

2027

FAMILY 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 childcare facility; we are a warm and welcoming community dedicated to nurturing your child's growth, learning and development. As a community-based, not-for-profit centre managed by a Parent Management Committee, we have proudly supported families and provided high-quality early childhood education and care since 1992.

We take great pride in being an approved education and care service, providing high-quality learning experiences for children aged 0 to 5 years. Our team of dedicated early childhood professionals is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where every child feels valued, supported and empowered to thrive.

We are open Monday to Friday, from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, offering flexibility and convenience for busy families. Our Centre operates for 50 weeks of the year, excluding public holidays, our annual closure period and one designated professional development day.

At Woden Valley Early Learning Centre, we offer permanent enrolment places, subject to availability. Consistent attendance provides children with opportunities to develop strong, meaningful relationships with our experienced and caring educators, fostering a sense of belonging, security and trust.

The benefits of choosing Woden Valley ELC:

- **Passionate Educators:** Our highly qualified, experienced and dedicated professionals are committed to providing exceptional early childhood education and care.
- **Long-Established Team:** Many of our educators have been with us for over 10–20 years, providing consistency, strong relationships and a sense of belonging.
- **Above Minimum Staffing Ratios:** We strive to operate above prescribed ratios, allowing for more individualised attention and meaningful interactions.
- **Nature Pedagogy:** We embrace outdoor learning, nature walks, sustainability and environmental exploration as essential parts of our curriculum.
- **Play-Based Learning:** Our programs encourage curiosity, creativity, independence, problem-solving and learning through hands-on experiences.
- **Strong Community Connections:** As a not-for-profit Centre, we value genuine partnerships with families and a welcoming, inclusive community.
- **Commitment to Excellence:** Proudly rated Exceeding the National Quality Standard across all seven Quality Areas and two Excellence criteria.

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



OUR PHILOSOPHY

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

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..."

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

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 Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) diligently oversees all early childhood programs to ensure they align with rigorous national standards. We are proud to share that in 2025, Woden Valley Early Learning Centre underwent a comprehensive Assessment and Rating process and was awarded an Exceeding rating in all seven Quality Areas.

This outstanding result demonstrates our unwavering commitment to providing the highest standards of education, care, and practice for children and families.

Your feedback is invaluable to us as we continue striving for excellence. We warmly invite you to contribute to our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) by sharing your thoughts, either in writing or through conversation with us. Together, we can ensure that our service continues to grow, improve, and deliver the very best learning environment for every child.





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

All sections of your child's enrolment form must be completed and submitted before their commencement date. This is a regulatory requirement and ensures educators have the necessary information to understand and support your child's individual needs.

Orientation process

All families are required to complete a minimum of five orientation sessions before their child's commencement date. While these sessions are provided free of charge, attendance is mandatory. Orientations allow children and families to build trusting relationships with educators, become familiar with the new environment and share valuable information about individual routines, needs and caregiving practices to support a smooth and positive transition into care.

Child Care Subsidy

The Australian Government provides the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to eligible families to help reduce childcare costs. We recommend applying at least 21 days before commencement, as full fees will apply until CCS eligibility and enrolment are confirmed in our management system.

Policies and procedures

As part of our commitment to sustainability and reducing paper waste, we no longer provide printed copies of our policies and procedures. All Centre policies, procedures and relevant National Laws and Regulations are accessible electronically via our website and Storypark, with QR codes displayed throughout the Centre for easy access.

Fee payment

Woden Valley Early Learning Centre is an approved service that administers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) on behalf of the Australian Government. Eligible families receive their CCS entitlement as a reduction in childcare fees. Families receive weekly invoices outlining fees, CCS payments and the remaining balance payable. Our current fee schedule is provided during the enrolment process.

Fees must be paid two weeks in advance, and payments are accepted via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) only.

