



Hawkesdale & District Family Services Centre
Information Handbook

66 Mitchell Street, Hawkesdale Vic 3287

Ph: 5560 7356

hawkesdale.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

Philosophy Statement

Hawkesdale & District Family Services Centre is an integrated service that fosters an environment that is welcoming, accepting and creates a sense of belonging.

Our centre is a place where children, families and educators can develop self-confidence, feel valued and connected to others, and develop relationships. We see children as capable, competent, unique co contributors; active and creative participants in their own journey of discovery and learning, thus helping to develop a positive self-identity.

We value and encourage family and community input and we endeavour to provide a service that is accepting of all families, welcoming their participation and helping to promote a sense of community within the centre that has equal opportunities and an inclusive approach.

We believe in supporting all educators in their commitment to quality education and care of all children.

We value and acknowledge Australia's indigenous heritage & Torres Strait Islander cultures, along with the cultures of all families attending our centre.

We value and encourage respect between all people, equity for everyone and inclusion of diversity. Our philosophy reflects and shows the spirit of community and dignity for all.



Introduction

We are pleased to welcome you to the Hawkesdale & District Family Services Centre. We look forward to getting to know you, your children and wider family throughout your journey with us.

The information contained in this Handbook is designed to provide information and guidance to families using our service. Further detailed information is provided in our various Policies and Procedures which are available for families to view at any time.

Our Early Years Programs

4 Year Old funded Kindergarten

Tuesday 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

Wednesday 8:30am - 1:30 pm

Thursday 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

3 Year old Program

Monday 8:45 am – 11:30am

Childcare Early Learning Program

Monday

- Full Day 8:30am - 5:00pm
- Short Half Day 8:30am - 11:30 pm
- Long Half Day 11:30 am - 5:00 pm

Tuesday and Thursday

- Full Day 8:30am - 5:00pm
- Long Half Day 8:30 am- 1.30pm
- Short Half Day 1.30 am - 5:00pm

In Venue Family Day Care

Wednesday and Friday as required.

Term 1 Tuesday 2nd February – Thursday 24th March

Term 2 Monday 11th April – Friday 24th June

Term 3 Monday 11th July – Friday 16th September

Term 4 Monday 3th October – Friday 20th December

Childcare Dates 2016

Tuesday 28th January - Educators commence

Monday 1st February – Children commence

Pupil Free Days (4yr old funded kindergarten)

Moyne Shire allocates four pupil free days per year to all funded kindergartens to assist with setting up, planning and co-ordination of the programmes. When setting the following dates, consideration has been given to public holidays as well as when our workload demands are highest.

- TERM 1: Wednesday 27th January
- TERM 2: Tuesday 14rd April
- TERM 3: Tuesday 14th July
- TERM 4: Tuesday 6th October

Public Holiday's 2016

Moyne Shire Children's Services will be closed on the following dates:

- Australia Day Tuesday 26th January
- Labour Day Monday 14th March
- Good Friday Friday 25th March
- Easter Monday Monday 28th March
- Anzac Day Monday 25th April
- May Race Day Thursday 5th May
- Queen's Birthday Monday 13th June

Our Educators

Our early childhood educators have many combined years of experience, diverse backgrounds and a wealth of knowledge around child development and education. We look forward to providing a high quality program which meets the needs of the community.

4yr old funded kindergarten

- Jo-Anne Bone – Centre Co- Coordinator and Educational Leader
- Cheryl Gardiner – Co Educator

3yr old program

- Jo – Anne Bone – Centre Co- Coordinator and Educational Leader
- Cheryl Gardiner – Co Educator

Childcare

- Dianne Verhoeff – Child Care Coordinator
- Kate Julius – Co Educator

Fees/Payments

Kindergarten

4 Year Old Kindergarten per term	\$180.00
3 Year Old program per term	\$135.00

These fees are to be confirmed at the AGM in November 2015

Invoices for sessional programs will be sent out at the beginning of each term.



Hawkesdale child care

Monday

Full Day	8:30am - 5:00pm	\$73.00
Short Half Day	8:30 am- 11:30 am	\$31.00
Long Half Day	11:30 am - 5:00 pm	\$52.00

Tuesday & Thursday

Full Day	8:30 am - 5:00 pm	\$73.00
Long Half Day	8:30 am – 1.30 pm	\$52.00
Short Half Day	1.30 am- 5:00 pm	\$31.00

Childcare invoices will be issued fortnightly and can be paid by EFTPOS at Moyne Shire Council office or Bpay, details can be found at the bottom of your account. Accounts may be paid by cheque at the office. Fees are calculated on a daily basis. Concessions are available and fees calculated according to the level of Commonwealth Child Care Benefit your family receives. Child Care Benefit is based on family income and assets and on Centrelink's Assessment Advice Statement. Families are responsible for contacting the Family Assistance Office and then notifying the centre of your Customer Reference Number (CRN) this will enable you to have reduced fees, once confirmed.

