



Kingston
Family and Children's Centres

FAMILY HANDBOOK

This handbook provides a brief overview of frequently asked questions during enrolment and orientation at our Family and Children's Centres.

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Kingston proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging. Council acknowledges the Bunurong's continuing relationship to the land and waterways and respects that their connection and spiritual identity is maintained through ancient ceremonies, songlines, dance, art and living culture. Council pays tribute to the invaluable contributions of the Bunurong and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island elders who have guided and continue to guide the work we do.



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Disclaimer:

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information available through this Family Handbook is up to date, Kingston Council and its employees will not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred by any person relying on this information. Please contact service provider for updates and changes to policies, procedures or guideline



CENTRE INFORMATION

Service Locations

PARKDALE

Family and Children's Centre

122 Warren Road,

Parkdale 3195

Ph: 8586 0900

E: admin.parkdalefcc@kingston.vic.gov.au

EDITHVALE

Family and Children's Centre

122 Edithvale Road,

Edithvale 3196

Ph: 8782 1200

E: admin.edithvalefcc@kingston.vic.gov.au

CARRUM

Family and Children's Centre

24A Graham Road,

Carrum 3197

Ph: 9581 3000

E: admin.carrumfcc@kingston.vic.gov.au

Hours of Operation

- 7:00am-6:00pm Monday-Friday.
- Our administration team is available between 8.30am – 5.00pm

Public Holidays and Centre Closures

The Family and Children's Centres are closed on all Victorian public holidays. Fees are charged for public holidays.

The centres are closed during the Christmas/New Year period. During the Christmas/New Year period, families are not charged fees.

CENTRE INFORMATION

Programs

- The Family and Children’s Centres provide Education and Care for children aged 0 – 6 years as per the table below.
- We provide a play based education program with a focus on the development of social and emotional skills, self regulation and resilience. We provide play based individual and group-based experiences that spark children’s curiosity and imagination, and embed emerging language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Program Type	Hours/Sessions	Age Grouping
Education and Care	7:00am-6:00pm Full time or part time (1-5 days)	Room structures vary per service. Example: 0-3.5 years; or 2.5-6 years
Program Type	Hours/Sessions	Age Grouping
Three-Year-Old Funded Kindergarten	Extended Day 7:00am-6:00pm Full time or part time (1-5 days)	3-4 years Children must be 3 by 30th April
Four-Year-Old Funded Kindergarten	Extended Day 7:00am-6:00pm Full time or part time (1-5 days)	4-5 years Children must be 4 by 30th April

From 2024, Sessional Kindergarten will only be offered at Carrum Family and Children’s Centre. Please visit Kindergarten - City of Kingston for more information.

Quality and Regulation

- The Family and Children’s Centres are regulated by the Department of Education and Training (DET). They carry out the quality assessment and rating process and ensure that services meet the Education and Care National Law and Regulations. Each of our services are rated Exceeding the National Quality Standard. This means our services go beyond the requirements of the National Quality Standard in at least four of the seven quality areas.
- As part of the assessment and quality rating process, the Family and Children’s Centres develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP identifies the strengths and areas for improvement in each of the seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard. Please speak to your Coordinator if you would like to view a copy of your centres current QIP.

Centre Policies

- The Family and Children’s Centres have developed a full suite of policies and procedures to meet legislative requirements and best practice recommendations.
- Please speak with your Coordinator if you would like copies of any of the policies or have any questions about the policies.

Complaints and Grievances

Should you have any concerns, complaints, or grievances, please speak with the centre coordinator or senior coordinator in the first instance.

Further contacts can be found in the foyer of each centre.

Feedback both written and verbal must be respectful and factual. We do not tolerate abusive or inappropriate behaviour or language in our services and will take action to remove any persons putting staff, children, or families at risk.

CENTRE INFORMATION

Child Safety, Wellbeing, Inclusion and Equity

The City of Kingston is a child safe organisation. Kingston's Family and Children's Centres are committed to the safety, wellbeing and support of all children and young people in all aspects of operation within our Service.

