



Family Handbook

Updated: 27.07.2022

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

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

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

A few things you need to know about us:

- We are a privately run centre, Kerri is the director and owner.
- We are open 52 weeks a year, only closing for Public Holidays. *Please note we do charge your normal fee if your booked session falls on a Public Holiday.*
- We are open from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. There is no set time for you to drop your child off or pick them up. *Please note we do charge for the full 10 hour session.* We try to be flexible with extra days if required, only if we have the space and staff available.

Our fees:

- **Our fees are \$115.00 per day inclusive of:**
- Early Childhood- Play based program's created to enhance and encourage your child's strengths and interests
- Food supplied for your child to implement their very own cooking experiences
- Extra food for children if they are super hungry and/or eat all of their lunch box sent from home (*peace of mind they will never have nothing to eat*)! (***Please note you will need to pack a lunch box for your child***).
- Excursions & incursions to and from the service
- Extra entertainment such as African drummer/ Reptile zoo etc. (which occurs multiple times per year)
- Educational programs visiting such as Healthy Harold/Life Education, Science on the move etc.
- Preschool Programs designed to suit your child's individual way of learning, for the best start towards their lifelong educational journey
- Nappies
- Nappy rash/ barrier creams
- Wipes/Tissues
- Hats
- Sunscreen
- Bed linen
- Repellents
- Ensuring the Educators caring for your children continue to enhance their professional development and are provided training in these areas:
 - Sid's safe sleep practices & Tresilian
 - Child protection
 - Educator programming and reflections
 - Safe food handling practices and procedures
 - Inclusion support seminars
 - Up skilling educators qualifications
 - Providing quality care for children
 - First aid & cpr refresher courses
- Smaller groupings of children i.e. - room changes with our brand new Nursery space, allow the rest of the children more floor space to explore and spread out into. This now reflects more educators with a less amount of children (and bigger floor space) to be able to provide continuity of quality care. 0-12months, 1-2 years, 2-3 years & 3-6 years. Smaller groupings of children means we are able to build meaningful connections with the children, support their individual learning experiences & enhance the opportunities provided for all of the children within our care environment.

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

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

Payments are accepted at the Centre in cash or payments by bank deposit. When paying via direct bank deposit, please follow these requirements:

- Please put your child's name on the deposit.

- Please deposit payment into NAB account:
Name of account: SSPS URUNGA PTY LTD
BSB: 082551
Account number: 926732504

Our contact details:

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

ABN: 26634192644

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

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

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

At Stepping Stones we believe:

- Children are competent, capable and resourceful learners.
- All children are individuals and learn at their own pace and have unique learning skills.
- Each child is respected and valued for the wonderful person they are.
- We believe children learn best with a play based learning environment, where the children's individual strengths and interests are nurtured and respected.

Please take the time to read our Service Philosophy which is located in our front foyer, this reflects our views and beliefs as a centre. You can also request an email copy or find a printed version to take home in the foyer.

Educator to child ratios:

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

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

Our centre: In 2022 we have 4 rooms:

- The Koala Room (Nursery) for 0-12 months. **Lead educator/s: Mel & Brooke**
- The Kookaburra Room (Toddler) for 12-24 months (must be walking). **Lead educator: Jade**
- The Kangaroo Room (Toddler 2) 2-3 years **Lead educator: Milly**
- The Preschool Room 3-5 years **Lead educator/s: Claire & Ally**
Within the Preschool Room we run a Preschool program tailored for each individual child's journey of development.

Educational Leader: Teagan –will guide all educators within their practice and delivery of high quality education and care.

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

Outside play: We have a large nature based play outdoor environment with trees, rocks, grass, a sandpit, a huge deck area and have 2 soft fall areas for the obstacle course. These are all natural elements of our surrounding community so it is important that the children are exposed to these natural resources. Each day we add other resources for a variety of play/learning activities. We have lots of shade outside and set up most activities in the shade in the hotter months. Every child **MUST** wear a hat outside- broad brimmed hats are best and we apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside each day. We have hats and these hats are washed daily. *We have been certified a sun safe centre with the Australian Cancer Council.*

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

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

We also have a side veranda that provides the children access to extra play space and is a wonderful addition to the centre.

