

Welcome to Blue Gum Early Learning and Child Care Centre

Dear Parents

The Management Committee, Nominated Supervisor/ Educators and Food – Coordinator of Blue Gum would like to welcome you to our exceptional service.

For many children, it will be their first time away from family and friends. It is important that they feel comfortable and secure in their new environment.

Therefore, it is necessary for you as a parent and us as your child's Educators, to collaborate and share information about your child. This will ensure a smooth transition from home to day care and vice versa.

We always endeavour to achieve the highest quality of care and education for your child.

Please feel free to contact our Nominated Supervisor on any matter regarding your child while attending our Service.



Our Philosophy

At Blue Gum Early Learning and Childcare Centre we take enormous pride in the high level of experience and education of our Early Childhood Personnel.

Blue Gum Early Learning and Childcare believes a strong sense of identity is facilitated in an environment where children feel safe and secure. By feeling safe and secure children grow in confidence to explore and learn. Our Early Childhood Educators develop secure attachments through consistent warm nurturing relationships. Building relationships is the foundation for the construction of identity. Each child's uniqueness is acknowledged in positive ways and Blue Gum Educators spend time interacting and conversing with each child.

Children attending Blue Gum are provided with opportunities to engage in both individual and collaborative pursuits developing skills of decision making, negotiation, sharing and self regulation. All children are encouraged to develop a strong sense of who they are and their connectedness to others and the value of cultural learning of individual children's communities. Educators engage in interactions with children that promote respect for diversity and value distinctiveness.

We believe children need good physical health and need to experience feelings of happiness. Good nutrition is essential to healthy living which enables children to be active participants in play. Having physical wellbeing contributes to children's ability to concentrate, cooperate and learn. Wellbeing is correlated with resilience which provides children with a capacity to cope with day to day stress and challenges.

Blue Gum Educators support an active learning environment encouraging children to be confident and involved learners. Children develop understandings of themselves and their world through active, hands on investigation. Active involvement challenges and extends on their thinking, and that of others. They are able to create new knowledge in collaborative interactions and negotiations. Developing connections and maintaining continuity between learning experiences in different settings makes learning more meaningful and increases children's feelings of belonging.

At Blue Gum we value and embrace children's use of their home language as this underpins their sense of identity and their conceptual development. Our Educators acknowledge that children have a right to be continuing users of their home language as well as to develop competency in Standard Australian English.

We believe literacy and numeracy capabilities are important aspects of communication and are vital for successful learning across the curriculum. It is essential that literacy and numeracy with which young children interact are relevant and meaningful in the context of their current lives. Educators at Blue Gum provide a range of experiences with language, literacy and numeracy that children have within their families and communities.

Our Philosophy was written and developed in accordance with The Early Years Learning Framework. We have incorporated all the Five Learning Outcomes.

OUR AIMS & OBJECTIVES

AT BLUE GUM EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE CENTRE:-

- We will provide the children with a warm, friendly and inviting atmosphere where they will feel secure and be happy in their environment
- We will provide caring educators who show genuine love and concern for the children in their care
- The environment will cater for the needs of all children and encourage the healthy development of physical, emotional, intellectual and social skills
- We will provide a safe and well supervised service
- We will respect the rights and opinions of parents and the community and encourage parent participation and a broad interest in the community
- Throughout the day children will be exposed to small group, whole group and individual learning experiences, which have been developed from the needs and interests of each child
- We will provide opportunities for the children to explore language, music and movement, science and the arts, to help them make sense of their world
- All children will be given adequate time for meals, rest and relaxation
- We will encourage children to value and respect each other's differences while promoting the development of a positive self esteem
- We will create a learning environment which will encourage children to interact, take on roles and develop relationships with others through play
- We will encourage children to be respectful, sensitive and thoughtful towards their environment

OUR SERVICE PERSONNEL

Our service personnel are dedicated to providing you and your child/children with high quality care and education in a clean homely environment.

All our educators have or are working towards Early Childhood Qualifications. We participate in ongoing training to further develop our skills and knowledge.

We have a pool of relief educators, ensuring that children receive continuity of care while our regular educators are on leave.

Students from various Universities, colleges and schools do at times attend our Service for observation work and/or work experience. These students are always supervised by one of our Qualified Educators and are not included in our educator: child ratios.



CURRICULUM

We aim to provide a total learning experience where children are free to observe, question, experiment and explore.

It is important for children to experience being wet, dirty, noisy and messy.

Children need to learn independence by knowing where to find things and being able to get things for themselves.

They need to learn to respect themselves, the needs and feelings of others and feel that they are important to a group.

