

Forest Lake Child Care Centre



Uniting Education

Parent Handbook

(September 2021)

Forest Lake Child Care Centre is an approved Services operated by Uniting Education Early Learning for the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, under the umbrella of the Approved Provider, the Uniting Church in Australia, Property Trust QLD (Q.).

The Nominated Supervisor manages the day-to-day operation of Forest Lake Child Care Centre and reports to the Area Manager, Uniting Education Early Learning.

Welcome:

The Uniting Church Queensland Synod is pleased to welcome you and your family to Forest Lake Child Care Centre.

Uniting Education Early Learning administers Forest Lake Child Care Centre. We look forward to the pleasure of getting to know you and your child and working in partnership throughout your child's learning journey at our Service to ensure your time with us is a happy and rewarding experience. As a non-profit organisation, United Education Early Learning Child Care Centres appreciate the generosity of others to help improve the diverse range of quality services. The centres may also conduct fundraisers with all money raised reinvested back in your childcare centre.

Mission statement:

The Uniting Church in Queensland has been serving families through childcare services, run by congregations and other church organisations such as Wesley Mission Queensland and UnitingCare since the opening of our first service, Toowong Kindergarten and Child Care Centre in 1964. From September 2021, all early learning services operated by the Uniting Church Queensland are consolidated within the UEEL portfolio. UEEL embodies the Christian principles of love, forgiveness, respecting and serving others. We utilise a play-based learning programme and are committed to the values of equity, inclusiveness and care for the environment.

Our Service Philosophy:

When children feel safe and comfortable, they are free to express themselves, which is why your child's welfare is at the centre of everything that we do. Every child is unique, and we see it as our role to ensure their first few years in a space away from their home filled with discovery and opportunity. Our Educators and staff are highly trained and will foster your child's growth in a manner that encourages their God-given talents and interests.

We believe:

- Children are unique individuals with rights
- Feelings must be treated with care and respect
- Play is an ideal platform for children to discover and create
- Learning takes place when a child is curious
- Routines help keep kids grounded
- Children of different age groups should play together
- Relationships must be supportive
- Jesus Christ is the son of God, and we are helping raise children in His image

Our principles:

Children thrive when they feel safe, which is why our Educators create a nurturing environment so that kids can be themselves. Playtime is crucial to building their imagination and enabling positive interactions with other children, which is why we encourage children to learn through small and large group play sessions.

Our team of Educators are highly trained, and we provide opportunities for professional development. Educators value feedback and want our families to know that you can always discuss your child's individual needs with us. All our practices are geared toward ensuring the children's health and wellbeing, which means that we support our staff and Educators in the same way.

All our staff and Educators are passionate about early childhood. We look for patience and attentiveness when hiring staff, as their role is dynamic and always focused on providing a safe environment for the children.

What will my child's day be like?

Your child's group will follow a flexible routine for the day to give your child a consistent, predictable and engaging environment. The routines will be designed best to meet the needs of the children in care. Your Educators will talk to you about your child's sleeping and eating patterns within the daily routine and incorporate these into the routine. Using the Early Years Learning Framework as a guide and the ages and interests of the children attending your educators will provide an engaging educational program.

What do I pack for my child?

Each room will have a place for your child's belongings. Please ensure name tags are on everything which will help Educators to locate all your child's belongings if they are discarded or removed from their bag during the day. We have a Lost Property Box so please check there for misplaced items. Unclaimed items may be donated to charity.

Please note we do not take responsibility for loss or damage to personal items.

It could take some time to work out what your child needs to attend childcare. Suggested items are:

- a bag to carry all your child's belongings in,
- hat (wide brimmed bucket or legionnaire style) / sunscreen and shoes (that are easy to put on),
- change of clothes that are appropriate for the weather (for use in painting activities and so on)
- if your child is learning to use the toilet you may need to supply extra spare clothing in case of accidents, so your child continues to feel comfortable throughout the day,
- water bottle,
- any specific items discussed with your Educator during orientation, (i.e., medications, insect repellent, nappy rash cream etc),
- your child's special comforting item if needed (stuffed toy, blanket etc).
- Linen for your child to use during rest.

Please discuss with your Educator any additional items that may be required for your child. Please check your child's bag every morning before dropping off. It is essential for your child's safety and the other children in care that there are no dangerous items in your child's bag (medications, batteries, money, cigarette lighters, small toys that pose a choking hazard).

Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing <include if food is part of the daily routine>

We work in partnership with you to develop a healthy approach to nutrition and hygiene. Food provided by the service is prepared and stored safely and hygienically. We respect the cultural and religious expectations and values of children and families.

Meals and drinks <include if food is part of the daily routine>

We provide morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack. Our menu is designed to ensure children have up to 50 per cent of their daily nutritional requirements while in our care. Our onsite cook provides a tasty menu to suit the ages of the children. We provide a freshly prepared vegetable mash for young infants and liaise closely with you regarding the planned introduction of new foods into their diet as appropriate.

Drinking water is freely available throughout the day. It is recommended each child bring their own water bottle or cup for hygiene reasons.

Allergies and special dietary requirements are catered for.

Mealtimes are a valuable time for children to interact and socialise. We provide an environment to encourage this.

Drop-offs

The morning routine of arriving with your child could be the most eventful part of the day for them, and we need to make the transition as seamless as possible. When you arrive, you must sign your child in, and if that is not available, you must not leave until you have made a member of staff aware that your child is on site. If you know that you will be unavailable during the day, please tell us the best alternative contact number. It would help if you also made staff aware of any disruptions in your child's routine, such as lack of sleep, general grumbling and unease.

All items such as drink bottles and bags should be labelled and named. You must follow service guidelines regarding baby bottles filled with milk or formula. We'd prefer that all personal items be left at home because a loss or breakage is sure to upset the little one.

Pick ups

You must inform a member of staff that you have arrived on-site and plan on taking your child home. You should also sign out at the kiosk, and if that is unavailable, please sign a register which should be readily available.

It's a good idea to check in with your child's Educator and have a conversation about the events of the day, and please collect all your child's belongings and take them home with you.

What happens if I am late to pick up my child?

It would help to let us know as soon as it becomes apparent that you will be later than your regular schedule to pick up your child. Your child's welfare is at the centre of everything we do. Please also be mindful that our staff have responsibilities outside of work hours and should not be expected to remain beyond the centre's closing time. This can be stressful for your child.

If you are late, we may ask you to pay a late fee, although this will only happen under exceptional circumstances. The Child Care Subsidy scheme does not subsidise late fees so you will be charged the full late fee in your next account.

Who can pick up my child?

Only an authorised person can collect a child. You may be required to provide proof of identity of the person by supplying documentation that has a photo and current address (for example, a driver's license, passport). This information will be photocopied and kept on file in the service. Please notify the service of changes to the normal collection arrangements for your child by:

- verbal notification, or
- a phone call from a parent/guardian.

We may ask the person collecting your child may have to provide proof of identity.

Keeping children safe:

Please close all gates and doors behind you as you go into and leave the service. We also ask you to be mindful of children's safety when using the car park and driveway entries and exits, as the complex is very busy with traffic from other programs.

Sleeping

We support the individual rest and sleep requirements of each child. Please ensure that you provide your child's preferred rest routine so that we can respond to the individual needs of your child.

For children who don't sleep, we will provide a range of relaxing experiences to extend and scaffold learning and interests.

We recommend and implement safe sleep practices in accordance with Red Nose guidelines at all times.

Celebrations

We recognise celebrating special occasions is essential to children and families. If you have queries, please speak with your child's Educator. We welcome family participation. Families are welcome to bring a special treat to celebrate. Please speak with the Director to make arrangements.

Excursions

Services may at times include excursions into the local and wider community. Excursions add richness to a centre-based care environment by offering children the opportunity to connect in an exciting and meaningful way with their local community and nature.

Permission from parents/guardians is sought before participation in the excursion. Safety is an essential part of all excursions. All excursions are assessed for risk, and first aid assistance is always available. We welcome family participation to assist with excursions.

Policies and Procedures

Child Protection

Children have the right to be free from harm and to play, learn and be cared for in a safe and secure environment. Our service upholds this right and are committed to the protection and physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing. It is a legal requirement of early childhood professionals who suspect that a child is at risk of harm, or has sustained actual harm, to provide notification to the relevant child protection authority. Our service abides by these requirements and follow the procedures set out in the state legislation.

Child Court Orders

Please ensure we are aware of the details of any Child Court Orders, parenting orders or parenting plans that relate to your child/children attending our service. A copy of the order or plan will need to be provided.