Families may also be eligible for the Child Care Rebate which pays up to 50% of out of pocket costs up to an annual cap. It is not income tested, so families may be eligible to receive the rebate even if they don't qualify for Child Care Benefit. Families may choose to receive the Child Care Rebate on a weekly or fortnightly basis, either paid directly to the centre as a fee reduction or to their bank account. Families may also choose to receive the rebate as a lump sum, quarterly or annually.

Fees will be payable for all permanent, booked care regardless of whether the child attends the centre or not. We request that parents notify the centre of planned absences as soon as possible.

Family Assistance Office 13 61 50 (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm)

Child Care Bookings

Bookings for child care are essential and must be made in advance to either the Child Care Coordinator, or In Venue Family Day Care provider. Bookings can be made by phoning the centre on 5560 7356, anytime Monday, Tuesday & Thursday.

The centre is licensed to provide permanent child care for up to 15 children, with not more than 4 children under the age of 3 at any one time. When all permanent places are booked subsequent bookings will be placed on a waiting list. Fees will be charged for non-attendance in booked places.

In Venue Family Day Care is licensed for up to 4 preschool children and 3 school age children. Contact the centre for further information.

Priority of Access

Enrolments for childcare will be accepted according to the Commonwealth Government 'Priority of Access' Guidelines

Priority 1—a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

Priority 2—a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test under section 14 of the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999

Priority 3—any other child.

Within these main categories, priority will also be given to the following children:

Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

Children in families which include a disabled person

Children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold or who or whose partner are on income support

Children in families with a non-English speaking background

Children in socially isolated families

Children of single parents.

Parents will be advised that children who meet the 'third priority' criteria may be required to alter their days or leave the service in order to provide a place for a higher priority child.

Our Program

The Hawkesdale and District Family Services is an integrated service which provides education and care for children from 0-6 years across our two rooms. Our aim at the centre is to provide high quality learning experiences to all children, regardless of age or which program they attend. Each room is staffed by qualified early childhood educators that provide quality early learning programs reflective of approved early learning frameworks. The frameworks strive to advance children's learning from 0-8 and make no distinction between a "kindergarten" or a "child care" program. Our educators will be encouraged to transition from previous terms of 'kindergarten' and 'day care', to more current and reflective terms of 'Early Learning Programs'. **Our aim will be to provide all children with high quality programs for the whole time that they attend.**

The programs we offer will reflect the 'Early Years Learning Framework for Australia – Belonging, Being, Becoming' (EYLF) and the 'Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework' (VEYLDF)

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of *Belonging, Being and Becoming*

Belonging – is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.

Being - is about the living in the here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be' – time to play, try new things and have fun.

Becoming – is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

The Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being, Becoming – identifies practice principles for educators including:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Partnerships with families
- High expectations and equality
- Respect for diversity
- Ongoing learning and reflective practice

The Frameworks identify five outcomes for all children:

- Children have a strong sense of identity (**Identity**)
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world (**Community**)
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (**Wellbeing**)
- Children are confident and involved learners (**Learning**)
- Children are effective communicators (**Communication**)

Based on the frameworks, children will be observed and a program developed that reflects your child's individual strengths and needs. This will be done through listening, watching and working with your child, using photos, work samples and discussions with families.

Children learn at different rates, in different ways and at different times. We offer a play based curriculum which allows for choice, extends children creatively, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually through a flexible, inclusive indoor/outdoor program.

We strongly encourage families to be involved in our program, contributing to the learning process of their child. This can be done through parent helpers, reading and interacting with your child's learning portfolio, suggesting ideas for the program and meetings and discussions with your child's educators.

To view the Victorian Early Years learning and Development Frameworks please visit www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning



The National Quality Framework (NQF)

A new National Quality Framework (NQF) commenced in 2012 for children's services nationwide. The NQF aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services and school age care.

One aspect of the NQF are the National Quality Standards (NQS). The new NQS brings together seven key Quality Areas that are essential to positive outcomes for children. These are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

When is the right time to enrol?