An understanding of all cultures is an important part of our daily curriculum along with pictures, puzzles, manipulative equipment and play, books, dolls, dress ups and music.

Our curriculum is reflective of the Early Years Learning Framework which is part of the National Standards in which we incorporate the five learning outcomes. We present our curriculum as a play based emergent curriculum and it is emailed out to our families on a daily basis.

Daily curriculum incorporates an awareness of a variety of cultures that exist in our community.

Our curriculum is evaluated on a long and short term basis.

Our philosophy and policies have a strong influence on our curriculum and have been developed in accordance with national legislative law, early childhood national quality standards and committee /parent input.

Your child's room leader is happy to make an appointment to discuss with you the experiences your child/children engage in on a daily basis. Your room leader can explain the important learning processes taking place. This can be at a time by mutual arrangement or alternatively this can be a phone appointment.



AGE GROUPINGS

Centre rooms may be divided into the following groups:

- Joeys
- Possums
- Wombats
- Koalas

Each room leader brings individual skills and experiences that enhance their unique caring and teaching skills. Therefore variations within rooms will occur, however we all follow the same Early Years Learning Framework.

Blue Gum has a clear set of goals based on a philosophy established from a sound knowledge of early childhood theories and practices, which form the basis of the Early Years Learning Framework.



Your child's Group Leader is available to discuss the room's programme and your child's progress with you.

SLEEP AND REST

Regulation 81 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations state that:

The Nominated supervisor of an education and care service must take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children.

At Blue Gum we have a rest period after lunch, where all children are required to peacefully relax to quiet music or listen to a story. This ensures that the needs of all children are being met. Children who fall asleep must be tired. We are unable to prevent children from falling asleep and it is against regulation for us to be waking children up from a deep sleep. All children must have the opportunity of at least 30 minutes quiet rest time.



A letter to my mummy and daddy

*Please make sure that when I come to day-care
I have everything I need...*

I have made a short list for you

- My very own pillow case to keep my sheets in.*
- A couple of changes of clothes. Sometimes I get “messy” or just need a fresh set of clothes.*
- A hat as outside play is so much fun and I don’t want the sun to get me.*
- All my bottles made up ready for me with my name on them.*
- My special comforter’s e.g. dummy, blanket, special teddy.*
- A drink bottle with my name on it.*



OPEN DOOR POLICY

We have an "Open Door" policy and Parents are invited to visit our service and experience and participate in the daily curriculum.

COMMUNICATION

Please read all the notices and signs when entering the centre to check for upcoming events of interest and special requests.

Communication books in all our rooms promote a sharing of information about the children's day while at the service, as well as from your home to Blue Gum.

Our Daily Curriculum is emailed to you each afternoon on the days that your child attends Blue Gum.

Your Fee Statements are emailed to you on a weekly basis, and Newsletters and other information is emailed when necessary throughout the year. As emails are our primary form of communication, we advise that you check them on a daily basis.

Each family has an information box in the foyer in which notices and catalogues are placed for your collection.

Please check your family's box each time you visit the service as it is an important key to communication.

WAITLIST APPLICATIONS AND ENROLMENTS

On your Waitlist Application, you are required to nominate specific days. We always do our best to accommodate these days, but unfortunately due to the high demand for places at our Service, this is not always possible.

The Service cannot accommodate all wait list applications; however, if places become available, we will do our best to offer you a place as soon as feasible.

Once your enrolment is confirmed, we strive to ensure that it is a positive experience for both you and your child.

When you visit the service you will be given an enrolment package.

A Supervisor will discuss important information including Service Policies, the Daily Routine of your child's room and the Centre Curriculum.

Please complete the enrolment forms and return them to the service as soon as possible.

The information you provide to us is extremely important and will remain confidential at all times.

A minimum of 2 days is suggested to support each child's involvement in the curriculum offered and to assist in the development of their friendships.

ORIENTATION

We encourage you to bring your child in for orientation sessions prior to commencing at Blue Gum.

This enables you and your child to become familiar with their new surroundings and Educators.

Please allow sufficient time to meet your child's Room Leader to discuss your child's integration into the group.

We understand that it is difficult for Parents to leave their child for the first time, and encourage Parents to call throughout the day to check on their child's progress.

Here are some suggestions to assist you:

- Say "Goodbye"
- Don't prolong the farewell
- Say "I am going now. I'll be back this afternoon"
- Give your child a kiss and a hug before you leave
- Always let the Staff know that you are leaving. This will signal the staff to give a little extra support to your child should they need it

Parents and children need time to adjust.

Allow time so that your child can show you things and places that interest them on arrival and departure.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We strive to give consistent loving care to your child and provide them with a happy environment.

Please feel free to look into our busy, happy rooms and see your child at play.

By working together, Parents and our Educators can help each child develop to their full potential.

We encourage Parent consultation and suggestions for our service policies, philosophy and parent information documents.

Blue Gum has a non-discriminatory and non-biased policy.

Children from non-English speaking backgrounds and children with additional needs will not be discriminated against.

Parents can participate in our program and curriculum by sharing their special skills, also by collecting recycled materials for art and helping at social functions.

PARENT GRIEVANCES/COMPLAINTS

The service will address grievances/complaints promptly with an emphasis being placed on resolving issues in a professional and ethical manner.

All matters are considered confidential and will be handled appropriately.

Please discuss minor concerns with a Supervisor of the service as soon as possible, so that they can be dealt with immediately.

If the grievance is more serious, parents need to put their grievance in writing and discuss with the Nominated Supervisor. The Nominated Supervisor will investigate and complete the grievance register, keep the parent informed of the action being taken and the outcome.

If the parents are not satisfied with the outcome, or they feel that it has not been properly addressed, they should contact a member of the committee, either in writing or verbally, who will conduct their own investigation and assess how it should be handled.

NEWSLETTERS

Every 6-8 weeks you will receive a newsletter by email.

The main aim of the newsletter is to keep you informed of current events at Blue Gum, the work that is being done by your child in their room and current topics or areas of interest to the children.

CELEBRATIONS

We encourage Parents to let their children share special celebrations with us at the service.

If you would like us to celebrate any occasion with your child, please talk to your child's Room Leader.

You are welcome to order a birthday cake with our Food Coordinator, however a birthday cake can only be ordered if your child's birthday is on the same day that they attend Blue Gum. Please give our Food Coordinator at least one week's notice and fill in the required form located at the office.

PERSONAL TOYS

It would be appreciated if children did not bring toys or valuables from home unless they are required for a special event.

Toys from home can become lost or broken and it saves a lot of heartache if items are left at home.

We encourage children to bring nature items and other items of general interest.

Comfort toys are always welcome.

LOST PROPERTY

Please label all items including socks, shoes and underwear etc. in order to assist the Educators to locate the owner.

CHANGE OF DETAILS

Please ensure that you notify the service of any changes to your child's information.

It is important for our service to maintain up to date contact details at all times.

OUR POLICIES

The service policies and procedures can be found in the front foyer.

We recommend that you take the time to read these policies.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to speak with the Nominated Supervisor.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

It is the policy of this service to focus on encouragement and positive guidance, rather than discipline.

We try to recognise why a child behaves in a certain way, and encourage more acceptable forms of behaviour.

Children will be offered reasonable choices when guiding behaviour, which may include redirection and alternative play choices.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Immunisation

The service is required to maintain up-to-date immunisation records for all children attending.

Parents are requested to supply proof of immunisation.

Please advise the service of any updated immunisations.

SUN SMART

We aim to promote a positive attitude towards skin protection and take effective measures to ensure the children's safety from the sun,

We will ensure that each child is covered with sunscreen and have a suitable hat on before going outdoors.

Please provide a wide brimmed or legionnaires hat for your child each time they attend.

Should your child be allergic to common brands of sunscreen, we ask that you send specific sunscreen for your child.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

During the day your child will participate in many different experiences and it is important that they are dressed in appropriate clothing.

Remember, children are hard at “work” while they are with us and often the most beneficial learning experiences come from messy play.

We encourage children to wear aprons when painting or participating in other messy experiences.

Older children are encouraged to wear sensible footwear, and comfortable casual clothes, which are suitable for an active day.

Overalls and braces are not recommended as children find them difficult to handle and will not be able to get in and out of them easily when they go to the toilet.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND AT LEAST ONE CHANGE OF CLOTHES EACH DAY

MEDICATION

If your child requires medication while at the service, you must complete the Medication Administration Form detailing the following important information:

- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Time medication is to be administered
- Time of last dose
- Parent signature

The responsible Educator will sign the form to indicate that the medication has been administered.

Under no circumstances will the Service administer higher than the recommended dose.

The Medication Administration Form must be completed on a daily basis, even if the medication is required for more than one day.

The medication must remain in its original named container.

If the medication is prescriptive, please ensure that the container is clearly marked with the Doctor’s instructions.

Any medication must be handed directly to an educator in charge of your child’s room, so that it can be stored in an area inaccessible to children.