Contact details

We ask that you ensure your email, phone and mail contact details are up to date with our service. UEEL prefers to keep in touch with you through email, although we try and work with what is best for your circumstances.

Privacy and your right to confidentiality

UEEL must obtain information from you about your child and family so we can provide care. Unless we have a legal obligation to share information with authorities, your details will only be used in conjunction with our service delivery. You will always have the right to request and access our information on file about your child, so please contact the Director if you have any questions.

Media and Photography:

During enrolment, you should be asked if images of your child can be used posted to social media, marketing, and service documents.

A snapshot of the types of materials that your child's photograph will be shared across include (although they are not limited to):

- educational materials
- newsletters and service communication
- website, and publicity events (posters, brochures, Family handbook)
- celebrating special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas, and Easter

We will make every effort to ensure that we honour your request. Please discuss the subject in more detail with the Director if you need more information.

Medical

Medication (including prescription, over the counter and homeopathic) cannot be administered to a child without a parent/guardian authorisation.

If your child needs medication (including creams), please complete all the details on the Medication Form and discuss this with your child's Educator. Please ensure you deliver all medication to an Educator, so that it can be stored securely (out of children's access) and at the recommended temperature (e.g., in the fridge, cupboard etc). It is vital that medication is not left in the child's bag where children may gain access.

All medication must be administered:

- from its original container before the expiry or use by date
- in accordance with any instruction attached to the medication or provided by a registered medical practitioner
- for prescribed medications, from a container that bears the original label with the name of the child to whom it is prescribed
- with a second person checking the dosage of the medication and witnessing its administration
- details of the administration must be recorded in the medication record.

Only one age-appropriate dose of Panadol will be administered in the case of a high temperature. Educators will make every effort to contact you prior to issuing the Panadol. If the child continues to be unwell or in pain, you will then be contacted to arrange for your child to be picked up.

Medical Conditions

If your child has a specific health care need, allergies or medical conditions (for example, Asthma, Diabetes, Anaphylaxis), you will need to tell staff either on enrolment at OHSC or if a diagnosis takes place. We will need a medical management/ emergency action plan signed by a medical practitioner.

Staff may administer reliever medication (commonly used Ventolin, Asmol, Eqap, Airmir) without the parent's consent in an emergency. All our Educators are trained in how to manage Asthma and Anaphylaxis conditions.

It is your responsibility to provide the emergency equipment and consumables for the treatment of these conditions. You will be required to replace medication when it has been used or is past its use-by date (expired).

Immunisation:

We are committed to the health and wellbeing of children in our care, and families and our staff and we encourage immunisation. From January 1, 2016, Australian Government laws

relating to immunisation have come into effect. Under these new laws, a child's immunisation status will affect family assistance payments. If a child does not meet the immunisation requirements for family assistance payments, Centrelink will inform families. From January 1, 2016, a conscientious objection will be removed and no longer recognised as a vaccine exemption. Children with medical contraindications or natural immunity, which are certified in writing by a General Practitioner or recognised immunisation nurse, will still be exempt from the immunisation requirements.

We recommend you seek further information on how the Australian Government's law will affect your circumstances at www.humanservices.gov.au (search for immunising children). Suppose your child is not medically vaccinated or not up to date with immunisations. In that case, they will be required to stay away from care during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable conditions (such as measles and pertussis) even if your child is well. You will be informed of recommended minimum exclusion periods by the Director in this event. In an outbreak, we will consult with the Public Health Unit and Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th Edition.

How do I make sure my child's immunisation history is known to the service?

During enrolment, you will be required to provide a copy of your child's immunisation history statement. As your child vaccines are updated, we need you also to inform us of these updates to maintain our records. An immunisation history statement is required to prove a child's immunisation status. An immunisation history statement is an official record issued by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) or a letter from a recognised immunisation provider (e.g., General Practitioner or recognised immunisation nurse). Families can obtain an immunisation history statement from ACIR for their child, free of charge at any time:

- Through Medicare Online Services, visit www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/Medicare/Medicare-online-accounts
- Through the Medicare Express App, available for download from Google Play and iTunes stores
- By emailing acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au supplying the child's full name, date of birth and Medicare Number
- By calling the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register on 1800653809
- In-person at a local Medicare Service Centre

Illness

If your child is unwell and or has a higher-than-normal temperature, unidentified rashes, had an occurrence of diarrhoea or vomiting in the past 24 hours or shows signs of pain, your child should stay at home until they are feeling better. Depending on the type and severity of the illness, you may be required to provide a doctor's certificate before your child can return to care.

If your child has an infectious illness (diarrhoea, vomiting, chickenpox, conjunctivitis or other similar conditions), they should be kept away from care for the duration of the exclusion period. The exclusion period will depend on:

- the ease with which the infection can be spread
- the ability of the infected child to follow hygiene precautions
- the severity of the disease/illness.

If your child becomes sick while in the care of the service, Educators will judge the severity of the illness, notify you, give your child medication as permitted by you, and administer first aid and, if necessary, phone an ambulance. (See Administration of Medication for more details).

What happens if my child is injured at the service?

If your child is injured while in care, our educators will attend to your child and apply first aid. Educators will document the event on an incident form that you will be requested to sign. You can request a copy. Where an injury is of concern to the Educator, we will contact you and, where necessary, contact Emergency Services.

We do not allow nuts or products containing nuts (including tree nuts) to be brought into or served in food. This is to protect the health and wellbeing of children attending the service who have been identified with severe life-threatening responses to these products.

Staffing

We have a dedicated team of committed and qualified Educators who nurture and support each child's learning and development in rich and meaningful ways. Educators are supported to carry out their roles and be reflective practitioners, keeping up to date with contemporary early childhood theories and practice.

Nominated Supervisor/Director

The Nominated Supervisor oversees the delivery of the service. They work closely with the team of Educators to implement the National Quality Framework and ensure all the regulatory and compliance requirements are met, and there is a culture of continuous improvement.

Educational Leader

The educational leader has an influential role in inspiring, motivating, affirming and challenging or extending the practice and pedagogy of Educators. It is a joint endeavour involving inquiry and reflection, which can significantly impact on the important work educators do with children and families.

Lead Educators

Lead Educators undertake and fulfil the duties of a responsible person. Our Lead Educators plan, deliver and evaluate an engaging educational program that considers each child's needs, interests, and strengths.

Assistant Educators

Assistant Educators work closely with Lead Educators and support the health, and wellbeing of each child. They support the implementation of the educational program.

Kindergarten Teacher

A number of UEEL services operate an approved Kindergarten program in line with Queensland government guidelines. An engaging curriculum is developed and implemented by a Qualified Early Childhood Teacher guided by the Early Years Learning Framework and Queensland Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines (QKLG). This program assists in developing early learning skills to facilitate a smooth transition to school for your child through play. The kindergarten teacher will also undertake the role and responsibilities of a responsible person.

Our Services

Nursery

The nursery caters for up to eight children aged between 0 - 2 years. This group focuses on developing positive and secure relationships between children and Educators. We focus on the individual care routines to ensure continuity between the service and home learning environments and experiences for our young children are rich in sensory and discovery experiences.

2-3 years age group

This is a rich learning time in young children's lives as they explore and make meaning of the world around them. Our learning programs are designed to offer the children a rich play-based environment where young children are encouraged to express their emotions and develop communication skills. We offer a wide range of play experiences that promote a sense of discovery and investigation.

3 - 4 years

This group operates in both our outdoor classroom and open plan learning environment in the service. Research tells us that when children can spend time with peers of different ages, they can share knowledge and learn from one another. This group allows children to develop close bonds with their peers and interact with older children in a secure, safe, and challenging environment. The range of learning experiences is drawn from the children to assist them in developing early literacy and numeracy skills in a play-based environment.

4-5 years

This group offers a formal kindergarten program embedded to support children to transition into a school environment. Through a rich play-based environment, our range of learning experiences helps children develop inquiry, investigation, and critical thinking skills to build their early literacy and numeracy skills. Technology is also an essential part of the curriculum. If your child is enrolled in our kindergarten learning programs the daily fee will not be any more than fees charged for three to five-year-old children who attend our service. Children who are four years old by 30 June in the year prior to school entry are eligible to attend the funded kindergarten program. If families are disadvantaged and meet the eligibility criteria for additional assistance, funding is available to reduce childcare fees to ensure that children can access educational programs. Eligibility is determined by Kindergarten Funding Guidelines.

Transitioning between groups

When children are transitioning to an older age group, it is done over time in consultation with Educators and families. It involves you and your child visiting older age groups to ensure a smooth transition to a new group.

Fees

A bond may be required to secure your child's enrolment.

