



Discovery
Early Education & Care Centre

Family Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome and thank you for choosing Discovery Early Education and Care Centre.

We will work closely with your family to build positive and meaningful relationships to help us create an education and care environment, where your child is valued and their abilities and routines are respected.

We aim to encourage a real sense of community spirit as we develop our new centre to provide an inclusive, innovative and responsive education and care experience for your child.

We hope that this handbook provides you with the information you require to ensure your child has a positive start to their journey at Discovery.

Warm regards

Kerrie Rowlandson

Director

Our Philosophy

At Discovery Early Education & Care Centre, we recognise the importance of play as one of the main ways in which children learn and develop. Each child is viewed as an individual, with unique strengths and interests. We view each child as competent in and able to make their own choices about learning as they strive to make meaning about themselves and the world around them.

We believe that by providing a warm, nurturing and secure environment which supports children's learning, will contribute to a strong foundation for life-long learning. We believe in providing educators that are nurturing, experienced, qualified and professional. We believe that early childhood is a vital period in children's learning and development and recognise that all children have the right to be valued as individuals and as contributing members of their family, community and society.

Belonging - We create a sense of belonging through supporting secure, respectful and life enhancing relationships.

We promote relationships that build trust. We do this by respecting and honouring collaborations between educators, children, their families and partnerships within the wider community. We believe families should be given opportunities to participate and contribute in all areas of the Centre programme and experiences. As educators we recognize the need to build our capacity to support high quality inclusion for all children through working collaboratively with families and participation in professional learning. We place equal importance on utilising our educator's personal attributes through reflective practices and we genuinely enjoy working well as a team.

Being - We practice in ways which recognises the here and now in children's lives.

We value each child as competent, powerful and an active contributor to her/his own learning. We understand intentional teaching as a way to build upon each child's existing knowledge and experience. We believe in a sense of agency by taking pride in capturing each learning moment as children plan, play, try new things and have fun.

Becoming - We believe in the importance of the early years as a time of developing and shaping children's identity.

We honour diversity by embracing secure respectful reciprocal relationships accepting each personality. We do this through our interactions and creating environments for children that allow them access to meaningful participation in our program. As early childhood professionals, we extend each child's interest and support individual strengths by role modelling and positive reinforcement. Through detailed observations and connections with children we build and scaffold their learning.

Service Information

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre is a Long Day Care Centre catering for children aged six weeks to school age. The service is approved to provide education and care to 84 children per day. The Centre has four purpose built indoor learning areas that are allocated to groups of children based on their age.

Nursery - Children, 0-2 years

Toddler - Children, 2-3 years

Preschool - Children, 3-4 years

Transition - Children, 4-5 years

Children move between rooms once they reach an appropriate age or stage of development. Transition visits occur to allow the child an opportunity to become familiar with the new room, educators, children and routines.

Transition to the next room is based on each individual child's readiness to cope, and on each family's needs. If no vacancy exists in the next room, the child will remain in the existing room until a space becomes available.

Parents/carers will be consulted in regard to any change in rooms for their child.

PLEASE NOTE: Your child will still receive an individualised program to suit his/her needs and stage of development, whichever room they are in.

Hours of operation

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre operates Monday to Friday, 6:30am to 6:30pm. Discovery is closed on Public Holidays.

Contact details

- Street address: 2 Menzies Street, Thrumster NSW, 2444
- Phone Number: 0265 161 900
- Email: admin@discoveryearlyeducation.com.au
- Website: www.discoveryearlyeducation.com.au

Service Management

At centre opening Discovery Early Education & Care Centre will be an approved service under the National Quality Framework (NQF) and operates in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations.

Approval number: PR-40005796

Provider details: DISCOVERY EARLY EDUCATION PTY LTD

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) has been designed to encourage continuous improvement of education and care services across Australia. One of its important features is that it sets out a series of National Quality Standards (NQS) against which all early childhood education & care services will be assessed and given a rating.