Parents are requested to collect medication from this area on departure.

Please ensure that no medication, creams etc. of any kind are left in your child's bag.

Please speak to the Nominated Supervisor for further information on the Service's Medication Policy.



ILLNESS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

We are committed to providing and maintaining a healthy environment to safeguard children and staff from infection.

The service reserve the right to send home or refuse attendance to any child that is considered not well enough to attend.

If your child is unwell or showing signs of an infectious or contagious disease, we will contact you immediately and you may be required to collect them from the service.

We will only administer Panadol in case of emergency where a child has a high fever and the parent is on their way to collect them from the service. We will not administer Neurofen or Panadol for any other reason without written authorisation from a medical practitioner.

Please do not send your child if they are unwell. If your child has experienced vomiting or diarrhoea please do not bring them into the service until 24 hours from the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea has occurred.

It is the policy of the service not to admit any child who has a communicable disease.

We will advise parents of an infectious disease at the service by email and placing a notice in each room, please keep your email address current and up to date.

HYGIENE

Strict hand washing procedures are implemented at Blue Gum.

Children are encouraged to wash and dry their hands before and after meals, after using the toilet and after messy experiences.

SAFETY

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

An emergency evacuation plan is displayed in each room.

Once every 3 months, the service conducts a fire drill. The aim of these drills is to ensure that in the event of a real emergency, the children can be evacuated as quickly as possible.

If you are present at the service during the fire drill, you are legally required to participate in this procedure.

ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS, INJURIES AND TRAUMA

Any accidents, incidents, injuries or trauma which may occur at the service is recorded on the relevant report form. If your child has been injured during the day you will be required to sign the relevant report, indicating that you have been informed.

If necessary you will be contacted to collect your child.

If you cannot be contacted and your child requires medical attention, we will take the necessary required steps.

Any medical expenses incurred will be the parent's responsibility.

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

We will only allow parents or persons stated in writing on the enrolment form to collect your child/children from the service.

Please take your child into the service on arrival and acknowledge your arrival and departure to educators.

Under no circumstances is your child to be left in the foyer or at the front door.

If you are unable to collect your child from the service, you will need to ring, or notify the service in writing.

This person must be at least 18 years old, and an authorised person on your child's enrolment form.

Photo identification will be required.

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

If you have a legal agreement outlining custody or restraining arrangements, please provide the service with a copy for our records.

Parents are requested to notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately if these legal circumstance change.

FEES AND HOLIDAYS

BOOKED DAYS

On enrolment you are required to inform the service of permanent days required.

Please speak to the Nominated Supervisor if you need to change these days.

Some notice may be required as it is not always possible to change the days due to Service demand.

FEE STRUCTURE AND PAYMENT

Fees are required to be paid two weeks in advance at all times. If your child's fees are not paid, your child's enrolment may be terminated. At Blue Gum we do not keep money on the premises and fees must be paid by direct debit.

CHILD CARE BENEFIT

The federally funded Child Care Benefit Scheme is designed to ensure all families can afford quality Childcare.

All families (except non-residents) are eligible for at least the minimum Child Care Benefit.

Families must register with the Family Assistance Office (FAO) by completing a "Child Care Benefit Application Form".

Full fees will apply until the centre receives notification stating that you are eligible for Child Care Benefit.

Parents are required to inform the FAO of any changes that may affect their assessment.

Please advise the Nominated Supervisor if siblings are attending another approved service.

Standard Information on Child Care Benefit and Child Care

Rebate Child Care Assistance

The Australian Government is committed to providing families with access to high quality, affordable

Child care and provides families with financial assistance to help cover the cost of approved child care through the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate.

Child Care Benefit

The Child Care Benefit is income tested and is usually paid directly to approved child care services to reduce the fees that eligible families pay.

Who is eligible for the Child Care Benefit?

- Your child must be attending approved child care or registered child care.
- You or your partner must be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident living in Australia or be exempted from the Australian Government's residency requirements.
- Children under seven years of age must meet the Australian Government's immunization requirements or have an exemption.
- You must be the person responsible for paying the child care fees.
- You can apply for the Child Care Benefit in person or online through the Department of Human Services.

Child Care Rebate

The Child Care Rebate is an additional payment to the Child Care Benefit which helps families cover the out-of-pocket costs of child care. It is not income tested and covers up to 50 per cent of out-of-pocket child care costs, up to an annual cap, which at July 2013 is \$7,500 per child. Out-of-pocket child care costs are calculated after deducting any Child Care Benefit payments that are received. Families can also choose for the rebate to be paid directly to an approved child care service to reduce the child care fees that eligible families pay.

Who is eligible for the Child Care Rebate?

- You and your partner (if applicable) must have had work, training, study related commitments (or have an exemption) at some time during a week.
- You must be using approved child care.
- You or your partner must meet the residency and child's immunisation requirements .
- You must be the one responsible for your child care costs . If your employer contributes to your child care through salary sacrificing or packaging, you should discuss with them who is responsible for the cost.

Even if your family's income is too high for you to receive the Child Care Benefit you may be eligible for the Child Care Rebate

How to claim the Child Care Rebate

- You will need to apply for the Child Care Benefit first. There is no separate claim form for the Child Care Rebate.
- You will automatically be assessed and paid if you are eligible when you apply for the Child Care Benefit (even if you are assessed at a zero rate for the Child Care Benefit due to your family's income).
- You can apply for the Child Care Benefit in person or online through the Department of Human Services.

How much could you get?

To find out how much Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate you could receive, use the child care estimator online or call 13 6150.

Child Care assistance payments will be made once the Department of Human Services has received child care attendance details from your approved child care service/s.

Examples of how Child Care Assistance works* Nick and Kate

- Nick and Kate both work full time and meet all of the eligibility requirements for Child Care Benefit however their family income is too high to receive any Child Care Benefit.
- Their first child, Ben, is aged 7 and is in Outside School Hours Care, which costs \$102.50 per week, \$4,920 over the year.
- Their second child, Sam, is aged 3 and is in Long Day Care, which costs, \$310 per week, \$14,880 over the year.
- They use 48 weeks of care in a financial year.

	Ben	Sam
Total child care fees	\$4,920	\$14,880
Child Care Benefit entitlement	\$0	\$0
Out-of-pocket expenses	\$4,920	\$14,880
Child Care Rebate(= 50% of out of pocket expenses)	\$2,460	\$7,440
This means that child care fees are reduced by \$9,900 and Nick and Kate pay only \$9,900 over the year.		

James and Sally

- James works full time and his partner Sally is studying. Their family income is \$65,000 which means they receive some Child Care Benefit..
- Their eldest child, David, is aged 8 and attends Outside School Hours Care, which costs \$105 per week, \$4,200 over the year.
- Their second child, Bella, is aged 4 and is in Family Day Care, which costs \$200 per week, \$8,000 over the year.
- They use 40 weeks of care in a financial year.

	David	Bella
Total child care fees	\$4,200	\$8,000
Less Child Care Benefit entitlement	\$1,790	\$7,000
Out-of-pocket expenses	\$2,410	\$1,000
Child Care Rebate(= 50% of out of pocket	\$1,205	\$500
This means that Child care fees are reduced by \$10,495 and James and Sally pay only \$1,705 over the year.		

*these examples should be used as a guide only and are based on 2013-2014 Child Care Benefit rates and income thresholds

For more information

Visit australia.gov.au/mychild

PRIORITY OF ACCESS

We operate under the Government Child Care Benefit Scheme (CCB) and comply with Priority of Access guidelines.

HOLIDAYS

Families are eligible for a 50% fee reduction of their weekly fees for a period of two calendar weeks per year, per family.

If your child attends the service on a full time basis and you take two weeks holiday, you would only be required to pay half of your usual two weeks fees.

If your child attends on a part time basis, i.e. two days per week, and you took two weeks holiday, you would be required to pay half fees for the four days you did not attend the service.

To apply for the reduced rate, two weeks' notice on completion of the the Holiday Notification form is required, and fees must be paid in full before going on holidays, to hold your child's place open at the service.

ALLOWABLE ABSENCES

Each family is entitled to 42 days of absence per year while claiming Child Care Benefit.

An absence may be identified as: a sick day, holiday, occasional absence or a public holiday.

Once the 42 days allowable absence have been taken full fees will apply for subsequent absences, as Child Care Benefit cannot be claimed for these additional days.

If your child is absent due to illness and has a medical certificate, these absences will not count towards the allowable absence total.

SICK DAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Please notify the service if your child is sick or unable to attend. If your child has been absent for more than two weeks without notification, we are unable to hold the position.

Public holidays and absences must be paid for and there are no make-up days

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

You are required to sign your child in and out each time they attend the Service.

This is a legal requirement. Sign in sheets must also be signed for any absenteeism.

Full fees will be charged for any unsigned attendance or absence, as Child Care Benefit cannot be applied for these days.

LATE FEE

If a child is left at the centre after 5.45p.m, a late fee of \$2.00 for each minute will be charged, with a minimum fee of \$20-00.



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