

**uniting
family
day care**



Family Handbook

Updated 3 January 2024

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Welcome:

The Uniting Church Queensland Synod is pleased to welcome you and your family. Our Uniting Family Day Care services are administered by Uniting Early Learning (UEL) for the Uniting Church in Australia, Property Trust QLD (Queensland Synod).

Uniting Family Day Care Bramble Bay	07 32694383	bbfdc.office@unitingeducation.com.au
Uniting Family Day Care Charleville & Districts	07 54826099	chvfdc.office@unitingeducation.com.au
Uniting Family Day Care Gympie	07 54826099	fdcgympie.admin@unitingeducation.com.au
Uniting Education Family Day Care	07 35486640	uefdc.office@unitingeducation.com.au

We look forward to 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, UEL believes in the importance of providing an affordable and quality service for families.

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 Uniting Care 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 UEL portfolio. UEL 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 is 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 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 children grounded
- Children of different age groups should play together
- Relationships must be supportive

Our principles:

Children thrive when they feel safe, which is why our Educators create a nurturing environment so that they 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 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 of 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.

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What will my child's day be like?

Your Educator 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 Educator 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?

Your Educator will have a place for your child's belongings. Please ensure all belongings are named which will help the Educator to locate all your child's belongings if they are discarded or removed from their bag during the day.

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

It could take some time to work out what your child needs to attend child care. 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)
- nappies/pull ups (if required)
- 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, (ie 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 drop 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 eg. medications, batteries, money, cigarette lighters, small toys or items that pose a choking hazard.

Health and Nutrition

In most cases, you will need to provide your child's meals. For a full day of care, your child will require a water bottle, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea (if starting early or staying late, you will need to discuss breakfast and dinner arrangements with your Educator). Nutritious and easy to handle food is best; children are encouraged to make healthy choices and feed themselves (if age appropriate). Some educators provide food so please talk to your educator about your child's food requirements.

Remember: Meat or dairy products being transported should be put in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack to keep the temperature below 5°C. The food should be put in a fridge straightaway at the Educator's home, with insulated containers left open. Expressed breast milk can be transported in an esky with an ice brick to keep it chilled. Please refer to the Safe Food Practices procedures for more details.

Here are some helpful websites for lunchbox ideas:

Get up and grow –

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection>

Nutrition Australia-<https://naqld.org/>

Raising Children- <https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/nutrition-fitness/breakfast-lunches/healthy-lunches>

Pins – Signing In and Out

Each parent/guardian and their authorised contacts will be issued with their own unique pin. This pin is used to sign your child/ren in and out of care and also to sign the attendance records at the end of each week. It is important that you do not share this pin with anyone. If a new pin is required, or to add a new authorised contact, please contact the office.

Drop-offs

The morning routine of arriving with your child is an eventful part of the day for them and we need to make the transition as seamless as possible. If you know that you will be unavailable during the day, please tell us the best alternative contact number. Please inform your Educator of any disruptions in your child's routine, such as lack of sleep, general grumbling and unease, or any occurrences at home that may affect them.

Pick ups

At pick up time check in with your child's Educator and have a conversation about the events of the day and collect all of your child's belongings to take them home with you.

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

Let your educator know as soon as it becomes apparent that you will be later than your booked session time to pick up your child. Please also be mindful that your Educator may have responsibilities outside of work hours and may not be available outside of your booked times.

If you are late there may be a late fee – please see your Educator's Fee Schedule for details. Late fees are not covered by Child Care Subsidy so the full late fee will be included with your next fees.

Who can pick up my child?

Only a parent/guardian (as listed on the enrolment form) or authorised person can collect a child from the service. New authorised contacts will need to provide proof of identity the first time they pick up your child (for example, a driver's license, passport). Please notify your Educator of any changes to the normal collection arrangements for your child.

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 are able to respond to the individual needs of your child.

For children who don't sleep, we will provide a range of quiet, relaxing experiences as an alternative.

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. Families are welcome to share special occasions that are important to their family. Please speak with your Educator to make arrangements.

Excursions/Outings

Excursions may be regular (regular are the day-to-day activities undertaken by an educator, e.g. school runs, library, local park, play sessions etc.) or non-regular (one-off outings for specific child-focused experiences, e.g. movies, museum, children's concert, local event, service organised activity). These outings add to the richness of the Family Day Care environment by offering children the opportunity to connect in a meaningful way with their local community, nature, interact with larger groups of children and participate in new experiences. Written permission by you is required before your child can be transported or escorted by their Educator, walking, in a vehicle or on public transport.

Approved child restraints are used in the Educator's registered vehicle for each child. These are checked annually by a qualified child restraint fitter.

If your Educator goes on regular outings (such as play sessions, shops, library or taking older children to school), you will give 'blanket ongoing permission' for this type of excursion. This form will provide you with all the details for these regular events (i.e., day, time, location, frequency, transport etc.).

Signed permission is required prior to children participating in an any excursion. You will be provided with written information on the details, and you will sign an Excursion Permission Form so your child can participate.

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 of 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 to the service.

Contact details

We ask that you ensure your email, phone and address and work details are up to date with our service. Please send an email to the Service to update your contact details.

Privacy and your right to confidentiality

UEL must obtain information from you about your child and family to provide our service. 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 us if you have any questions.

Media and Photography:

During enrolment, you are 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 image will be shared across include (although they are not limited to):

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

Please discuss the subject in more detail with your Educator if you need more information.

What happens to the Educator's pets when my child is in care?