Account Name: Woden Valley Child Care Centre
BSB: 112 908
Account Number: 0406 431 82
Reference: Child's Full Name

Debt Management

Timely payment of fees is an expectation, not a choice. As a not-for-profit service, we rely on fees being paid in full to maintain quality education, staffing, meals and daily operations.

Overdue fees will incur surcharges.

Continued non-payment may result in termination of enrolment and referral to a debt collection agency, in accordance with our policies.

Families experiencing financial difficulties must contact the Director promptly to discuss a payment plan.



Once your child starts

- Build positive relationships with your child's educators. Greet them by name when you arrive and, if time permits, engage in an activity together with your child.
- Allow time to settle. Initially, you may wish to stay with your child for a little while, playing alongside them or observing their play. Gradually reduce this time as your child becomes more confident and comfortable in their new environment.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings. If your child is feeling anxious, remain calm and offer reassurance. When it is time to leave, say goodbye and let them know you will return later in the day. Our educators will support your child's transition and keep you informed of their progress.
- Connect at the end of the day. When collecting your child, take time to talk about their experiences, what they have learned and what they enjoyed most.

Privacy and confidentiality

WVELC is committed to protecting the privacy of children, families and educators. Personal information is securely stored and accessed only by authorised staff for professional, administrative or regulatory purposes.

Grievance concerns

At WVELC, we value open communication and constructive feedback as opportunities to improve our practices and strengthen relationships with families. We encourage families to raise concerns promptly with their child's Team Leader or Centre Director so they can be addressed fairly, respectfully and professionally. Private meetings can be arranged when required.

We have zero tolerance for rude, aggressive, threatening or abusive behaviour towards our educators, management, children or other families. All communication must remain respectful and professional, even during disagreements. Inappropriate behaviour will be addressed in accordance with our Centre's policies.

Families may also seek external support through:

- Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA): 02 6207 1114
- ACT Children and Young People Commissioner: 02 6205 2222

Cessation of care

Families are required to provide a minimum of four weeks' written notice when ceasing enrolment. All outstanding fees must be paid in full before departure. Any unpaid fees will be deducted from the enrolment bond, with any remaining debt payable by the family.

YOUR CHILD'S EARLY LEARNING

WVELC recognises parents as their child's first and most enduring teachers. Our educators work in partnership with families to develop meaningful early learning programs that reflect and build upon each child's interests, curiosity, strengths and abilities. Through high-quality educational experiences, we aim to nurture every child's learning, development and individual potential.

Learning Documentation

Our educators follow the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF V2.0) – Belonging, Being and Becoming to design meaningful, developmentally appropriate educational programs based on children's interests, strengths, abilities and individual needs. Family input is valued and incorporated into learning goals and curriculum planning.

You can learn more about the EYLF by visiting the Australian Government Department of Education.

We recognise and value the learning that occurs through play. Educators observe, assess and document children's learning and development through photographs, conversations, written observations, learning stories, projects and samples of children's work.

WVELC uses Storypark, a secure, online learning documentation platform that allows families to follow their child's learning journey, view observations and contribute through comments and shared experiences.

We encourage families to actively participate by sharing information about their child's interests, achievements, experiences and family life to strengthen the connection between home and the Centre.

Quality Programs

Our educators thoughtfully design educational programs that reflect each child's unique interests, strengths, abilities and developmental needs. Through play-based learning, exploration and meaningful experiences, children are encouraged to develop confidence, curiosity and a lifelong love of learning.

Our programs embrace the local environment, community and culture, fostering children's sense of belonging, connection to Country and understanding of the world around them.

Value of play and relationships

Play is fundamental to children's learning and development. Through meaningful, play-based experiences, children develop essential physical, social, cognitive and emotional skills, while building creativity, resilience and confidence.

Positive, trusting relationships with educators and peers are equally important. These connections foster a sense of belonging, emotional security and social competence, supporting children as they explore, learn and grow.