What your child needs to bring:

- Please send a hat if you have one, otherwise we do have centre hats here that can be worn here and washed here daily. Please ensure you do not take these hats home.
- Please send your child in appropriate clothes, they will be busy all day and will often be involved in messy play, e.g. finger painting, nature play, water play, active play or sensory play. **CHILDREN WILL GET MESSY-IT'S AN IMPORTANT PART OF LEARNING THROUGH PLAY.**
- **Please send spare clothes.** –Accidents can happen! -During the warmer weather the children play with the water trays each day and often get wet. **Please label everything so nothing gets lost.**
- **Please send food for morning tea, afternoon tea and lunch.** We can warm up food for your child for lunch. We can make sandwiches or fruit in case your child is extra hungry or there is an accident e.g. dropping lunch on the floor. We encourage all children to drink water, they can access the water dispenser at all times but we also encourage the children bringing their own water bottles also. We have bubblers outside. All staff model drinking water.

We encourage healthy eating. Staff eat at times with the children to model good eating habits. *Please don't send chips, CC's, nuts, rollups (as these are a choking hazard) or chocolate and lollies or the roll ups that claim they contain "real fruit" but are actually majority made up of sugar.*

Settling in

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

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

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

Things you must do upon enrolment.

- Fill in the enrolment form. MOST IMPORTANTLY—**dates of birth for children and parents and your CRNs. (customer reference numbers)**
- Advise Centrelink you are using Stepping Stones Preschool & CCC for your childcare.
- Complete a Child Care Subsidy claim via your Centrelink account.
- Tell us if you are using another centre as well (it makes a difference to the forms we fill in).
- Please let us know if there are any special issues regarding your child, e.g., custody or court orders or food allergies.
- **WE MUST SIGHT & COPY IMMUNISATION RECORDS FOR EACH CHILD. This includes after updated immunisations are received.** We have an immunisation register so we will know if you haven't provided us with a recent/ up to date copy.
- **It is EXTREMELY important that we know your child's medical status, particularly if he/she has Asthma, Anaphylaxis or Diabetes or any other serious medical condition.**
- **We request that you and your family's information be kept current and any changes noted when they occur so that we have all valid and relevant information when we need it. This is very important so please ensure you have notified us if and when any changes occur.**
- Please pay your accounts promptly. We issue an account each week. If you are having trouble paying your account please see Kerri promptly. Failure to make regular payments may result in your child's position being revoked.

Extra information about our centre:

- We will try to be obliging to fit in with your schedule and requirement of extra days if possible for your child. Please note we can only do this where there is availability for your child to come. If we are at full capacity we are able to decline to your request to an extra day.
- We can suggest visits to access other support teams such as Occupational therapist, speech therapist, Early Intervention, The Northcott Foundation, Inclusion Support and Brighter Futures.
- As a centre we aim to have at least 2 big "special events/visits" per year.
- Each child receives a Birthday book on their birthday or the next attending day after their birthday and a Christmas Party. We pride ourselves with no additional charge for these extras.
- **We are mandatory reporters and are legally bound to report any concerns we have about children in our care.**

Children's Behaviour:

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

Staff at Stepping Stones Preschool and Child Care Centre.

- **Kerri is the Owner & Director.** Kerri has her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Bron** is an ECT. Bron has a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education.
- **Teagan** is a Responsible Person and is working towards her Bachelor of Education- Early Childhood and Primary.
- **Jade** is an ECT and is working towards her Bachelor of Education- Early Childhood and Primary.
- **Claire** is a Responsible Person, holds a Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Brooke** holds a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services and is working towards her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Ally** is a Responsible Person and holds a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Jess** is a Responsible Person and is working towards her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Taylor** has her Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services and is working towards her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Milly** holds a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services is working towards her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Mel** holds a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services is working towards her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **Grace** holds a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services is working towards her Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **CourtneyS** holds a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care services.
- **CourtneyB** is a Trainee that attends the centre 5 days a week.
- Please note we will have Casual staff working from time to time they will either be Diploma or Certificate 3 trained. We also cater for work placement students from TAFE and local high schools.