Some Educators have family pets that they may include in their program. Before confirming care with a chosen Educator, you will be advised of any pets and their potential contact with your child. Pets can help children developing a caring and nurturing attitude, responsibility, empathy and improved communication. When animals are not directly a part of the educational program and supervised by the Educator, they will be kept separate from the children in a secure, clean environment. You will be given prior notification of any new pets. All pet bowls and litter trays are kept out of the FDC areas.

Other Members at the Family Day Care Residence

All adult occupants in the Family Day Care Residence are required to hold an adult occupant blue card. When you meet your Family Day Care Educator, your Educator will let you know who resides in the house, the ages of their own children (if applicable) and their possible involvement in the program. They will also share with you regular and non-regular visitors to the home. Anyone visiting the home during FDC hours will complete the visitors record, and if they are a regular visitor will also hold an adult occupant blue card.

Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol Free Environments

Educator's premises are smoke, alcohol and drug-free when children are in attendance. This applies to the Educator, household occupants, visitors and families attending care.

Parking

When parking at your Educator's premises be mindful of their neighbours, other families attending, and staying safe when you and your child/ren are entering or exiting the car. Consult with your Educator about safe and appropriate parking.

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 of the details on the Medication Form and discuss this with your child's Educator. Please ensure you deliver all medication to the 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
- details of the administration must be recorded in the medication record.

Only one age-appropriate dose of Paracetamol will be administered in the case of a high temperature. Educators will make every effort to contact you prior to issuing the Paracetamol. 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), this must be disclosed at enrolment or if a diagnosis takes place. We will need a medical management/emergency action plan signed by a medical practitioner. This must be updated every 12 months.

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). Care cannot take place if the medication has not been provided to the service.

Immunisation:

We are committed to the health and wellbeing of children in our care, families, Educators and staff and we encourage immunisation. Australian Government laws relating to immunisation means that a child's immunisation status will affect Child Care Subsidy eligibility. If a child does not meet the immunisation requirements for Child Care Subsidy, Centrelink will inform families. 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).

If your child is not vaccinated or not up to date with immunisations, 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 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 operator of your Family Day Care?

During enrolment you will be required to provide a copy of your child's current immunisation history statement to verify your child's immunisation status. As your child's vaccines are updated we need an updated immunisation history statement that shows these updates to maintain our records. An immunisation history statement is an official record issued by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) or we can accept 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

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- 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, your Educator will notify you, give your child medication as permitted by you, and administer first aid if required and, if necessary, phone an ambulance. You will be required to sign an Incident Report Form.

What happens if my child is injured at Family Day Care?

If your child is injured while in care, the Educator will attend to your child and apply first aid if required. Where an injury is of concern to the Educator, they will contact you and, if necessary, phone an ambulance. The Educator will document the event on an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Report that you will be requested to sign. Incidents requiring medical attention are reported to the Department of Education.

Educators

Family Day Care Educators provide education and care for children in a home environment. They undergo a comprehensive assessment process before becoming registered as a Family Day Care Educator. They must meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework, which comprises the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Fees

Please refer to your Educator's Fee Schedule for information on all fees and charges.

Our service uses a central payments system and the payment of your child care fees will be by direct debit each week. Invoices are emailed each Wednesday for the previous week's care and payment is deducted each Thursday. All fees must be kept up to date at all times.

Refer to the Payment of Fees Policy for more detail.

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy assists families using approved childcare services for work, training, studying and volunteering reasons. It is paid directly to services to be passed on to families in the form of fee reduction. 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 application. For more information on this process, visit education.gov.au/childcare. You must notify them if your circumstances change.

If you have applied for and/or are eligible for subsidies, you will need to let us know:

- the Customer Reference Number (CRN) of the CCS claimant parent/guardian.
- your child's Customer Reference Number.
- the date of birth of the CCS claimant parent/guardian.
- your child's date of birth.

If you do not have CRN's, 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

Regular Booked Days

If you need to change or cancel your child's regular booked days of attendance, you will need to provide your Educator with 2 weeks notice. If your child does not attend any of the days during the notice period, fees will 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 with documentation to support your child's absence.

Documentation can be:

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

Fees are payable for all absences, including illness, holiday and public holidays.

Public Holidays

Educators are normally closed on public holidays, however some Educators may be available to work on public holidays. Please talk to your Educator if you require care on public holidays. Fees are charged if your booked day falls on a public holiday.

Leaving our services

If you are intending to cease care, you must provide two weeks written notice so a planned exit for your child can occur. CCS is not payable for absences at the end of care. If a family has confirmed their child's last day at a service, but that child does not attend their last booked session/s of care, no Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any days after the child's last physical attendance at the service. We strongly recommend your child attend for at least a part of their final booked day.

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 with our continual quality improvement.

Family input

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

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/ren. This handbook should be considered a resource, although it is not intended to cover every aspect of our service concerning your child. A copy of service policies and procedures is available upon request.

Feedback and Concerns

If you have a concern with your child's Educator, please speak with them first if possible. Educators are here to support you and your child and will be open to discussing any feedback or concerns that you have.

If you wish to speak to a Coordinator you can contact them at the service. If you are still not satisfied with the response you can speak to the Family Day Care Operations Manager who can be contacted through the service.

The Queensland government's Department of Education, Early Childhood Education and Care can be reached on these details:

Metropolitan Region – Metro North
Early Childhood Education and Care
Department of Education
PO Box 3376
STAFFORD QLD 4503
Email: MNRNundah.ECRA@qed.qld.gov.au
Phone: 07 36340532