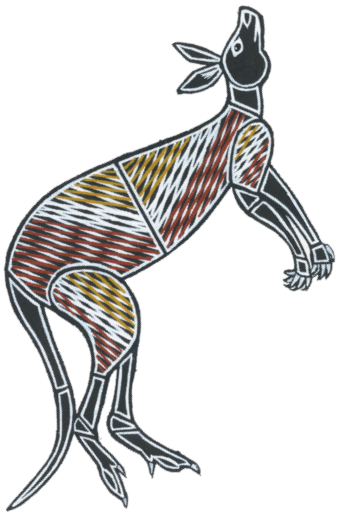
We value strong partnerships with families to ensure every child's learning journey reflects their individual needs, culture and experiences.

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is a shared journey that recognises and celebrates the histories, cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. At WVELC, we are committed to building respectful relationships, fostering cultural understanding and embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our everyday practices.

We believe that reconciliation is everyone's responsibility and that, together, we can create an inclusive community built on respect, recognition and belonging.

Woden Valley ELC Acknowledgement of Country



Yumalundi,
hello and welcome to
Woden Valley Early Learning Centre.

We at Woden Valley ELC acknowledge the Ngoonawal people as the traditional custodians of this Country.
We are grateful 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 of the plants.
We promise to take care of the people.
We promise to take care of ourselves.



At WVELC, we celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity by incorporating languages other than English into our everyday educational programs. We value the languages, cultures and traditions of our families, encouraging children to explore communication through stories, music, symbols and play.

As part of our ongoing commitment to reconciliation, we embed First Nations languages, cultures and perspectives into our curriculum. We proudly collaborate with Tyronne Bell and Jai Bell, as well as Duncan Smith OAM and Jakida Smith from Wiradjuri Echoes, to provide authentic cultural learning experiences.

Our Acknowledgement of Country and Narragunnawali Garden further strengthen children's connection to Country, cultural understanding and sense of belonging.

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, bunnies 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 MANDATORY!

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

Educators will only administer prescribed medication provided in its original packaging, with a pharmacy label clearly stating the child's name, medication name, dosage, administration instructions and expiry date. Parent/guardian authorisation is required before administration.

Non-prescribed medication will only be administered with written medical advice and parental authorisation, in accordance with our Medication Policy.

WVELC does not keep or routinely administer fever-reducing or pain-relief medications, including Panadol, Nurofen, Tylenol, Aspirin or Dymadon.

Medical Conditions

Families must inform the Centre of any medical conditions requiring ongoing management or treatment, such as asthma, allergies or anaphylaxis.

The Director will work collaboratively with families to develop appropriate Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plans, supported by a current Medical Management Plan from a healthcare professional.

These plans ensure educators understand your child's condition, recognise symptoms, respond appropriately and support their safe and inclusive participation in all aspects of the program.

Illness and Exclusion from Care

WVELC follows the National Health and Medical Research Council's Staying Healthy guidelines and ACT Health requirements to protect children's wellbeing and minimise the spread of infectious diseases.

Please keep your child at home if they are unwell or experiencing:

- Fever (38°C or above)
- Vomiting or diarrhoea (48 hours symptom-free before returning)
- Unexplained rashes accompanied by other concerning symptoms
- Red, swollen or discharging eyes
- Unusual tiredness, lethargy, irritability or inability to participate comfortably in daily activities

If your child becomes unwell while attending the Centre, families will be contacted to arrange prompt collection. Educators will ensure your child is comfortable and supervised until collection.

Families must notify the Centre of any diagnosed infectious illness. Where required, we will inform other families and relevant authorities while maintaining confidentiality.

Additional exclusion periods may apply depending on the illness, in accordance with our Infectious Diseases Policy and current health advice.

Hygiene Practices

Educators model and promote good hygiene practices throughout the day. Families are required to wash or sanitise their child's hands upon arrival and before departure to help maintain a healthy environment and minimise the spread of infections.