Our services provide welcoming inclusive environments for all families and endeavours to ensure that all children, families, Educators, Staff, and visitors are treated equitably. The centre has zero tolerance for discrimination.

We are dedicated to promoting cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Where required, the centre will seek support for children with additional needs e.g. assistance with teaching strategies, or funding for additional resources and/or Educators through inclusion support programs.

- The centre acknowledges and values diversity, and promotes the empowerment, safety and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children with a disability.
- The centre provides additional support for families experiencing vulnerability including linking them with support services and funding where appropriate.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan – City of Kingston April 2022 – April 2024

The City of Kingston's vision for reconciliation is to have a unified community through respecting and embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by recognising their wisdom and honouring their cultures.

The council will strive to provide a space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in which they can reach their full potential by feeling culturally safe through highly valuing their health and wellbeing as a collective community.

As well as acknowledging the special relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land, committing to the protection of storytelling and aiming to continuously educate the community through advocacy, policies and programs about this intrinsic connection.

We are committed to the following five principles developed out of consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and staff across the City of Kingston:

Respect – We will respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, values and beliefs, treating everyone equally. This will be done through respecting cultural diversity and creating a respectful environment to all people.

Understanding – We will strive to understand the spiritual and historical connection to the land that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have through providing the opportunity to be educated to increase our knowledge.

Truth – We will acknowledge the true history of Australia and its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all opportunities possible. We will also continue to support the healing caused by Australia's true history and acknowledge past injustices.

Communication – We will be transparent and authentic in our communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and Traditional Owners. We will communicate in a culturally sensitive way and continue to educate ourselves through cultural awareness training to ensure we are further educated in how we communicate.

Engagement – We will continue to engage in a meaningful way with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and Traditional Owners. Through ongoing, active engagement we will ensure this relationship is respectful and long lasting



CENTRE INFORMATION

Enrolment and Orientation

Families will receive an offer via their Xap guardian portal when a vacancy becomes available.

Where a family has not yet visited the service, a tour time can be arranged with the centre coordinator prior to accepting the position. Please contact our administration staff to organise a time.

At the time of acceptance, families are required to pay a non-refundable bond (enrolment deposit) to secure their child's booking and complete their child's enrolment details.

Our administration staff will make contact to organise two, one hour orientation sessions, discuss your child's commencement date and advise of any additional paperwork to be completed prior to your child's first day (Education and Care/Kindergarten Extended Day). Children enrolled in Sessional Kindergarten at Carrum Family and Children's Centre sessions will have orientation plans emailed prior to the term commencing.

If your child has a diagnosed medical condition, allergy intolerance or dietary requirement you will be required to meet with the centre coordinator prior to commencement of care. This is to ensure the service has all relevant information needed to ensure high quality care and a safe environment for your child regarding any medical or dietary conditions. Our administration team will support you in regards to making a time to do this.

Enrolment Information

It's important that the centre has the most up to date information for each family. Families are required to review and update information in their Xap guardian portal regularly.

The administration staff will prompt families throughout the year to review their information and request new documentation where previously provided paperwork has expired.

Additional Days

Parents/guardians can request additional permanent days for their child via their Xap guardian portal. Families will receive an offer via their Xap guardian portal when a vacancy becomes available.

Hats and Kindergarten T-Shirts

Hats and kindergarten t-shirts are available to purchase at administration.

No Jab No Play - Immunisation Requirements

Under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, we are unable to confirm the enrolment of a child unless certification the child is age-appropriately immunised or has an approved exemption.

Families need to provide evidence that their child's immunisations are up to date. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) is the only accepted documentation and is

required to finalise enrolment. A copy of the green book or an Immunisation Status Certificate completed by a GP or local Council immunisation service are no longer accepted.

Your child's Immunisation History Statement can be located in your MyGov account.

Authorised Nominees (Emergency Contacts)

Families must nominate at least two other family members or friends who can collect their child/be contacted in an emergency. It is important that these authorised nominees can collect the child when required e.g. a family member who lives interstate is not appropriate. Families can review and update authorised nominees at any time via their Xap guardian portal.

Custody and Access

Please advise the centre if there are any custody or access arrangements in place for your child.

