and grow.

We are open Monday to Friday from 6.30 am to 6.00 pm, offering flexibility and convenience for busy families. We operate 50 weeks of the year, with the exception of public holidays and one professional development day per year.

At Woden Valley Early Learning Centre, we offer permanent positions based on availability and vacancies. This stability ensures that your child can form strong bonds with our experienced and caring educators, promoting a sense of security and trust.

The benefits of choosing Woden Valley ELC:

- Our curriculum is thoughtfully designed to incorporate the natural world into daily learning provocations. From exploring the local flora and fauna to embracing the changing seasons, we encourage children to connect with the environment in meaningful ways.
- We believe that play is a child's most profound way of learning. Our programs emphasize hands-on, exploratory provocations that allow children to make discoveries and build problem-solving skills.
- Nature is our playground. Children have the opportunity to explore the outdoors, engage in gardening, and participate in outdoor provocations that promote physical fitness and a sense of responsibility toward the environment.

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*Early childhood
education is the key
to the betterment of
society*



OUR PHILOSOPHY

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We acknowledge and value our differences and perspectives to develop a sense of safety for our community. We all have a right to a voice and have a responsibility to advocate for those who need to be heard. Our professional integrity is the foundation for our words and actions as we collaboratively strive for high quality early childhood education and care.

RESPECT

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Each day we explore innovative ways to play, teach and learn. We want to know more to develop a culture of curiosity, investigation and critical reflection. When we take action with wisdom we live a journey of possibilities and create opportunities to explore new paths with insight and determination.

INITIATIVE

"Our purpose is to nurture confident, respectful and responsible citizens of the World..."

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Our environments seek to bring calm and connection of self. Having access to nature develops an understanding of our impact on the world. When we are connected to family, community, culture, and place we see the importance of equity and social justice. Being fully present and aware in the moment strengthens our capacity to value and benefit from multiple points of view.

MINDFULNESS

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We are purposeful and meaningful, setting a standard where learning is irresistible. All children deserve the opportunity to experience spaces that are created for them, where they can grow into who they are and be celebrated.

EXCELLENCE

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Our Nature-Inspired Early Learning Centre, where the wonders of the natural world are the foundation of your child's education. We believe in fostering a deep connection between children and nature, providing them with an enriching environment that stimulates their curiosity and supports their holistic development.

We believe that every child has the right to a respectful environment that fosters harmony through balanced and creative relationships and possibilities. When a child is in the company of caring adults in such an environment, they may come to understand themselves and the world better, building confidence and respect as a citizen of the earth.

Assessment & Rating

The Australian Childhood Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) diligently oversees all early childhood programs to ensure they align with rigorous national standards. We are pleased to share that our early learning program consistently surpasses both state and national benchmarks, demonstrating our commitment to Meeting and Exceeding National Quality Standards.

In 2018, Woden Valley ELC underwent a comprehensive rating and assessment process, affirming our dedication to providing exceptional early childhood education. Your valuable input can further enhance our commitment to continuous improvement. We encourage you to contribute to our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) by sharing your feedback, whether in written or verbal form. Your insights are integral to our ongoing efforts to create the best possible learning environment for our children and their families.



A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Quality Educators

The Center is dedicated to hiring educators who are deeply committed to providing exceptional care and education to children within a Centre Based setting. Our team comprises qualified educators who hold nationally recognized qualifications or are actively working towards achieving these qualifications. It's noteworthy that approximately 80% of our educators possess Diploma or higher qualifications, reflecting our commitment to quality education. Furthermore, all our educators are required to hold a current Working with Vulnerable People Card, and qualified educators must maintain a current approved First Aid Certificate (HLTAID012). This ensures the safety and well-being of our children while they are in our care. In our pursuit of excellence, the Center closes for one day each year to facilitate Professional Development. This day is an opportunity for every educator to actively engage in professional growth, further building their skills, practice, and experience. We place a strong emphasis on ongoing learning to ensure our educators remain at the forefront of best practices in early childhood education.

We also take great pride in our commitment to maintaining healthy educator-to-child ratios. Our approach allows us to offer individualized attention and care, creating a nurturing and stimulating environment for our children.

Quality Environments

At our Center, your child's learning environments are designed to be engaging, inviting, and truly exceptional. These spaces are thoughtfully equipped with natural, sustainable, and high-quality materials that encourage exploration and play. We take pride in providing an indoor/outdoor curriculum throughout the year, allowing children the freedom to choose their preferred play environment.

Moreover, our classrooms extend into a nature reserve and bushland, offering regular nature walks that allow children to connect with the natural world. These walks are not just an exploration of the outdoors; they are integral to our high-quality program.

We place special emphasis on outdoor play, as it offers children a unique opportunity to comprehend their world through experiences like observing animals and wildlife. This enriching interaction with nature helps children develop an understanding of their place and impact within their surroundings, promoting a sense of environmental stewardship from a young age. Our commitment to providing these opportunities within a quality program and environment ensures a holistic and enriching learning experience for your child.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Complete your child's enrolment form

Please complete all relevant sections of your child's enrolment form and submit it to the centre before they start. This is a regulatory requirement, and it will help educators understand your child's needs. It is extremely important to keep your enrolments up to date all the time. We have a yearly enrollment update process happening each August.

Orientation process

We expect families to complete at least 5 orientations prior to their starting date. This will enable you and your child to develop relationships and attachments with the educators and environments, as well as share valuable care-giving strategies to support their transition.

Child Care Subsidy

The Commonwealth Government provides the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to eligible families that reduce the cost of child care substantially, depending on your income and circumstances. It is recommended that you apply for this Subsidy at least 21 days prior to starting as full fees will apply until our management system is updated.

For more information go to; <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

Policies and procedures

The Centre's Policy and Procedure manual, as well as National Laws and Regulations, are made available to you in the foyer, Story Park or on the website.

Fee payment

Woden Valley Early Learning Centre is an approved Service and is responsible for administering CCS on behalf of the Australian Government. Eligible families will receive their Australian Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlement as reduced fees on invoices.

Parents are provided with a weekly invoice detailing the claims that have been processed, listing the CCS received and the amount the parent/guardian needs to pay for each child in care. At the time of initial contact, families are provided with the current fee schedule.

It is the centre's policy that fees are paid 2 weeks in advance. We only accept EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) to pay fees.

Account Name: Woden Valley Child Care Centre
BSB: 112 908
Account Number: 0406 431 82
Reference: Parent/Family Name

Debt Management

Fees that are left outstanding for more than 14 days will incur a 10% surcharge, after 21 days another 10% will be added and over 28 days a 20% surcharge will apply.

If fees are still not paid your child's place will be allocated to another family and the debt pass on to the debt collecting agency.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please speak to the Director immediately to create a financial payment plan.



Once your child starts

- Establish a good relationship with your child's educators. Speak to them when you arrive, greeting them by name. If time permits, you can engage in an activity with your child and an educator.
- Initially, you might like to stay with your child for a while, playing with them or watching as they play. You can reduce this as your child becomes more confident in their new environment.
- If your child is feeling a little anxious, try to be calm and acknowledge how they are feeling. When it's time to leave, let your child know you will be collecting them later in the day. Our educators will support your child to settle in and will keep you informed each day.
- When you collect your child, take some time to ask them about their day such as what they learnt and their favourite activity.

Privacy and confidentiality

WVELC is bound to protect the privacy of children, families and educators. Educators are only permitted to have access to personal information for professional and administrative purposes. Only information relevant to the centre will be kept on file.

Grievance concerns

We are here for you and your child, and if you have any concerns we want to address these immediately with the emphasis being placed on resolving issues in a professional manner. Constructive feedback provides us with the opportunity to grow professionally and to build stronger relationships, therefore speak with management or your child's Team Leader in the first instance. Private meetings can be arranged if required.

For further support you can also contact;

* Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA) team on 6207 1114 and ask to speak with a Children's Services Adviser.

* ACT Children and Young People Commissioner on 6205 2222 for an independent, fair and impartial consultation process regarding complaints about services for children and young people, including services provided by child care centres.

Cessation of care

You are required to provide the centre with a minimum of four weeks' notice if you no longer require our services. Fees must be paid up prior to leaving the centre, otherwise, your bond will be retained.

YOUR CHILD'S EARLY LEARNING

WVELC recognises parents as their child's first and most enduring teachers. Our educators will work in partnership with you to develop an early learning program that reflects and builds on your child's interests, curiosities and skills. Quality early learning programs will extend your child's learning and help them reach their full potential.

Learning Documentation

Educators follow the National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) as a guide to educationally and developmentally appropriate programs that are based on the interests and needs of children, as well as family input to assist in goal setting.

You can learn more about this framework by visiting <https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>

Educators value all the work children do in their play. Educators will capture, collate and document your child's work to ensure you have full access to all the stages of your child's learning and development. Documentation may include photographs, your child's words and dialogue, written observations, learning stories, group projects and investigations and samples of your child's work.

WVELC use Storypark to document children's learning. Storypark is a live, secure, login-based e-portfolio that will enable you to enjoy insights into your child's learning throughout the day. It will also allow you to contribute to and comment on what your child is doing. We encourage you to share information about your child and family with educators at every available opportunity.