Accidents and injuries

Despite our commitment to maintaining a safe environment, accidents and injuries can occur. All incidents are documented, and families will be informed and provided with an incident report.

For minor injuries, families may receive a courtesy call. In the event of a serious injury or emergency, families will be contacted immediately, and emergency services will be called if required.

Please note that families are responsible for any ambulance, medical or transport costs incurred, in accordance with our policies and applicable laws.

Immunization

Families must provide their child's Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement upon enrolment and keep the Centre updated with any changes. Children who are not fully immunised may be excluded from care during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, in accordance with ACT Health requirements. Child Care Subsidy (CCS) eligibility requires children to be up to date with immunisations, following an approved catch-up schedule or holding a recognised medical exemption.

Sun Protection

WVELC is committed to protecting children, educators and visitors from harmful UV radiation. Sun protection measures are implemented from 1 September to 30 April, or whenever the UV index reaches 3 or above.

Families are reminded to provide a sun-safe hat and apply sunscreen 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 proved 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.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD SAFE PRACTICES

At WVELC, the safety, wellbeing and protection of every child are our highest priorities. We believe every child has the right to feel safe, respected, valued and supported to thrive.

Our policies and practices align with the National Quality Standard, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and relevant ACT child protection legislation.

Child safety is embedded in our everyday practices, and all educators, staff, volunteers, students and contractors share the responsibility of maintaining a safe, inclusive and child-focused environment.

What is Mandatory Reporting?

Mandatory reporting is a legal responsibility requiring educators and other mandated professionals to report certain suspected instances of child abuse or harm to the appropriate authorities. All members of our community, including families, are encouraged to speak up if they have concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing involves speaking up about suspected misconduct, unsafe practices, inappropriate behaviour or breaches of child safety standards. Concerns may involve educators, management, visitors or any other person associated with our Service.

How Can You Raise a Concern?

Families are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the Centre Director or the Parent Management Committee. Alternatively, concerns can be reported directly to external authorities, including:

- Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA): 02 6207 7581
- Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS): For concerns about suspected child abuse or neglect.
- ACT Police: 000 if a child is in immediate danger.

All concerns will be taken seriously, handled sensitively and addressed in accordance with our policies and legal obligations. You do not need proof of wrongdoing to raise a genuine concern.

Accessing Our Policies

Our Child Protection, Complaints and Grievances, and other relevant policies are available on our website. QR codes are displayed throughout the Centre to provide families with quick and convenient access.

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
(we encourage breakfast to be eaten before coming into the Centre)	
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 WVELC; 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 Land Line - 02 6282 6648
After Hours Mobile - 0494781089 (text only)

Director's email - director@wvccc.com.au

Assistant Director email- accounts@wvccc.com.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.

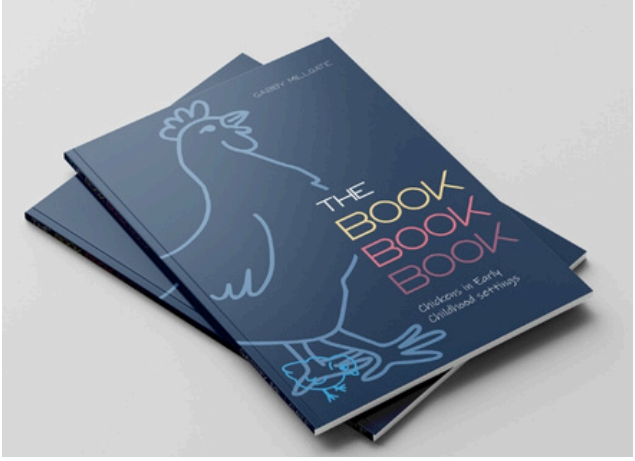
OUR PUBLICATIONS

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.



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https://www.facebook.com/wodenvalleyccc/

https://www.wodenvalleychildcare.com.au/