



Woden Valley
Early Learning Centre



2022

**PARENT
HANBOOK**

YUMALUNDI AND WELCOME TO WODEN VALLEY CHILD CARE CENTRE



Centre management

Woden Valley Early Learning Centre is a Community Based Non - Profit early learning centre managed by a Parent Committee. We have been continuously operating since 1992. We are an approved service providing high-quality care and education for children from 0 to 5 years old.

Our Centre is your child's new world. For many children, it will be their first time away from family and friends, so it is important that they feel comfortable and secure in their new environment right from the start. It is very important for you as a parent, and us as early childhood professionals to work together sharing information about your child and their learning, so that the transition from home to the Centre is as smooth as possible.

The Centre is open Monday to Friday from 6.30 am to 6.00 pm, 50 weeks of the year (excluding public holidays and one professional development day per year).

The benefits of choosing WVCCC:

- Approved Centre Based Care
- A variety of programs delivered by qualified and experienced educators fostering children's holistic learning
- Dedicated Educational Pedagogy Leaders who specialise in guiding and enhancing the holistic nature of early childhood educators' professional practice, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning.
- A Nature Pedagogical Leader who specialises in the art of teaching and learning with nature inside a classroom, outside in nature and then beyond in wilder spaces.
- Child Care Subsidy available to eligible families
- Competitive fees
- Higher ratios of educators working directly with the children

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



A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Woden Valley ELC is committed to providing consistent best-practice and high-quality educational experiences through your child's time in our centre.

Quality Educators

The centre aims to employ educators with a strong commitment to the care and education of children in a Long Day Care setting. Our qualified educators hold Bachelor's Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates that are nationally recognised or are actively 'working towards' one of these qualifications. All educators hold a current Working with Vulnerable People Card, with all qualified educators requiring having a current approved First Aid Certificate (HLTAID004). The centre closes for one day each year for Professional Development purposes. Each educator is expected to participate in the professional development so they can continue to build their practice, skills and experience.

The assessment and rating process

The Australian Childhood Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) regulates all early childhood programs to ensure they meet a national standard. Our early learning program outshines both state and national benchmarks for Meeting and Exceeding National Quality Standards. WVELC have undergone a rating and assessment process in 2018. You can contribute to our continuous improvement plan (QIP) by providing us with feedback written or verbal.

Quality Environments

Your child's learning environments will be engaging and inviting. They will feature natural, sustainable and quality equipment for experimentation and play. Our service operate an indoor / outdoor curriculum throughout the year so children have choices about where to play. Our preschool room also run a bush classroom, with regular nature walks provided.

Our centre puts special emphasis on the outdoor play, which enables children to understand their world through weather, planting, flora and fauna. It allows children to explore their environment and understand their place and impact on their surrounding.



ENROLING FOR EARLY LEARNING

Starting childcare is a special time for families. Your child can look forward to engaging in new experiences, developing friendships, and learning valuable lifelong skills. Before your child starts, there are some things you can do to help ensure your child enjoys a smooth transition.

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 needs.

It is extremely important to keep your enrolments up to dated all the time.

Child Care Subsidy

The Commonwealth Government provides the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to eligible families that reduces 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. Once your enrolment is created families are required to confirm the enrolment with the service online via the mygov website. For more information go to; <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

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.

Orientation process

We expect families to bring their child for orientation 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 sharing valuable care-giving strategies to support their transition.

Fee payment

It is centre policy that fees are paid 2 weeks' in advance. We only accept EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) to pay fees. A bond of \$550 is also required to secure the placement.

Account Name: Woden Valley Child Care Centre

BSB: 112 908

Account Number: 0406 431 82

Reference: Parent/Family Name – NB: when paying the bond ONLY please add BOND to the end of family name e.g. Smith BOND

Fees that are left outstanding for more than 14 days will incur at 10% surcharge, 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.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please speak to the Director immediately.

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.

We invite you to review our policies, which cover all aspects of operation, quality, health, safety and wellbeing in our centres.

If you have questions or feedback, please speak to your child's educator.

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.



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 on 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.

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 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 having 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.

NATURE PEDAGOGY

Your child's learning environments will be engaging and inviting. They will feature natural, sustainable and quality equipment for experimentation and play.

Our service operate an indoor / outdoor curriculum throughout the year so children have choices about where to play, however we put special emphasis on the outdoor play, which enables children to understand their world through weather, planting, flora and fauna. It allows children to explore their environment and understand their place and impact on their surrounding. The children are supported to engage in meaningful interactions with the land, animals and plants and the whole community is educated in the importance of sustainable ways of living. If children so wish, they can be involved in composting and preparing garden beds, help to look after the animals like chickens, ducks and frogs, or be involved with tending to the plants, like flowers, grasses or edibles that they are free to pick and eat.

Nature Walks

Nature play significantly improves all aspects of child development – physical, cognitive, social and emotional. They use the resources that surround them to explore their world. Playing outdoor grows resilience, self-confidence, initiative, creativity and more. Who wouldn't want to have bare feet, dirty hands and feel energised?

One of our key themes is to “to inspire children to take up a lifelong active engagement with the natural environment.” The children are able to discuss, be immersed in the physical changes to their environment, and map this according to what they already know or would like to discover. It removes any previous boundaries and opens possibilities across all ages.

Outside play encourages children to explore, to experience a sense of wonder, to develop problem-solving skills, and to develop a shared respect for each other when they ensure their own safety and that of others.

Program

Children at Woden Valley are free to climb, run, jump, crawl and orientate themselves through obstacles, and can do it all year round in our expansive play spaces. Children free to explore, build their sense of community and navigate their understanding of how to become an active member.

The Woden Valley connection to the environment and the community is built upon by the program delivered by Tyrone Bell and his colleagues at Thunderstone. They share their knowledge of the Aboriginal culture, encompassing land, animal, people, language and expression. They help us explore the messages and teachings that are present in our natural environment, helping to remove us from any simulated life. Each season and each landscape are seen as a new learning opportunity which can bring forward new information. By encouraging children during their early years to see their own impact on the Earth and on each other, we are setting them and the environment up with a better future.



Animals

Woden Valley is home to a diverse group of farm and native animals including ducks, chickens, joeys and reptiles. The animals are considered co-workers and teach the children about empathy, impulse control, responsibility and caring for the natural world.

When children care for the animals by feeding, cleaning their water troughs and sleeping spaces, they take on the responsibility of caring for another living creature. As they play and learn in the animal's spaces, they learn empathy and respectful sharing of their environment. As they wash their hands before and after entering the Narragunnawali garden, they become aware of hygiene and looking after their own health and the health of the animals. When children collect the animal's droppings for the compost bay, they learn about recycling and rejuvenating the soil. As they collect the eggs, they understand that animals will provide for us. As they experience the pregnancy of the animals and the incubation of the eggs, they learn about life.

Sustainability

Pedagogy at Woden Valley Early Learning Centre is modelled on sustainable living within the natural environment. As we learn by experience and discover new ways of practise, we refine our pedagogy program.

We incorporate connections with the environment in all our actions from nurturing a child's connection with the planet to welcoming parents and the community to join us in our mission. Children at Woden Valley will learn about the benefits of sustainable activities being a founding value of our early learning centre. In all programs, children will be involved in growing food and looking after animals. They will participate in programs to re-generate the land such as with native plantings, learning about the biology of nature, or the impact we can have on the world.

PARTICIPATING IN YOUR CHILD'S EARLY LEARNING



Your involvement in your child's early learning experience will reward you, your child, the service and local community. Parental participation and volunteering in early learning services supports children's development, building their sense of identity and belonging. Through your voluntary participation in the service, you'll also make friends and build connections with educators and local community members. You'll learn more about what happens in the service and be encouraged to contribute your ideas and suggestions.

Family members are encouraged and actively supported to contribute in a variety of ways. You may like to be a family helper on a regular, occasional or ad hoc basis. You might also consider being part of the service's parent activity group, which will meet regularly to share ideas and coordinate a range of activities and events throughout the year to strengthen the service now and into the future.

Ways you can be involved:

- Providing feedback regularly and participating in our parent surveys.
- Participating in community/social events and supporting fundraising
- Attending parent information evenings.
- Participating in the review of the service's philosophy.
- Participating in the development and review of the service's quality improvement plan.
- Speak to your child's educator about ways you can become involved in the centre.

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 prescription label on it stating the child's name, product name, expiry date, 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, Asprin, 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

WVVELC 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, 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, as per the Hygiene Policy to wash 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.

Emergency procedures

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

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 on our Emergency Evacuation Plans.

For a practiced 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 premises during these drills.

Absences

In the interest of safety, please contact 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 for each child per financial year if you would have otherwise received Child Care Subsidy on that day. This includes public holidays.

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

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 enrollment form can be contacted, the centre will follow 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. Children not signed in or out correctly will be presumed to be absent.

Please use one of the iPads to electronically sign in or out your child.

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 nutritiously 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 7:30am (we encourage breakfast to be eaten before coming into the Centre)
Morning Tea:	From 9am
Lunch:	From 11:30am
Afternoon Tea:	From 3pm
Late Snack:	5pm

Water and milk are provided throughout the day. Daily menu is displayed on the Kitchen door and near the entry.

Breastfeeding and bottles

If your child has formula throughout the day, please provide the required number of bottles with the formula already made up; the centre will supply cows milk (or alternatives) when your child is ready for it. Please ensure all bottles are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Breastfeeding is welcomed at WVELC; please discuss this with the Team Leader if desired. You are welcome to visit your child's centre at any time to breastfeed your child. Educators will help you find a comfortable environment for you to breastfeed in.

Celebrations

We like 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.

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.

WVLC 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.

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 which enclose their feet 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 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 centers 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) – 6207 1114

ACT Children and Young People Commissioner – 6205 2222

Emergency (Fire, Ambulance, Police) – 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

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, majority of who works 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 water proof. Clothes for wet weather should include gum boots, wet weather overalls and coat with 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 shut down period is subject to change and is free of charge for the 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, 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 \$550 bond upon offer of the placement. The Bond amount does NOT have the CCS applied. 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.