Quality Programs

Our educators will design your child's learning program around their unique learning needs. Educators will structure the early learning program to maximize your child's opportunities and experiences to explore, grow and learn. Each of our early learning programs is responsive to its local environments. This will enable your child to understand a sense of place and culture in their immediate world.

Value of play

Play is children's important work. It is the vehicle for children to develop vital physical, social, cognitive and emotional skills. Play helps children make sense of their world and practice skills such as empathy and resilience.

Your child will have the opportunity to learn through a range of play-based activities and have fun.

Relationships for learning

Relationships with adults and other children are critical in children's early years. The relationship your child develops with their educator is a pathway for your child to experience separation, develop new relationships and practice their social and emotional skills. Working together, you can help your child gain the best possible early learning experience and ensure your child's experience is consistent with your values and culture.

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians – as individuals, families, communities, organisations and importantly as a nation. At the heart of this journey are relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We all have a role to play when it comes to reconciliation, and in playing our part we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and futures.

Woden Valley ELC Acknowledgement of Country



Yumalundi,
hello and welcome.

We at Woden Valley acknowledge the
Ngoonawal people as the
traditional custodians of this Country.

We are privileged to learn and play on this land.

Dhawra nguna dhawra Ngoonawal.

This land is Ngoonawal Country

We promise to take care of the land.

We promise to take care take care of the plants.

We promise to take care of the people.

We promise to take care of ourselves.



Taking on Language

This year as part of our Quality Improvement Plan, we are exploring the purposeful use of languages other than English through multiple literacy resources and tools (6.1.2 - The expertise, culture, language, values and beliefs of families are respected and used in relevance to the Service and its program).

Our journey began with Reconciliation Week when the United Nations declared the period 2022-2023 as the Decade of Indigenous Language. By offering fun provocations, the children interact with text and symbols and share meaning and an emerging understanding of the Ngoonawal language. We've used symbols and words on wooden discs, almost like sound buttons, to introduce our youngest to the concepts of texts and phonetics. These discs are designed to be exciting and an open-ended resources. Children have enjoyed jumping on them like an obstacle course, transporting them in many ways, using them in play to share knowledge and understanding, or rearranging them in meaningful ways to them. Ngoonawal Language has always been a part of Woden Valley ELC Acknowledgement of Country, and the children know the word Narragunnawali as a fun word to shout and hear in response, like announcing we are here. Its meaning, in Ngoonawal, is alive, well-being, coming together and peace.

NATURE PEDAGOGY

Nature pedagogy in early childhood education emphasizes the importance of fostering a strong connection between young children and the natural world. It promotes outdoor and nature-based learning experiences that encourage children to explore, play, and learn in natural environments. Nature pedagogy recognizes that exposure to nature can enhance children's physical, emotional, and cognitive development. It often involves activities like outdoor play, nature walks, gardening, and exploring the environment, fostering a sense of wonder, curiosity, and environmental stewardship. This approach not only supports holistic development but also helps instill a lifelong love for the natural world, promoting eco-consciousness and sustainability from an early age.

Access to Nature

Access to nature is profoundly beneficial for young children's development. Nature provides ample opportunities for physical activity, promoting physical fitness, balance, and coordination. Exposure to natural environments has a calming and stress-reducing effect, alleviating anxiety and improving attention spans. Nature sparks curiosity and creativity, providing a multisensory experience that stimulates imagination and problem-solving skills. Outdoor play encourages social interaction, teamwork, and communication, fostering essential social skills. Nature fosters emotional resilience as children learn to adapt to changing weather and terrain, building self-confidence. Early exposure to nature instills a sense of responsibility for the environment, promoting conservation and ecological values. Interacting with nature enhances cognitive development, including sensory perception, pattern recognition, and vocabulary enrichment. It serves as a natural classroom for scientific exploration, nurturing a sense of wonder and an interest in the sciences. Nature-based play teaches risk assessment and management, contributing to overall development and safety. Time spent in nature strengthens family bonds, offering shared experiences and quality time for children and caregivers. Incorporating nature into early childhood education provides a holistic approach to child development, nurturing physical, emotional, and intellectual growth, while instilling a lifelong appreciation for the natural world.



Animals

Woden Valley is a vibrant community that hosts a diverse array of farm and native animals, such as ducks, chickens, joeys, and reptiles. In our educational approach, we regard these animals as invaluable co-workers, playing a pivotal role in teaching our children vital life skills. Interacting with these animals encourages empathy, as children learn to understand and respect the needs and behaviors of these creatures. It instills essential qualities like impulse control and responsibility, as children take on tasks such as feeding and caring for the animals. Additionally, our animal friends foster a deep connection with the natural world, imparting valuable lessons about sustainability and the welfare of all living beings.

Interacting with and caring for farm animals in early childhood education offers numerous benefits for young children. It provides hands-on, sensory-rich learning experiences that promote empathy, responsibility, and a deeper understanding of the natural world. Children learn to care for and feed animals, fostering a sense of responsibility and empathy as they observe the needs and behaviors of the animals. These interactions also support the development of fine and gross motor skills and can enhance language and communication abilities through discussions about the animals' characteristics and behaviors. Additionally, it helps children build a connection to nature and the food production process, instilling values of sustainability and animal welfare from a young age. Overall, farm animal interactions provide a holistic and engaging educational experience for young children.



Sustainability

At Woden Valley, our commitment to environmental stewardship permeates every facet of our educational approach. We are dedicated to nurturing a child's profound connection with the planet, and we extend a warm invitation to parents and the community to join us in this shared mission. Sustainability is not just a concept here; it's a foundational value of our early learning center. Within our programs, children actively engage in sustainable practices. They participate in activities like cultivating their own food and caring for animals, gaining firsthand knowledge of these processes. Our curriculum includes initiatives to regenerate the land, encompassing endeavors such as native plantings and comprehensive learning experiences about the intricacies of nature's biology. Through these educational avenues, children develop a deep appreciation for their role in shaping the world and understanding the positive impact they can have on it.

Places & Spaces - Nature Walks

Our Nature Walk program - Places and Spaces is deeply rooted in the principles of exploration and fostering a profound connection with the natural world that envelops us. At its core, our program aims to nurture the children's capacity for keen observation and mindful interaction, cultivating a lasting respect for the land and its inhabitants. We have carefully crafted our approach, blending meticulously planned provocations that hold deliberate teaching objectives with spontaneous activities that organically sprout from the children's own inquisitiveness and passions.

To enrich the learning journey, we frequently weave engaging stories that draw inspiration from the rich tapestry of Australia's landscapes and its diverse wildlife, allowing the children to immerse themselves in captivating narratives. In an effort to enhance their cultural awareness and connection with the environment, we also encourage the children to embrace Ngunnawal words for naming the native animals we encounter, further deepening their appreciation of our indigenous heritage and the natural world around them.



FAQ

What happens when there is rain or extreme weather conditions?

We have many alternatives for children which can be used whatever the weather and during extreme weather conditions. We have a bell tent, an inside classroom, a workshop and an art studio that can be used. We support the children to play outside during light rain, although we will take them inside when it is raining heavily, or if it is very hot.

What about snakes?

Snakes are part of the Australian landscape. Our staff are trained to assist children to be safe in the environment, to check for signs of snake activity and have them removed by experts when required. We provide snake bite first aid kits to staff when in the outside environment, such as on Nature Walks.

What to bring?

Children who join Nature Walks must wear closed comfortable shoes and weather-suitable clothing. We also ask for each child to have their own water bottle and hat.

What if the child has an accident/incident?

If the child is involved in a minor accident, first aid can be provided to that child on the spot. In case of more serious accidents, the child will be brought to the closest 'meeting point' and either taken to the hospital or back to the Centre by additional personnel.

WELLBEING DOG PROJECT

Research has unequivocally demonstrated the manifold benefits of well-trained dogs in various settings. Scientific evidence underscores their remarkable capacity to alleviate stress, anxiety, and lower heart rates, creating a soothing presence. In the context of children, these furry companions play a pivotal role in emotional regulation, fostering social connections, and enhancing communication skills. Beyond this, dogs contribute to a more relaxed school environment, ultimately bolstering academic performance. Our initial observations indicate that neurodivergent children experience heightened calmness and attentiveness in the presence of dogs, particularly during group activities. Additionally, children grappling with severe separation anxiety exhibit immediate improvements in their well-being. For adults, dogs prove invaluable in trauma management, anxiety alleviation, mitigating the escalation cycle, nurturing leadership skills, and enhancing communication. They also cultivate empathy, bolster social awareness, and reduce reactivity

Project Background

The Dog Connect Program's inception occurred within Victorian school communities, and it has since proliferated to encompass over 250 schools across Australia. The introduction of well-being dogs has yielded tangible outcomes, including enhanced attendance rates and a heightened enthusiasm for learning among students. Both students and staff have attested to increased happiness and a notable reduction in anxiety across their respective communities. While some Canberra schools have embraced this program, official accreditation remains pending. Our approach entails a trial period to minimize financial commitments. It is imperative to clarify that the well-being dogs are meticulously selected to suit each unique environment and are not designated as therapy or assistance dogs.

Our program goes beyond traditional education by actively teaching children about dogs and how to handle them responsibly, significantly reducing accidents and anxiety within our community. Thus far, the success of this program has been remarkable. We maintain rigorous monitoring, with senior staff members consistently present when dogs are introduced into the classroom. Notably, the most significant positive impacts have been observed in our junior preschool, particularly among children with challenging behaviors and neurodiversity. We prioritize the comfort and safety of every child. If a child displays any reluctance or fear in interacting with the animals, our staff never compel them but instead provide understanding and assistance. We encourage open and honest communication with our families, welcoming them to inform us of any fears or allergies within their child or family. We are always prepared to provide alternative program options that suit individual needs.

FAQ

Are these dogs trained for obedience or companionship?

No, they are not service or companion dogs. They are well-being dogs chosen for their gentle and friendly nature, as well as their ability to interact with children.

What is an emotional support dog?

An emotional support dog is a type of assistance dog trained to provide comfort and support to individuals suffering from mental health conditions or emotional disorders. These dogs are not the same as service dogs, as they do not have specific training to perform tasks related to a person's disability. However, they are trained to provide emotional support and companionship and are often used to help alleviate anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Emotional support dogs are often used in therapy settings, but they can also be used in private homes or other settings where emotional support is needed.

Have the staff in each room received training on how to help kids interact with the dog/handler?

We are in the process of developing a program that a dog behaviourist will deliver. Furthermore, the official dog program includes six months of online staff training.



How are visits to classrooms scheduled and managed? Once the visit is over, where does the dog go? Is it taken home or kept in a kennel on-site or staff room?

To ensure that the children do not overwork the dog and have limited access to it, we have created a schedule to rotate the dogs and monitor age appropriateness. The dogs are kept on a lead most of the time and under the control of their handlers. We may allow the dogs off the lead for a short period during a nature walk, provided we feel comfortable. During each scheduled visit, the handler will remind the children about the proper approach to the dog, introduce themselves, and observe signs of safety before approaching. We do not allow the dogs to run around freely. Depending on the dog's situation, it will either go home or stay with the handler until the end of the work shift.

In the event that the dog displays aggressive behaviour, like growling or nipping at the children, how will the situation be handled? Will the dog continue to be allowed in the classroom?

Our Centre prioritises positive reinforcement in disciplining behaviours and does not condone physical punishment. While we do not anticipate any incidents of this nature occurring, if such an incident were to appear, we would remove the dog from the classroom and evaluate the situation to determine the cause. This is a part of our policy and procedure.

YOUR ROLE IN YOUR CHILD'S EARLY LEARNING JOURNEY



Your active participation in your child's early learning experience is a rewarding and enriching endeavor with benefits that extend far and wide. By becoming an integral part of your child's educational journey, you not only foster their growth and development but also contribute to the vibrancy of our centre and the local community. Active involvement and volunteering within our early learning services play a pivotal role in supporting your child's development. This engagement aids in building their sense of identity and belonging, fostering a strong foundation for their future. It is a chance for you to contribute to your child's learning and well-being actively. As you engage in voluntary participation within our service, you'll not only witness your child's growth firsthand but also have the opportunity to form lasting connections. You'll build valuable relationships with our educators and fellow community members, forging friendships that can last a lifetime. Your participation offers an unparalleled opportunity to gain insights into what happens within our centre. You'll learn more about the enriching experiences and educational activities that shape your child's daily life. We encourage your curiosity and welcome your ideas and suggestions to enhance our programs. We actively encourage family members to engage in diverse ways that suit their schedules and preferences. You might choose to be a family helper, assisting on a regular, occasional, or ad hoc basis. Alternatively, consider joining our centre's parent activity group, a dynamic community that meets regularly to exchange ideas, coordinate various activities, and plan events throughout the year. Your active involvement in this group will contribute to the service's ongoing growth and development. At our centre, we believe that your participation is the cornerstone of a rich and holistic learning experience for your child. Your involvement not only strengthens the foundation of our service today but also paves the way for a brighter and more vibrant future.

OUR COMMUNITY

About the Committee:

At Woden Valley ELC, we take immense pride in being a non-profit, community-based early learning center. Our operations are overseen by a dedicated Parent Committee, consisting of seven financial members of the incorporated association. This committee convenes monthly, actively shaping the financial and policy decisions that guide our center's mission.

Our Parent Committee serves as the cornerstone of our commitment to providing exceptional early childhood education and care. It is their duty to ensure the smooth functioning of our center, reflecting our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of quality and professionalism expected from an esteemed educational institution.

Working Bee and community engagement:

Children's connectedness and different ways of belonging with people, country and communities help them to learn ways of being which reflect the values, traditions and practices of their families and communities. That's why Working Bee and other community events are excellent ways for children to experience relationships and participate in community life, contributing to their belonging, being and becoming. Those positive and respectful experiences strengthen children's interests and skills in being and becoming active contributors to their world. As a community-based Service, we expect a level of engagement from all enrolled families.

Mission:

At the heart of our mission is the creation of an environment where families feel confident and comfortable entrusting their children to our care. We understand that choosing the right early learning center is a significant decision for families, and we strive to make this choice an easy one. Our commitment to providing a safe and supportive atmosphere is unwavering. We believe that the key to providing an outstanding early education experience lies in our team of dedicated educators. Our center is designed to be a place where high-quality educators are inspired to make a profound difference in the lives of young children. We provide them with the support and resources necessary to foster growth, learning, and development in our students.



**AGM ATTENDANCE IS
CRUCIAL FOR THE CENTRE'S
OPERATION.**

YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

We hold children's safety and well-being central to all our work in practice, recruitment, professional development, advocacy and policy work. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, we fully endorse the rights of all children to participate, have a purpose, be protected and ensure that prevention from risk and harm is paramount in all we do. We have a duty of care to ensure children in our centre are happy, safe and well and are empowered to have a voice.



Administration of medication

Our educators will not administer medication without a chemist's prescription label on it stating the child's name, product name, expiry date, the dosage required, times for administration, issuing pharmacist's name and the Doctor's name.

Unprescribed medication will NOT be given without a doctor's letter.

Panadol, Nurofen, Tylenol, Aspirin, and Dymadon are not kept in the centre and cannot be administered.

Health conditions

Please speak to educators if your child has a medical condition that requires treatment (e.g. asthma). Director will work with you to develop a plan that ensures your child can participate in all aspects of the program.

This will include developing:

- a Risk Minimisation Plan
- a Communication Plan
- an understanding of how to keep your child well
- an understanding of the signs and symptoms of your child's medical condition and their attention or treatment needs

Illness and infectious disease

WVELC will follow legislated procedures to promote children's health and minimise the spread of infection.

If your child has the following symptoms or illnesses, please keep them at home until they are completely well:

- high temperature (38° C or above)
- vomiting (if less than 24 hours since the last episode)
- loose bowel motions (if less than 24 hours since the last episode)
- rashes – any irritation that cannot be identified
- red, swollen or discharging eyes
- if your child seems sick without obvious symptoms. For example, they are unusually tired, irritable, lethargic, and not eating or drinking.

If your child develops any of these symptoms or illnesses while at their centre, they will need to be collected. Educators will ensure your child is comfortable and observed until this time. Details of your child's illness will be written in the Illness Record, which you will need to read and sign.

Please inform educators as soon as possible if your child is diagnosed with an infectious illness. Educators will need to alert all families at the service. Your confidentiality will be respected at all times.

Hand washing

Throughout the day educators model and encourage appropriate hygiene practices with the children. Parents are requested to wash or sanitize their child's hands ON ARRIVAL and BEFORE DEPARTURE at the centre daily.

Accidents and injuries

Even in the safest environments, accidents and injuries do occur. If your child is injured a detailed report will be prepared and discussed with you. In some instances, you will be notified by a courtesy call. If your child has a serious accident we will contact you immediately. In an emergency, the centre may need to contact emergency services. If an ambulance is required, the centre will not be held liable for medical or transport fees that may occur.

Immunization

Copies of your Child's Immunizations are to be given to the centre upon enrolment as this is a requirement of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and ACT Public Health Regulations. If there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease and your child has not been immunised against this, he/she may be excluded from care for as long as the outbreak continues. Parents have the responsibility to keep the centre informed of their child's updated immunisations. It is a requirement for children to be immunised to be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy.

Sun safety

Our duty of care extends to ensuring children, educators and visitors are protected from ultraviolet radiation from the sun. A combination of sun care measures will be implemented for outdoor play from 1 September until 30 April or whenever the UV index is three or above. Please remember to pack your child's hat and apply sunscreen during this time upon arrival.

Emergency procedures

Educators and children practice our Emergency Evacuation and Lock Down Drills every three months. They are practised at different times of the day so that all educators have an opportunity to participate and practice their roles.

The safety of the children is the educator's primary responsibility. All drills are recorded, and improvements are made where necessary. Educators and children meet at their assembly points which are identified in our Emergency Evacuation Plans.