Every child is unique and therefore knowing when to commence an Early Childhood Program can be a challenging decision to make. We strongly advise you speak with an Early Childhood Educator and discuss your concerns. Four year old sessional programs receive a government subsidy. This is provided for one year only. It is a misconception to assume you can automatically have another year of a funded kindergarten program. Educators are now required to complete mid year reports on any child who may look like needing a second year in consultation with parents/guardians and specialist services. In order to be eligible for further funding, delays in at least two areas need to be recognised. General immaturity is not a delay. Children need to turn 4 by the 30th April in the year of attendance.

Sessional three year old programs receive no government subsidy and rely on fees to run. Children need to turn 3 by the 30th April in the year of attendance to be eligible. No child can commence until they are 3 years old.

Repeating Four Year Old Sessional / Funded Kindergarten

In some cases, a child attending the four year old program may be assessed by the educator to be eligible for a further year of a funded kindergarten program. The educator will discuss this with you and this will assist you to make a decision.

If a child should turn 6 while attending funded kindergarten an exemption must be applied for by the parent/guardian. For further information speak to your child's educator, or visit www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood/careandkinder/secondyear.

Orientation / Settling In Period

For most children starting in an early childhood setting is exciting, for others however it can be unsettling. As we are all different we strongly encourage parents/guardians to work with us through this initial transition period and be guided by your child's educator.

For children using child care we encourage two visits (for approximately 1 hour) where the parent/guardian is encouraged to stay, prior to starting the longer days. This can be negotiated with your child's educator.

We encourage all parents/guardians to say goodbye to their children before they leave. This helps to develop trust and the reassurance that you will return.



Arrival & Departures

It is a legal requirement that children are signed in and out on arrival and departure. Parents/Guardians must bring children in to the designated room, sign in with the exact time and write who will be collecting the child. At the end of their time at the centre, parents must sign children out, noting time of collection.

Some important aspects to note are:-

- Parent/Guardian supervision is required at all times outside of the entry doors to each room.
- Please respect session times. Children need to feel secure in the knowledge that they will be collected on time (see our late collection and late fee policy)
- The foyer area is a nice place to catch up but we encourage respect and care of others and any resources in the area. We ask you to be mindful of safety at all times.
- With a larger number of people coming and going please be vigilant with your child/ren. Be mindful of doors and the car park.

Incursions / Excursions

Throughout the year our funded kindergarten programs are enhanced by excursions and incursions. Excursions are conducted in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations. A Risk Assessment will be conducted prior to each excursion and controls will be put in place to eliminate or minimise any identified risks. Adult/child ratios for excursions will be determined based on a number of factors including activities involved, method of transport and length of time.

Parents/Guardians will be required to give written consent for children to attend an excursion.



Newsletters & Daily Information

We will be sending home regular newsletters to inform families of what we have been busy with, forthcoming events and relevant information.

Noticeboards in each room will provide specific information about programs, rosters, photos etc.

Photographs

Throughout the year we take many photographs of the children to assist with programming and recording interest areas and development. Photos are primarily used in individual portfolios.

A consent form is included in your child's initial information pack to allow us to take photos

Parent Involvement

At Hawkesdale and District Family Services Centre we encourage a partnership with parents. We welcome parental involvement and recognise that in our ever increasing busy lives, the time we can contribute varies.

Examples of opportunities to be involved are:-

- Sharing specific skills/interests with the children
- Helping on a daily parent roster (parent helper/parent educator)
- Supporting fundraising activities
- Attending various family functions at the centre

Parents/Families Involvement in Program Planning

We highly value and respect the involvement of parents in establishing programs relevant to the children's strengths and interests in each of our programs. Parents and families will be asked to fill out information sheets to help us get to know more about what has been happening in the children's home lives and what families want their children to be gaining from their time at the centre.

Parents/Families are also encouraged to make comments on the programs in their child's relevant room on the 'Parent Voice' boards or in the Suggestions Box in the foyer.

Bus Travellers (Four Year Old Funded Kindergarten Only)

The Hawkesdale and District Family Services Centre Committee with the support of the Moyne Shire have set out a policy for bus travel during the kindergarten year.

The policy procedure is as follows:

Children attending the four year old kindergarten program will be permitted to travel on the school bus to kindergarten sessions from the beginning of Term Two. Please discuss this with the kindergarten teacher before commencing travel.

Children attending the three year old program are not permitted to travel on the school bus at any time during the year. Parental contact with the teacher each session is a positive and essential part of the 3 Year Old Program.