The seven quality areas are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's Health and Safety
3. The physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

Our three main regulatory bodies are:

Department of Education and Communities – Early Childhood Education and Care (Education and Care Service Regulations 2011) – Discovery will undergo monitoring and licensing visits to ensure our compliance with these regulations. For more information, visit www.dec.nsw.gov.au

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – National Quality Framework – National Quality Standards – In 2012 the National Quality Framework was introduced including the Regulations and the National Quality Standards. For more information, visit www.acequa.gov.au

The Department of Education – Discovery Early Education & Care Centre is subject to regular audits in relation to care arrangements and Child Care Benefit through the Child Care Management System. For more information, visit www.education.gov.au

Staffing

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre is staffed by a professional team with a wide range of qualifications and experience. These qualifications include Early Childhood teachers (Degree qualified), Diploma in Children's Services, Certificate III in Children's Services, Trainees working towards an Early Childhood Qualification, Food Safety and Handling Qualifications, and Work Health and Safety Training. All staff will have current first aid, asthma, and anaphylaxis management certificate, child protection training and have completed a Working with Children Check (WWCC).

Educators at Discovery will continue to develop skills and knowledge and attending professional development courses on a regular basis. All work together to provide quality care and education for all the children attending the centre.

Our staffing will comply with the Education & Care Services National Regulations ratio requirements specifying the minimum number of staff that must be in the centre each day.

Age range	Ratio Educator: Child
0 – 2 years	1:4
2 – 3 years	1:5
3 – 5 years	1:10

Curriculum and Program:

Children Learn through play.

It is our aim at Discovery to provide an integrated curriculum that promotes holistic practices which are developmentally appropriate, and supportive of children's different learning capabilities and styles. Through play, children at Discovery will develop a range of skills and processes such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating themselves and their world. The curriculum will reflect the principles, practices and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia whose vision is for all children to experience play based learning that is engaging and builds strong foundations for lifelong learning.

The EYLF encompasses five learning outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to the world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators

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Information regarding planning of the curriculum and program for individuals' abilities and interests will be the result of close observations, assessments and reflections, which in turn increase children's dispositions for motivated learning in meaningful experiences. Inclusive curriculum practices (when educators make thoughtful and informed curriculum decisions and work in partnership with families) will be implemented which create continuity between home and care settings, thereby fostering a sense of belonging for individual children and families.

Enrolment and Orientation

At Discovery Early Education & Care Centre, a suite of online QiKkids programs are used to manage the centre's operations. Waitlists and enrolments are managed through QK Enrol which provides families with access to a parent portal called My Family Lounge.

The service follows the Australian Government's Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating childcare places. Once these Guidelines are met, the service prioritises siblings of children who are already attending.

Families are encouraged to visit the centre prior to their start date to familiarise themselves with the environment, staff and routines. The dates and times of these visits need to be confirmed with the nominated supervisor. Parents must stay with their child at all times during these periods. The number of visits required will be dependent on the needs of the child.

At the end of the enrolment and orientation, parents are asked to complete a Child and Family Enrolment and Orientation Checklist which provides feedback on how to improve these processes.

Fees

Enrolment Fee

Upon enrolment, families will be charged an enrolment fee in order to secure their child's booking at the service. The enrolment fee is charged per child and is non-refundable.

The enrolment fee is \$80 per child. Upon payment of the enrolment fee your family will receive an enrolment pack that includes the following:

- A drink bottle
- A sustainable wet bag for wet/dirty clothing
- A hat for your child to wear at the centre

Bonds

A security bond of \$100 is payable upon enrolment. This amount is held separately to your fees and is rolled over each year and credited to your account when the child leaves the centre.

Daily Fee

The current daily fee is \$98.00 per child, per day for Nursery and Toddler rooms and \$95.00 per child, per day for Preschool and Transition rooms. This includes morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late afternoon tea.

Families will be charged two weeks' fees in advance. These fees must be paid in full before the child commences at the service.

Fees are to be maintained according to our fee policy. Payment of fees is compulsory whether or not a child attends on the days for which he/she is enrolled. As you are paying for your child's position at our centre, fees are charged in the event of illness, personal holidays and public holidays.

Ezidebit

Discovery uses the payment system Ezidebit to administer their fees. Families must nominate whether their fees are deducted from their nominated bank account or charged to their credit card on a fortnightly or weekly basis. An authorisation form needs to be completed upon enrolment.

Correct Bank Details

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that bank account and/or credit card details provided to Discovery Early Education & Care Centre are up to date and accurate. Families are required to notify the centre in writing should their bank and/or credit card details change no later than 48 hours prior to a debit. If incorrect or invalid bank or credit card details result in being unable to withdraw funds, families will be liable for an Ezidebit Failed Payment Fee.

Available Funds

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that there are sufficient cleared funds in their nominated account or on their credit card by the due date to enable the direct debit to be honoured. Failure to do so will result in an Ezidebit Failed Payment Fee.

Cessation of Care

When a family becomes aware that their child will be ceasing care at the service they are required to provide two weeks' notice in writing to the Director. Upon cessation of care, any outstanding accounts need to be paid in full. Any accounts that are in credit will be refunded to the family. Should families still have a debt on the last day of care, the Ezidebit

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agreement and payments will still continue to be debited from the nominated account until the debt is paid in full.

Your child must continue to attend during this notice period in order to remain eligible for the Child Care Subsidy. Child Care Subsidy cannot be claimed for absences on the **last day of care**.

Statements

Fortnightly emailed statements will be provided to families.

Child Care Subsidy

Most families are eligible for Child Care Subsidy to assist with the cost of childcare. Discovery Early Education & Care Centre encourages all families to provide parent/guardian and child/ren CRN's to enable us to enrol you in the Child Care Management System (CCMS). Please contact the Family Assistance Office at the Department of Human Services for more details www.humanservices.gov.au or contact Centrelink on 13 61 50.

CCS cannot be claimed for fees paid to reserve a child who has not yet commenced care or once a child has ceased attendance.

Eligibility for CCS requires your child to be attending an approved child care centre and you or your partner must meet the residency and child's immunisation requirements

Please refer to www.mychild.gov.au for further information

Operational Information

Arrival and Departure of children

To ensure your child/ren's safety when they arrive and depart we ask parents/carers to be aware of the following procedures:

The authorised person who delivers a child to the service uses an iPad to digitally sign the child into the service using the QikKids application QK Kiosk. They must then place the child into the care of an educator, ensuring they are aware of their arrival. Children are signed out using the same digital process and the person collecting the child needs to inform an educator that they are collecting the child so that they are aware of their departure. Children must be signed in each day by the authorised parent/carer.

Sign in/sign out records must be completed accurately. This record is a legal requirement and vitally important, particularly in the case of an emergency.

Parents/carers are asked to communicate any important information to staff.

Parents must give prior notice where the person collecting the child is someone other than an authorised nominee (e.g. in an emergency situation). The person nominated by the parent must be able to produce some form of photo identification. No child is released into the care of any person not known to the educators without photo identification and authorisation from a parent or authorised nominee.

Only authorised persons 18 years and over are able to drop off and collect children from Discovery.

As a part of licensing requirements we are not permitted to have children on the premises after closing. Please aim to arrive at the centre with plenty of time to collect your child, sign out, collect belongings and discuss your child's day with their educators before 6.30pm.

What to bring

Babies/Toddlers:

- All bottles made up of formula/breast milk (the Centre provides cow's milk)
- Several spare sets of labelled clothes
- Dummy in a sealed container (both labelled) if required
- Comfort items
- 6-8 nappies per week and nappy creams if required
- Labelled sheet and light blanket (in the cooler months) for rest time (if your child is sleeping on a mattress)

Preschoolers:

- Spare sets of clothes and underpants (If your child is being toilet trained, you will need to send several sets of clothes. Ensure clothes allow easy toileting)
- Labelled sheet and light blanket (in the cooler months) for rest time

Children's clothing

Shorts and T-shirts in summer and tracksuits in winter are the most practical as they allow children the freedom to climb, run and jump. As most of our activities are hands-on and will include messy, exploratory play, we recommend clothing be casual and suitable for messy activities and appropriate for the weather conditions on the day. Children are also encouraged to be independent in dressing and toileting. To help your child experience success, please avoid buckles, belts, overalls.

Sturdy shoes suitable for climbing and active play. No thongs or slippery soles.

Hats will be provided and left at the centre for outdoor play.

Rest and Sleep

All children have the opportunity to have a rest/sleep during the day, depending on individual routines.

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0-2 years: will be encouraged to follow their own sleeping patterns, as they would at home. Each child is provided with a cot or mattress. These are allocated on an age and/or needs basis, with the youngest child given priority to cots. Other children sleep on a padded sleep mattress with their own bedding. For safety reasons, children sleeping in cots are not given pillows or toys.

2-4 years: a sleep time occurs in the room after lunch. Children are provided with a padded sleep mattress and assistance is given by staff to help those children who need a sleep. Quiet activities are provided to those children who don't sleep, after they have had a rest. Families are to provide bedding and a small cushion or pillow if their child requires it.

4-5 years: although there is no formal rest schedule for this age, we do acknowledge the need for a quiet time in the day for children to engage in a relaxed environment.

Please discuss your child's sleep routine with staff, to ensure consistency for the children.

Settling your child in to our Centre

We aim to establish a secure and caring environment for your child, whilst building a positive relationship based on communication and trust with you.

How you can help:

Visit the centre with your child to promote familiarity with the new environment.

On the first day spend some time involving your child in an activity. When the time comes to leave, say goodbye and reassure them that you will be back later to collect them.

Tell a staff member when you are about to leave so they can be with your child to provide a cuddle or to help wave goodbye.

When you are ready to leave please do so quickly as prolonging the goodbye in most cases prolongs the tears. Please be assured that most children settle within 15 minutes.

Please feel free to phone us throughout the day to see how your child has settled.

Whatever the situation, we do not allow a child to be distressed for a long period and would notify you if this was the case.

Nutrition and Meals

The centre provides children with 50% of their dietary needs. We serve morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late afternoon snack. The weekly menu will be displayed, all meals will be prepared by a qualified cook who is trained in the preparation of meals that satisfy each child's nutritional requirements.

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At Discovery we recognise the importance of providing healthy food and drink. We will implement the key messages outlined in Munch & Move supporting the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings and follow procedures pertaining to encouraging and supporting breastfeeding, promoting healthy food, promoting safety, safe food handling, positive eating environments, education and communication.

Health and Safety

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre will provide an environment that will protect, and promote effective health and safety practices that minimise risk and ensure best practices for our staff, children and families.

The Discovery policy manual, located in our foyer and available electronically, will provide more detailed information regarding the following practices.

Child protection

Children and young people have a right to grow up in healthy communities which offer safety from abuse, protection from harm, security of accommodation and stability of care. We are mandatory reporters and have a responsibility to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and young person having contact with Discovery Early Education & Care Centre and to work in a co-ordinated and co-operative manner to ensure protection and timely intervention where children and young people are at risk of harm.

Immunisation records

Parents/carers are required to provide Discovery Early Education & Care Centre with documented evidence of their child/ren's immunisation status. This will initially be provided at the time of enrolment and updated as necessary. Parents enrolling their children in Early Childhood Education & Care will be required to provide evidence of either their child's vaccination status, or an approved exemption before their child can be enrolled.

Administration of prescription medication

In recognition of the duty of care there will be occasions when the administration of prescribed medication may be necessary to support children during the course of normal attendance at Discovery.

Discovery educators will:

- Provide families with medication forms that are essential for medication to be administered at Discovery.
- Administer prescribed medication and be witnessed by a second staff member as per our Medication Policy.

Responsibilities of Parents/carers:

Any medication must be given directly to a permanent Discovery staff member on arrival at centre and a medication authorisation form must be completed for each medication provided. This must be completed accurately and signed and dated by parent/carer. If anyone other than the parent/carer is bringing the child to Discovery, a written permission note from the parent/carer, including the above information, must accompany the medication. The guardian will be requested to complete the medication form at the centre.

Managing high temperatures

On enrolment, parents are requested to consent to the administration of liquid paracetamol to their child should it be needed. This will only be administered once in the case of a child's temperature reaching 38 degrees or higher. In this case the child's parent or emergency contact will be called to pick up the child and verbal consent will be sought over the phone. Parents will then be required to complete a medication form upon picking up their child.

Infection control

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre will promote and adhere to best practices that will reduce the transmission of infectious disease through policy and procedure on general hand washing, toileting, use of gloves, nappy changing, handling of body fluids, cleaning and maintenance.

Families are asked not to send a sick child to the centre as they can become quite distressed and run the risk of infecting other children and the staff. The Nominated Supervisor and the Room Leader are authorised to refuse a child's admission to the centre if they feel it is in the best interests of the child and the centre.

A child starting a course of antibiotics must be kept at home for at least 24 hours from the start of the first day of the course.

Exclusion

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre will effectively manage an outbreak of an infectious disease in the centre by appropriate exclusion of sick children and staff. Discovery Early Education & Care Centre's Exclusion Policy Guidelines have been formulated with reference to the NSW Health Department's Exclusion Policy Guidelines and "Staying Healthy" guidelines

Medical Conditions

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre will facilitate effective care and health management of children with medical conditions including asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes and epilepsy.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for ensuring effective care and health management of children with medical condition, and ensuring the following steps are undertaken.

For children attending with a specific medical condition we will:

- On enrolment provide each family with a copy of the medical conditions procedures as they relate to the child's specific medical condition and the risk minimisation plan (Regulation 91).
- Receive from parents a medical action plan from the child's medical practitioner
- Meet to discuss and document a Risk Minimisation Plan. Where possible, the Director, parent/guardian and the child's primary educator, will all participate
- Update the risk minimisation plan when notified of any changes to a child's health needs. It is the parent's responsibility to notify Discovery of any change
- Ensure that no child with a diagnosed medical condition attends Discovery without his/her treatment/medication.
- Inform all educators of the child's medical condition, and the location of both the medical condition action plan and risk minimisation plan
- Ensure all educators have undertaken Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management training, and engage in regular practice sessions with training apparatus

Sun Protection

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre takes every reasonable precaution to educate children and staff about the importance of protecting themselves from the harmful effects of exposure to the sun. Children play outdoors at the discretion of the educators who take into account the weather and are guided by the routines and children's interests.

On enrolment, every child is given a hat that complies with the SunSmart guidelines. Parents are encouraged to put sunscreen on their children on or prior to arrival at the centre and ensure that their children wear clothes with adequate protection from the sun such as t-shirts with sleeves.

The service supplies 30+ broad-spectrum waterproof sunscreen for children and staff and educators will reapply sunscreen once during the day if authorisation has been given. The sunscreen is available in each room and in the outdoor play area. Parents are required to include information in their enrolment form if their child is allergic to sunscreen, and to supply an alternative clearly labelled with the child's name.

Emergency and Evacuation procedure

In case of an emergency situation, every effort will be made to contact parents to collect their child. The centre is fitted with safety devices which are maintained regularly. Regular fire drills are necessary for regulation purposes and every effort will be made to make

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evacuation procedures an enjoyable learning experience for children. Regular practice of emergency procedures gives children an opportunity to become familiar with the routine and planned evacuation. If you are present at a fire drill, you are required by law to participate.

Emergency evacuation plans are displayed in the centre and staff are familiar with emergency procedures and policies.

Parents and visitors are asked to make themselves familiar with the evacuation plan and where hoses and first aid equipment are to be found.

Parent Concerns

Parents are requested to raise any concerns they may have regarding their child's care with their educator in the first instance. Following this, parents can speak to the Director if the concern has not been satisfactorily resolved. The Director will be pleased to discuss any aspect of your child's care and education. All concerns will be dealt with in a confidential and professional manner. If you are still not entirely happy, you can take the matter to the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care or NSW Ombudsman.

Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education

Address:

Locked Bag 5107
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Website:

www.dec.nsw.gov.au/ecec

Email:

ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

Phone:

1800 619 113 (toll free)

Fax:

(02) 8633 1810

Policies and Procedures

Discovery Early Education & Care Centre has developed a range of policies that meet the National regulations. We will continue to create policies and procedures to support the effective operation of our new centre. We encourage families to participate with staff and management in both the review and development of our policies.

By signing our enrolment forms, you are agreeing to comply with the policies of the centre. The information in this handbook details some of our operational policies; for a more detailed explanation they are available for families to access at the centre.

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Family Involvement

At Discovery your family is welcome into the centre at any time. Family involvement sends strong positive messages to your child that you support the child care environment.

Involvement can include:

- Attendance at special activities and functions
- Sharing your child's interests with educators to assist in programming
- Feedback regarding the service
- Attending parent/teacher nights
- Sharing your hobbies or occupation with the children
- Celebrating events relevant to your culture
- Sharing any languages spoken at your child's home

Finally

Please do not hesitate to approach the staff if you would like more information about anything related to your child's care at Discovery Early Education & Care Centre.

Thank you again for entrusting Discovery Educators with the care of your child. We will endeavour to make your child's time with us a positive and rewarding experience.