If your child is enrolled in our kindergarten learning programs the daily fee will not be any more than fees charged for three- to five-year-old children who attend our service. Children who are four years old by 30 June in the year prior to school entry are eligible to attend the funded kindergarten program.

If families are disadvantaged and meet the eligibility criteria for additional assistance, funding is available to reduce childcare fees to ensure that children can access educational programs. Kindergarten Funding Guidelines determine eligibility.

Please refer to the Fee Schedule for information on all fees and charges.

Child Care Fee assistance

The Australian Government may provide financial assistance towards meeting the costs of your child's care. If you are eligible for free help, you will need to let us know:

- your Customer Reference Number (CRN) which has been provided to you by the Family Assistance Office,
- Your child's Customer Reference Number which has also provided to you by the Family Assistance Office,
- your date of birth (this may be the date of birth of the CRN Holder,
- your child's date of birth.

If you do not have this information (CRN), you can contact the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50 or visit one of their offices. Locations can be found at www.familyassist.gov.au

Child Care Subsidy

The CCS assists families using approved childcare services for work or training, studying and volunteering reasons. It is paid directly to services to be passed on to families. You may be eligible for CCS and can submit a Child Care Subsidy claim using your Centrelink online account through myGov and complete your Child Care Subsidy assessment task. For more information on this process, visit education.gov.au/childcare. You must notify them if your circumstances change.

Regular Booked Days

If you need to change or cancel your child's regular booked days of attendance, you will need to provide the service with two weeks written notice. If your child does not attend any of the days, fees may still apply.

Absent Days

CCS is paid for up to 42 absences for each child per financial year. These absences can be for any reason, including public holidays. In special circumstances, CCS may be paid beyond the 42 days. There is no limit on these days however you will be required to provide documentation to support your child's absence. We recommend you provide documentation to support days away from the service.

Examples of documentation include:

- medical certificates,
- shared care plans (signed by both parents) and
- court orders.

Public Holidays

Our services are closed on public holidays. Fees apply for public holiday closures that fall on your normal day of attendance. CCS will not be paid for public holidays if 42 absences have already been used.

Leaving our services

If you are intending to leave our service, you must provide two weeks written notice so a planned exit for your child can occur. The bond will be held by the service and applied to fees owed upon your notification of your intention to leave the service two weeks prior to the exit date. The bond will be refunded if fees have already been paid for the notice period.

If you would like to attend again in the future; you are welcome to complete an application for childcare.

There are times when we must advise a parent/ guardian we can no longer provide our service to a child due to the need to place a child with a higher priority for access to our service. We will provide written notice of the need to vacate care and will assist in locating an alternative service wherever possible.

Feedback is important to us, when you leave our service, we may ask you to share your thoughts with us. This valuable information helps us continually improve people's experiences of our services.

How you can have a say in how we operate

A child's home and family are the most significant influence on their lives, which is why families must be encouraged to be part of the learning process within our service. We wish to maintain a dialogue between a child's parent or guardian built on mutual respect, trust, and a commitment to a nurturing environment. It is the view of UEEL that children are

connected to family, community, culture and place from the moment of birth, and we are honoured to play a role in their development.

Our service leaders are always available to discuss any matter that you deem important; please see the Director next time you are in the centre if you wish to discuss an issue.

We commit to providing information about the services you receive.

We are bound by laws and legislation and are committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of your child and our staff. This handbook should be considered an exceptional resource, although it is not intended to cover every aspect of our service concerning your child. A folder contains service policies and procedures is available at reception, and you are encouraged to read this document.

Feedback and Concerns

Our mission is to walk alongside people in need, offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community wellbeing. In this spirit, we are committed to working with you to resolve any issues.

If your concern is with an individual staff member, please speak with them first. Staff are here to support you and your child and will be open to discussing any feedback or concerns that you have. You may feel more comfortable speaking with the Director of the service, who will book a time to discuss your feedback or concerns.

If you are still not satisfied with the response you can speak to the Area Manager who can be contacted through the Director. Alternatively, you can call Yolanda Borucki, who is the Manager- Early Learning Operations, on 0455886358. Yolanda can also be reached by letter at 60 Bayliss Street Auchenflower QLD 4066 OR Email: Early.Learning@ucaqld.com.au

An external agent such as the Queensland government's Department of Education, Early Childhood Education and Care can be reached on these details:

PO Box 15033

CITY EAST QLD 4002

Email: ecec@qed.qld.gov.au

Phone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Thank you!