The centre can only attempt to stop a parent/guardian from collecting a child if there is a current court order in place. If the parent/guardian becomes violent or aggressive, or the safety of the staff other children is threatened, the child will be released and the service will contact the police and the parent/guardian custodian immediately.

Drugs and Alcohol

If a parent/guardian arrives to collect a child in a drug or significantly alcohol affected state, the centre will attempt to dissuade the parent/guardian from collecting the child and try to determine if another family member or friend can assist with collection/care of the child. If the parent/guardian insists on taking the child, the service will phone the police and make a report to Child Protection.

Holiday Discount

Families may be eligible for a holiday discount of 25% for up to 2 weeks of care (pro rata) if they notify the service a minimum 2 weeks in advance of their child/ren's absence of 2 or more consecutive days.

Casual Bookings

Families can request a casual booking via email. The administration officer will seek approval from the coordinator to offer a casual booking.

FEES

The Family and Children's Centres only accept payment made by direct debit or EFTPOS.

Enrolment Fee Deposit

Families pay a non-refundable bond (Enrolment Deposit) at the time of accepting an offer.

The bond is waived for families with a health care card, Additional Child Care Subsidy (Temporary Financial Hardship, Grandparents and Transition to Work). Please contact administration prior to accepting your child's offer to have the bond waived.

Fees

The Family and Children's Centres charge a daily (11 hour) fee.

Families will receive an invoice outlining the previous two weeks' fees.

Families are required to pay their fees via direct debit on a fortnightly basis. We may cease your child's enrolment where fees remain outstanding. See fee policy for more information.

A current Early Years Fee Schedule is displayed at each service. Fees are reviewed annually as part of the City of Kingston budget review process.

Early Drop Off/Late Collection Fee

Dropping off or picking up children more than ten minutes either side of session times will incur a fee.

The fee is charged in 15-minute blocks and will automatically apply to family's accounts when a child is dropped off before a session commences or after a session concludes.

Non-Attendance

Families are required to let the service know via phone or email if their child will be absent.

Fees are charged for all absences including illness, holidays and personal leave.

Child Care Subsidy

Childcare subsidy helps families with the cost of childcare and extended session kindergarten.

Eligible families are required to submit their application for childcare subsidy prior to their child commencing care.

Eligible families will receive an assessment notice which includes their subsidy percentage and subsidised hours per fortnight.

Once approved, the service will submit an enrolment notice which needs to be acknowledged in the claimant's myGov account.

Childcare subsidy is paid directly to the service to reduce the out-of-pocket expense (gap) for families.

Families are liable to pay the full fee where their entitlements are yet to apply or suddenly cease.

The service is unable to contact Centrelink to discuss family entitlements. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly to discuss eligibility and entitlements.

For more information visit Child Care Subsidy - Services Australia

Additional Child Care Subsidy

Families receiving Child Care Subsidy may be eligible for extra help with the cost of childcare.

Eligibility criteria for ACCS includes:

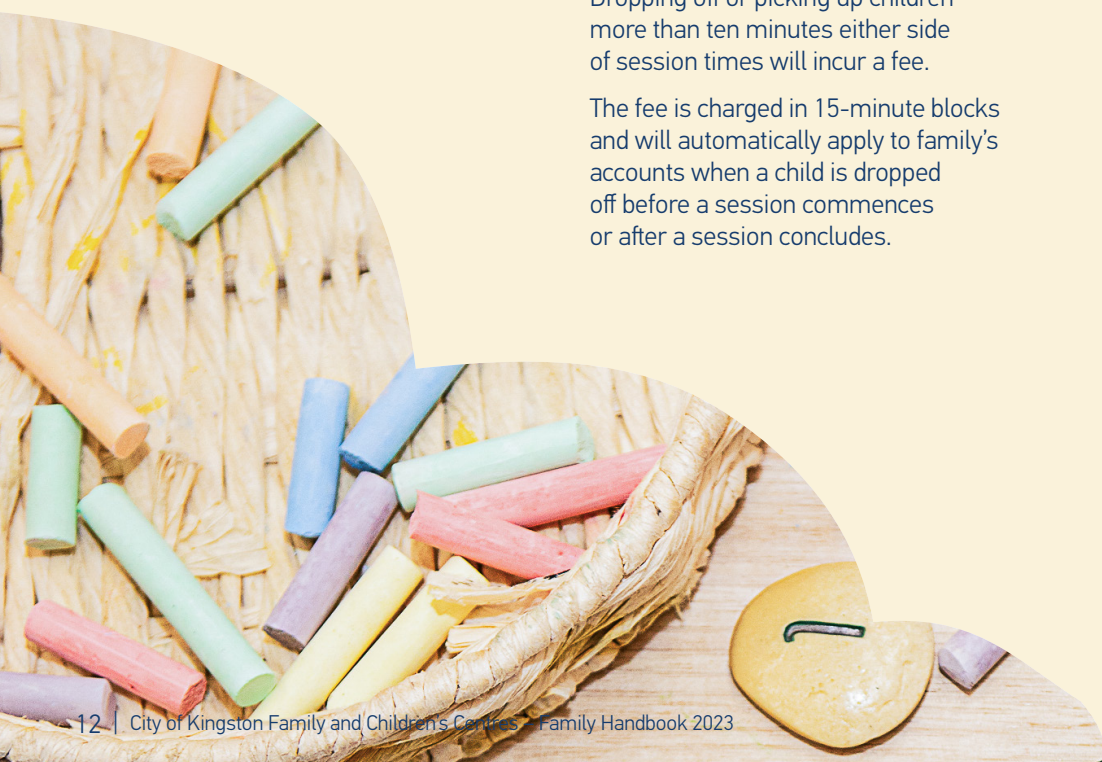
- an eligible grandparent getting an income support payment
- transitioning from certain income support payments to work
- experiencing temporary financial hardship
- caring for a child who is vulnerable or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

For more information visit Additional Child Care Subsidy - Services Australia or speak with your centre coordinator.

Ceasing Care

If you wish to cancel part or all your child's care and education, 4 weeks-notice is required. Please advise the centre in writing via email.

There are occasions where Childcare Subsidy will not apply to a ceased enrolment. Please visit <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-if-your-child-absent-from-child-care?context=41186#a3> for more information.



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Our centres are large and busy environments. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all families and children, please supervise all of the children in your care. Children, including school aged children, cannot be left unattended in the foyer or other areas of the centre while you drop off your other child(ren).

Please make sure only adults are using the door codes, opening doors to children's rooms, and using the exit buttons.

Signing In and Out

- When completing the child's electronic enrolment form via Xap, families are required to provide the contact details of parent/guardians and two additional emergency contacts.
- Each person listed will have their own personal pin number to use when signing children in and out of the service on the centre iPad's located outside the children's rooms.
- The pin number can be updated at anytime by logging in to your Xap guardian portal.
- This pin number is for adults only- children are not permitted to use the administration iPads.
- Please ensure any person dropping off or collecting your child has been added to your Xap guardian portal.

Parking and Road Safety

Please utilise the dedicated car parking spaces and walkways provided (where available). Please be mindful of other cars and pedestrians, especially during busy drop off and pick up times.

Please ensure that all of the children in your care are with you at drop off and pick up times. In Victoria it is an offence for a person responsible for a child to leave the child unattended for any longer than is reasonable, including leaving a child unattended in a car (windows up or down).

Communication

Upon arrival please notify an Educator that your child has arrived or is departing.

Families are welcome to call the centre throughout the day or spend a few minutes during collection to discuss their child's day.

During arrival families are encouraged to notify Educators of anything that may impact on their child's day e.g. lack of sleep the night before, changes at home etc.

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Handwashing

To minimise the spread of infection and to protect children with allergies and anaphylaxis, all children are encouraged to wash their hands on arrival and departure.

Sunscreen and Sun Protection

The centre provides SPF 50+ sunscreen for children. Families can provide their own sunscreen to be kept at the centre if their child is sensitive to the centre sunscreen.

Families are encouraged to apply sunscreen to their child on arrival in conjunction with the sun and weather policy.

Safe Sleeping

Where possible, the centre will maintain children's sleep routine from home. Sleeping practices from home can only be implemented at centre if they meet Safe Sleeping practices e.g. the centre cannot put very young children on their stomach to sleep. You will discuss your child's sleep/ rest practices during orientation.

Toileting

The centre acknowledges that children are ready for toilet training at different ages and stages of development. When a child is ready, Educators will, in partnership with families support the child to begin toilet training at the centre.

Families can bring in a named potty for their child if that is their preference. Families are requested to bring a minimum of three changes of clothes each day while their child is toilet training. Accidents are a part of the learning process. Educators will place all wet and soiled clothes in a sealed plastic bag into the child's bag.

Educator-to-Child Ratios and Supervision

The centre adheres to the following Educator-to-child ratios:

1. 1:4 for children under 3 years of age; and
 2. 1:11 for children over 3 years of age.
- The ratios are maintained at all times, including during sleep and rest time.
 - Educators maintain high levels of supervision at all times. Please assist with this by booking in a time to see Educators if you need more than a few minutes of their time, as their attention needs to be with the children.

Interactions with Children

- Educators develop positive and trusting relationships with children. They will get to know each child (what they like to do, how they settle, who they like to play with, how they react in different situations etc.) by spending meaningful time with each child individually and in a group and by gaining insight from families. Educators use positive

HEALTH AND SAFETY

language, remain calm and gentle, respect children's choices and role model appropriate behaviour.

- Educators comfort children who are upset or having difficulty separating from families. Educators work with families to create a drop off routine that meets the needs of each child e.g. completing a favourite activity, reading a story etc.

Behaviour Guidance

Educators guide and support each child's behaviour by:

- Focusing on establishing reciprocal and respectful relationships with each child by helping them feel safe, secure and supported.
- Facilitating and supporting each child's emotional and social development
- Facilitating the development of self regulation skills.
- Talking about what children can do;
- Setting clear and developmentally appropriate routines, expectations and limits;
- Role modelling positive language and interactions

Educators will work with individual families to discuss suitable strategies and develop a plan to support children who exhibit persistent challenging behaviour. Educators may also consult with the Inclusive Practice Coordinator when developing such plans.

Inclusive Practice Coordinator

The objective of the Inclusive Practice Coordinator role is to improve the capacity of educators and staff to positively include and effectively support children and families with social and developmental vulnerabilities and children who display challenging behaviours.

This is done through the provision of consultation, mentoring, reflective conversations, training, the provision of resources and strategies, and the sharing of information.

The Educational Leader

The role of the Educational Leader at Kingston Family and Children's Centre's is to lead and guide the development and implementation of quality educational and care program in the services in line with legislative requirements and guidelines including the National Quality Standards. This includes the mentoring and coaching of educators, as well as collaborating with educators to provide curriculum direction and guidance to enhance practices that create greater learning outcomes for children.

Education and Care Program

Our responsive and engaging play-based environments are child focused and intentional as we see the environment as an important tool for learning and teaching. Educators are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in creating

holistic environment in line with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). We champion that children learn best through play-based learning in an environment enriched by positive relationships that are responsive to children's individual needs and where children are encouraged to take the lead in their learning and exploration. Our programs celebrate the wealth of diverse cultures at our centres as well as striving to create ongoing partnerships with local community organisations to enhance positive transitions and to be active contributors to a thriving connected local community.

Educa

What is Educa?

Educa is a simple, safe, and private online tool for educators to communicate with families and can be used to share children's learning.

Educa is trusted by over 90,000 teachers, educators, and parents all over the world to bridge the gap between families, educators, and learning.

How we use Educa?

Each of our three Family and Children's services use Educa in different ways. This supports each service to align with their own teaching, pedagogy approach and philosophy, to meet the needs of their individual community. An electronic profile will be created for your child,

that you will have access to. We use Educa to relay important messages to families, and educators may post photos, videos and learning updates. Our focus is always for educators to be on the floor deeply engaged with children and extending their learning. We believe that by providing daily posts, updates, and photos, this takes an educator away from actively engaging with and supervising children.

Technology

Technology may be used to enhance the educational program e.g. to research an idea or topic with the children. Each room has a teaching and learning iPad that is available for this purpose. Carefully selected applications (apps) may be used where approved by the Educational Leader. Screen time is limited and is intended for children over two years of age, however due to the multi-age setting younger children may have some exposure.

Partnerships with Families

The centre works in partnership with families to best meet the needs of their child. This is achieved through open communication, shared decision making and showing sensitivity to individual family needs, values and culture. Where appropriate, the service will work in collaboration with families to seek additional support/assistance for children.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Families are welcome to attend the centre anytime their child is in attendance (except where there are court orders in place, or where it would conflict with any duty of the City of Kingston or the service) and are encouraged to attend excursions with their child (where appropriate).

Excursions and Incursions

We are committed to providing excursions and incursions that enhance the educational program and encourage a sense of belonging in the community. Risk assessments are completed alongside parent permission forms, so we are ensuring children are protected and safe from hazards/harm and are adequately supervised at all times. These excursions start with our youngest children who can be pushed in the pram. The services plan incursions throughout the year which could include local schools, culture groups, little farms, story tellers, or animal themed visits.

Volunteers and Students

The centre supports the early childhood industry by providing limited placements for students to undertake work placement to gain practical experience. Students are never left with sole supervision of a child or group of children and are closely monitored by Educators. Where applicable, the centre will seek permission from parents/guardians for students to observe their child as part of their studies.

Food and Nutrition

Our Family and Children's Centres provide breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and an evening snack. We have a team of qualified, passionate chefs on site and a Kitchen Coordinator who oversees kitchen compliance and consults with the Healthy Eating Advisory Service and Nutrition Australia to ensure our menus meet at least 50% of children's nutritional needs in our early years' service.

Our services provide 5 menus; everyday menu, vegetarian menu, allergy menu and two infant feeding menus to ensure children's nutritional needs are met. Our 4-week rotational menus, which change twice a year, are developed with seasonal produce, nutrition, and cultural diversity in mind.

Infant menus are designed around texture modification and ensure inclusion of a variety of iron rich foods.

Medical Conditions

We take managing children's wellbeing and specific healthcare needs, allergy or relevant medical conditions seriously in our centres. We work in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations to ensure health related policies and procedures are implemented. We aim to take every reasonable precaution to protect children's health and safety by adhering to individual medical management and risk management plans and responding to any emergency, should they arise.

Families whose children have specific healthcare needs, allergy or other medical conditions cannot commence without meeting with the centre coordinator to ensure appropriate management plans are in place.

We endeavour to provide a nut free service and ask families to refrain from bringing nuts or nut products into the centre. No outside food is to be brought into the centre unless under a medical management plan.

Illness and Injury

Children who are unwell and unable to participate in the program need to stay at home to rest and recuperate and must remain at home for 24 hours after their last symptom (unless families provide a medical clearance).

If children become unwell whilst at the service, Educators will complete an Illness Report which states the earliest time the child can return to the centre and may include a request for a medical clearance for the child to return.

Educators will contact families if their child is injured in the following circumstances: all face and head injuries (even if deemed minor), pierced skin, substantial bruising and all major injuries/incidents. Any other injury/incident will be discussed during pick up. Parents/guardians are requested to sign an accident form to meet legislative requirements.

Minimum Exclusion Periods for Infectious Diseases

The centre adheres to the Minimum Exclusion Periods for Infectious Diseases for all children, Educators and staff. Children must remain at home for the required timeframe.

- To minimise the spread of infection, children with a suspected infectious disease need to be collected from the centre within two hours.
- As per No Jab No Play - Children with a medical exemption on a recognised catch-up plan may be excluded during an outbreak.
- Refer to centre for minimum exclusion period.

Medication

Administering Medication

- Educators can only administer medication to children with written authorisation from parents/guardians. The centre can only administer medication that the child has already been given at home.
- Educators will complete a medication form and parents/guardians sign to acknowledge the medication has been given. Two Educators check the dosage to ensure the correct amount is given to children.

Panadol and Nurofen

- Panadol/Nurofen is not kept at the centre and can only be given when provided by families with a doctor's authorisation.



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