Forms are available at Hawkesdale College. It is to be noted that school children have priority for seats on the buses.

Parents are responsible for seeing their child onto the school bus. Kindergarten children are asked to sit near the front of the bus. Bus travellers will be met at the Hawkesdale Family Services Centre by a nominated bus monitor, and then signed in by your child's educator.

NO CHILD IS PERMITTED TO TRAVEL HOME ON THE BUS



Children's Requirements

A named back pack or bag, lunch box and water bottle, spare change of clothes in case of accidents or due to water or mud play, and a sun hat. The Hawkesdale Family Services Centre parent committee provide Sun smart approved hats to all children at the centre.

All belongings need to be clearly named with your child's full name

Clothing

Children like to explore, climb, dig, paint, run, create and be adventurous. Clothing needs to be suitable, not restricting. Smocks are provided, however children do get dirty having fun. Please keep this in mind.

For safety reasons we ask parents to ensure children wear closed toe footwear. Thongs and crocs can be dangerous when climbing and running and are not particularly supportive or well fitted.

Backpack

We encourage older children to be independent and pack/unpack their bags. Our lockers are spacious and allow plenty of room for children to get things in and out.

Change of Clothes

From time to time children require a change of clothes. While we do have spare clothes most children prefer their own.

Sunscreen/Sunhat /Sun smart

Hats are provided by Hawkesdale & District Family Services Centre. In accordance with our sun smart policy all children are required to wear sunhats which are approved by the anti-cancer council from September until the end of April, and at any time the UV index level rating is above 3.

Parents are required to apply sunscreen to their child/ren prior to arrival. This will be reapplied by staff throughout the day at the educator's discretion. We ask that parents sign a sunscreen consent form at the time of enrolment, if for some reason you do not wish your child to use our sunscreen we ask you to provide your own and state this in writing.

Food & Drinks

Parents are required to provide their child's food while in attendance at the centre. This should primarily consist of fruit (for snack times) and a healthy sandwich, wrap, roll etc. with another piece of fruit (for lunch). For younger children all bottles, formula and baby foods need to be provided. Please refer to our Healthy Eating Policy for further details. Drinks need to be water only.

Cutlery, bowls, plates, bibs etc. are all provided by the centre.

Children will engage in healthy eating practices and the 'Smiles for Miles Learning Program at the centre.

The Hawkesdale and District Family Services Centre is a NO NUT centre.

Celebrations

Birthdays are an exciting time for children. You are welcome to bring along something small, such as cupcakes to share with other children at this time. Please feel free to speak with us if you have any questions. If your child has any dietary restrictions/allergies it may be a good idea to have food on hand at the centre for such occasions. We aim to make all children feel included. We welcome learning about other events our families celebrate.

Ideas on what to send for lunches and snacks

The following are some ideas on what to send in your child's lunchbox for the day. Usually children eat more while they are at Hawkesdale Family Services Centre, so 5-7 snacks and a lunch meal is a good start (for a full day). It's a good idea to pack a variety of foods and change your child's lunch a little each day to avoid boredom.



Snacks (* foods you can give to children from 10 months)

We encourage snack time to include nutritious foods which satisfy children's appetites and keep their energy levels up.

Please try to keep food with higher sugar content to a minimum. (Eg- jam, honey, flavoured yoghurt, 'fruit' sticks and bars, packaged foods)

- Toast with vegemite, jam, honey or cream cheese*
- Fruit bread*
- Cheese cut into sticks or grated*
- Dry biscuits with spread or cheese*
- Natural flavoured popcorn
- Fruit puree
- Yoghurt or Custard *
- Hard-boiled egg
- Dried fruit (sultanas, apricots, pineapple, apple)
- Pikelets plain or with spread*
- Rice cakes spread with mashed avocado and cottage cheese*
- Carrot, cucumber, celery sticks and mini corn with dip (eg: hummus, cream cheese, tatziki, French onion)
- Fresh fruit* (cut into sticks for easy grasp), mango, watermelon, pear, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, kiwi fruit, peach, plums, berries, grapes.

Lunches

Sandwiches* (use wholegrain bread, pita, bread rolls, bagels or tortilla wraps) with lots of different fillings such as :Ham, chicken, beef, lamb, tuna, egg, carrot, cheese, tomato, lettuce, corn, pineapple, banana, avocado, honey, jam, vegemite, pickles, chutney.