For a practised drill a sign will be displayed on the front door – please do not enter the premises. If you are dropping off or collecting during either an Emergency Evacuation or Lock Down Drill, we ask you to wait until this is concluded before signing in or out to ensure the safety of all children and educators. Please follow the directions of team leaders or management in each instance if you happen to be on the premises during these drills.

Absences

In the interest of safety, please contact the centre via phone or email if your child is unable to attend due to holidays, sickness or other reasons.

The CCS will be paid for up to 42 absences (or otherwise advised by the government) for each child per financial year if you would have otherwise received a Child Care Subsidy on that day. This includes public holidays.

Please notify the centre prior to 10 am if your child is not attending or if they are arriving late.

Collection and access

To protect your child's safety, only the people authorised on your child's enrollment form can collect your child from kindergarten or their early learning centre. When someone other than a parent is coming to collect your child, we must be notified beforehand, and the person will need to produce photo identification.

If you have a legal agreement outlining custody or restraining arrangements, please provide the centre with a copy. Educators have a mandated responsibility to adhere to the Parenting Court Order.

A late payment fee of \$10 per minute will be incurred if children are collected after the centre has closed. If the child is not collected within 1 hour and no person listed on the enrollment form can be contacted, the centre will follow the abandoned child procedure.

Sign in and out

It is a legal and safety requirement for you to sign your child IN and OUT each time they attend the centre. We recheck the rolls at 10 am each day. If your child is accidentally marked absent or you arrived late, please speak to the office.

Please use one of the iPads to electronically sign in or out your child. Each parent and authorised person can use their individual mobile phone numbers and pins to log in to the system.

Child protection

Keeping children safe in care & the wider community is of paramount importance. All Early Childhood Professionals have a mandated responsibility to report any suspected abuse or neglect of children. Care & Protection Services phone (24hrs) 1300 556 729.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



Nutritional Meals

Your child's health is important to us, so our meals are nutritious and culturally balanced. If your child has a special dietary need or allergy we will attempt to accommodate their needs, or we may request you to provide alternatives. Please discuss your requests with the Director.

Approximate Meal Times:

Breakfast:	Finishes at 7:30 am
<small>(we encourage breakfast to be eaten before coming into the Centre)</small>	
Morning Tea:	From 9 am
Lunch:	From 11:30 am
Afternoon Tea:	From 3 pm
Late Snack:	5 pm

A daily menu is displayed on the Kitchen door and near the entry, as well as available on our website. The menu changes accordingly to the season and operates on a four-weekly rotation.

Responsive Meal Times

Educators respond to the needs of the children by being dynamic and flexible in our practices. Our Educators can provide a mealtime experience that meets the demands of each individual day. They use consistent cultural norms and ensure the children have a predictable routine so they feel safe and secure in their environment.

Breastfeeding and bottles

Breastfeeding is welcomed at WVVELC; please discuss this with the Koalas Team Leader if desired. You are welcome to visit your child's centre at any time to breastfeed your child.

Our Centre can provide any milk (full cream, soy, lactose-free, skim, rice, oat) your child may require. Formulas must be clearly labelled with the child's name and dosage.

Due to allergens, we are unable to support the intake of almond milk.

Celebrations

We love to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas and cultural events. Remember we are a NUT-FREE CENTRE. If you would like to celebrate an occasion with your child, please speak to the Team Leader.

Any food brought to the Centre must be clearly labelled with all allergens and ingredients present.

Please check the Story Park community board frequently as we run multiple celebrations throughout the year that sometimes require some preparation from the families. All events will be communicated to families in advance

Sleep and relaxation

Educators will create a calm and relaxing environment for your child to rest or sleep according to their needs throughout the day.

WVELC follows SIDS Safe Sleeping Practices which advises that all children are to be placed on their backs to sleep. For more information refer to our Sleep Rest and Relaxation Policy or go to www.rednose.com.au/section/safe-sleeping.

During warmer days children may be encouraged to sleep outdoors. Please follow us on Facebook to find out all benefits of this practise.

"Let the child be free; encourage them; let them run outside when it's raining; let them remove their shoes when they find a puddle of water..."

- Maria Montessori



Dressed for play

We encourage clothes and shoes that allow children to feel comfortable and which are suitable for “messy and active” play. Children’s clothing should allow for freedom of movement but allow children to play safely. Clothes that fit properly, without being too loose or too tight will allow children to move without restrictions enabling them to freely participate in experiences.

When weather permits children are encouraged to engage in barefoot play. We recognise the benefits to a child’s development by being barefoot. When in the garden or on nature walks children must wear shoes that are enclosed and allow a firm grip. Thongs, clogs and moccasins are not appropriate footwear.

Earrings, jewellery and amber beads

Earrings, jewellery and Amber Beads have the potential to choke a child and can become caught during play and interactions, therefore we discourage them from being worn while at the centre. If your child has pierced ears we only allow small studs. The centre is not responsible for lost or damaged jewellery.

Toys and comforters

We do not encourage children to bring in toys, valuable items, etc into the centre as they are easily lost, broken or can cause disagreements between children. Exceptions are comfort toys/blankets. From time to time we may have “show and tell” sessions where children can bring in something special. This will be determined by the Team Leaders.

The centre is not responsible for lost or damaged toys.

Inclusion Support

We’re committed to providing accessible early learning and care centres that meet the needs of all children and families. In some circumstances, extra support can be provided to children and families with additional needs. Please speak to your child’s educator if your family or child will require additional support to access the early learning program fully.



Important numbers

Children’s Education and Care Assurance (CECA) – 0206207 1114
ACT Children and Young People Commissioner – 02 6205 2222
Emergency – 000
Care and Protection – 1300 556 729
Police Assistance – 131 444
Centrelink (for CCS information) - 136 150
Poisons Information – 131 126
Beyond Blue - 1300 22 4636
PANDSI (Post & Ante Natal Depression Support and Information) – 6288 1936
Australian Breastfeeding Association – 1800 686 268



Centre Numbers and Emails:

Main Line - 02 6282 6648
Emergency Phone - 0478 631 406

Director's email - wvccc@iinet.net.au
Assistant Director email- acc.wvccc@iinet.net.au
Pedagogical Leader email - pdwvccc@iinet.net.au
Nature Pedagogy Leader email - suswvccc@iinet.net.au
Committee email - comwvccc@gmail.com

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does my child need to bring each day?

Your child will need a bag containing:

- Water bottle
- Closed-toed shoes for Narragunnawali visits and excursions
- SunSmart Hat (broad brim)
- Sunscreen: we do provide this, however, some families prefer to bring their own (especially in the event of allergies)
- Plenty of spare clothes appropriate to daily weather forecasts (rain, hail, wind or shine!)
- We recommend "Muddlarks" brand or similar wet weather clothing in winter and gumboots
- Enough nappies or spare underwear for the day.
- You may also wish to provide nappy rash creams (we provide Sudocream and PawPaw)

Will my child always have the same educators?

All our educators are permanent staff members, the majority of whom work in a full-time capacity. Educators are assigned to one room and one shift for a whole year. This means that your child will have consistent staff throughout the day and the week.

What happens when there is rain?

The children will spend time outside every day, regardless of the weather, so clothing should be warm and preferably waterproof. Clothes for wet weather should include gum boots, wet weather overalls and a coat with a hood.

Does Woden Valley close over the Christmas Period?

We close for two weeks over the Christmas break, between Christmas Day and New Year's Day Public Holidays. This shutdown period is subject to change and is free of charge for families.

How does Woden Valley manage Public Holidays?

We do not open on Public Holidays, and yes, fees are charged for Public Holidays. Public holidays are state and nationally-recognised holidays intended for celebrations, and memorials and to support workers with work/life balance. If your regular enrolment falls on the day of a Public Holiday, you will incur the normal fees for that day, and the child will be marked absent.

Do I have to pay to keep my booking when I go on holiday?

Yes, if you wish to keep your spot in the Centre. It is important to note that the CCS is applied to 42 absent days per year. This means that CCS continues to be applied when you take holidays.

What is the Bond Fee?

Centre charges a \$550 bond upon offer of the placement. The Bond amount does NOT have the CCS applied. A bond is a security payment to secure your spot with us and to protect against families leaving with outstanding fees.

It is refunded to your selected account at the cease of your enrolment provided that four [4] weeks' notice is given and your account is up to date.

OUR PUBLICATIONS

The Book Book Book: Chickens in Early Childhood Settings

by Gabby Millgate

This Book Book Book is for teachers and children to learn about chickens together. Its pages contain everything you need to know about chickens. If you are thinking about getting chickens for your early childhood setting, you need this book. If you already have chickens, this book will continue your journey of learning about them with the children.

This full-colour, A4, 124-page resource is not just a fabulous book, but one that you'll delight in reading with children and learning all about raising chickens.



My Promise

by P.J.Guss

"My Promise" is an exceptional book for early childhood educators, written by author P.J. Guss with the educators and children at Woden Valley Early Childhood Centre in Canberra, Australia.

With its stunning illustrations and intriguing heart-warming text, the story promotes opportunities for young children to learn and explore nature through hands-on experiences, recognising their connection, rights and responsibilities to the land, challenging their abilities and finding a sense of self. This book is a must for every early learning centre.