- Baked beans or spaghetti
- Pasta with meat balls, vegies, cheese or tuna
- Rice and vegies
- Mashed potato, pumpkin with peas and corn
- Chicken pieces or drumsticks
- Scrambled eggs
- Homemade sausage rolls or pies
- Homemade soup
- Quiche or Vegetable slice
- Pasta or Potato salads

No chips, chocolate, lollies, juices, cordials or food with nuts.

Some useful websites: www.wholesomefood.com www.essentialbaby.com.au
www.freshforkids.com.au

Children's Health

We all function best when we are feeling 100%, this is especially true for children. Please ensure any unwell children are kept at home. Not only will this enable them to get better, it also shows respect for the other children who are attending the centre. Some conditions require periods of exclusion from the centre, an Infectious Diseases chart is on display on the foyer noticeboard.

In the event that your child becomes unwell while in attendance you will be contacted. In an emergency an Ambulance/Doctor will be called if necessary. Please ensure your details are kept up to date.

Medication

Any child who requires medication to be administered whilst at the centre must have the details of administration completed in the medication record. Medication needs to be in its original container, bearing the original label with the child's name printed on it and be within its use by date.

Children with ongoing medical conditions will be required to have an up to date management plan, signed by a doctor and including a recent photo.

Accidents

Parents/Guardians will be notified as soon as possible if a child has had an accident while attending our centre.

Accidents are recorded in our Accident/Emergency Record which parents are required to read and sign.

In an emergency an ambulance will be called. Any costs incurred will be the responsibility of parents/guardians.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Emergency Evacuation Procedures are clearly displayed throughout the centre. Please take some time to familiarise yourself with emergency procedures and location of Evacuation/Assembly Points in the event of an emergency.

Grievance Policy

All users of the centre are encouraged to express their concerns or complaints about aspects of the service. Complaints will be treated consistently, and in a timely fashion.

Initially, inquiries or complaints about the program should be directed to your child's educator for discussion and clarification. If you're not comfortable discussing directly with your child's educator you may speak to the centre Educational Leader.

If after discussion the matter has not been resolved, it should be referred to:

Sharon Wilson
Coordinator Early Years
Moyne Shire Council, PO Box 51, Port Fairy 3284
Phone: 5568 0549 Mobile: 0417 389 343
Email: swilson@moyne.vic.gov.au

The Coordinator Early Years will respond promptly to inform the complainant of how the complaint will be addressed.

If no resolution can be reached, the matter may be referred to:

Director Community and Corporate Support
Moyne Shire Council, PO Box 51, Port Fairy 3284
Phone: 5568 0555

If the matter is a notifiable complaint as per Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, or requires professional involvement from a third party Early Childhood professional, the complaint will be referred to an authorised officer at:

Department of Education and Training
Level 2, 237 Ryrie Street, PO Box 2086 Geelong 3220
Phone: 5225 1000

Glossary of Commonly Used Terms

- Curriculum - In an Early Childhood setting this means, all the interactions, experiences, activities and routines that occur within the setting.
- Culture - Refers to the 'culture' of each child/family. Not just their ethnicity but how their lives are lived. E.g: family structure, home environment, family activities.
- Educators - Early Childhood practitioners who work directly with children in the early childhood setting.
- EYLF -Early Years Learning Framework.
- Fine Motor Skill Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body that enable such functions as writing, grasping small objects, and fastening clothing.
- Gross Motor Skills –Gross motor skills involve the large muscles of the body that enable such functions as walking, kicking, sitting upright, lifting, and throwing a ball.
- Inclusion - Involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity in the curriculum decision making.
- Learning Outcome – A skill or knowledge that an educator can actively promote within the early Childhood setting.
- Learning framework – A guide which provides general goals or outcomes for children's learning. Providing a support to assist early childhood settings to develop their own, more detailed curriculum.
- Literacy - In the early years this includes things such as, music, movement, dance, story-telling, visual arts, media and drama as well as talking, viewing, reading and writing.
- Numeracy - Includes understandings about numbers, structure, pattern, measurement, spatial awareness and data, along with mathematical reasoning and counting.
- Play-based Learning – A perspective for learning in which children make sense of their social world by actively engaging (playing) with people and objects.
- Philosophy - A set of beliefs, principles and aims underlying a centres or educators practice.
- Social Skills - Any skill facilitating interaction and communication with others.
- Transitions - The process of moving between home and childhood setting, between a ranges of different childhood settings (room to room) or from the childhood setting to full-time school.
- VEYLDF - The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework