

Greater Hume Children Services

"leading innovative and inclusive early childhood services"



Handbook for Families

Greater Hume Children Services is managed by Greater Hume Shire Council.

Should you wish to learn more about our service visit www.ghchildren.com.au or email us at mail@ghchildren.com.au.

The service has a proud record of quality assurance and complies with the requirements of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Greater Hume Children Services is a member organisation with the following peak bodies:

- Family Day Care Australia
- NSW Family Day Care



The information contained in this publication has been prepared for general information only. The information contained herein is not intended to constitute or substitute for legal or professional advice appropriate to your specific circumstances. Greater Hume Children Services and its employees shall not be liable for any loss or damage incurred as a result of any reliance on the information contained herein.

Welcome

We welcome your enquiry about our service. Greater Hume Children Services is a flexible, professional home based child care service where children are provided with quality care and education in a warm, friendly environment.

Our flexible childcare options cater for full-time, part-time, casual, overnight care, weekend care, before and after school and vacation care.

Educators are registered, trained and supported by the experienced and highly qualified coordination unit staff. Educators are acting as agents for our service but the agreement to provide care and education is between Greater Hume Children Services and the family.

Greater Hume Children Services includes the services of:

- **Family Day Care** where children are provided with education and care in a home environment with a registered educator
- **In Venue Family Day Care** where a venue or premises other than a home can be licensed. In Venue Family Day Care must be approved by the Department of Education and Training and can only be approved where there is a demonstrated unmet demand for childcare.

Greater Hume Children Services is auspiced by Greater Hume Council and has been operating since 1994. The service operates in Greater Hume Shire and also in Albury, Federation, Indigo, Snowy Valleys, Wodonga and Benalla council areas.

The service has a proud record of quality assurance and complies with the requirements of The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

You can find out more about our service at our website: www.ghchildren.com.au
Join us on facebook.



Philosophy

Our Children

We believe and respect each child as a capable, unique individual, who learn and develop through play. We know that children explore, discover, imagine, create, and challenge themselves and each other's thinking. We believe that the play environment should reflect this, by providing children with the opportunity to make their own choices, discover, take risks, explore, investigate, express their ideas, and solve problems. We believe the environment, should be unhurried, fun, enriching, supportive and a place where children can just "Be".

Our Families

We acknowledge that the most powerful influence in a child's life is their family. We aim to form trusting, supportive, inclusive and respectful partnerships with families, be accepting of their cultural diversity, and value their ideas and input into their child's learning.

Our Team

Our service celebrates the individuality, uniqueness and diversity of every educator. We respect and value their knowledge, originality, flexibility, and willingness to try new things. Our Educators are chosen because they share a genuine passion and interest for children and their wellbeing, with a commitment to high quality education and care.

Our team, including Greater Hume Shire, Coordination Unit staff and Educators believe in creating supportive, positive, respectful and fair relationships between team members, where all members are valued, nurtured and fostered.

We recognise the critical role we play in paving the child's future and providing them the best start in life, by ensuring high quality service. We are professionals who embrace current research, collaborate and reflect on our own development and have a commitment to continuous improvement.

Our Community

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and embrace the wide cultural diversity we have in our community, by respecting, celebrating and honouring all differences, to foster a "Sense of Belonging"

We believe community is an important part of our service; we serve both urban and rural children and families and believe strongly in giving rural children and families equal opportunities.

We believe that it is important for children to connect, to nature and the land, by providing them with opportunities to play, explore, and be challenged, in the natural environment. We encourage and develop lifelong respect for our environment by developing practices of recycling and reducing waste in daily life to promote a sustainable future.

Sources: Belonging Being and Becoming

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Revised July, 2009, May 2010, July 2010, January 2011, November 2011, May 2013, December 2015, August 2016



Communicating with families

To enrol, each family is asked to contact the Coordination Unit who will discuss your childcare needs to help our staff get to know you and enable us to support your educator.

We ask all families to give us their email address so we can send out Childcare Usage Statements (all services are mandated to send) and to ensure the dissemination of important information. The service routinely asks families to give feed-back via questionnaires and surveys and to be involved and contribute to service decisions. We regularly review policies, procedures and the service philosophy and encourage all families to give us their comments. We invite all stakeholders to actively participate in the service.

Steps to Register with Our Service

Contact the Coordination Unit to exchange information about your child and match you to an educator. This can be either at the Jindera Coordination Unit Office: 80 Creek Jindera, or over the phone.

Contact the Greater Hume Children Services Office: T: (02) 6026 3877.

As part of our registration process all families need to complete the following requirements:

1. Contact the Department of Human Services on T: 136150 to complete the Child Care Benefit eligibility test for each child using care and obtain Primary Parent Customer Reference Number (CRN) and CRN for each child (some parents may have completed this step already if they have used registered and approved childcare before).
2. Provide the service with a copy of your child's birth certificate.
3. Provide the service with your child's immunisation history statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register.

From 1 January 2018, parents must provide a copy of one or more of the following documents to enrol in child care:

- an **AIR Immunisation History Statement** which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations or
- an **AIR Immunisation History Form** on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule (temporary for 6 months only) or
- an **AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form** which has been certified by a GP.

We must have a current statement stating the child is **up to date prior to the child starting care**

- through Medicare Online Services
- by requesting a statement to be sent in the mail
- at your local DHS Service Centre
- by calling the Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809.

4. Complete the Family Registration Form and submit

5. Inform our staff when you will start childcare and with which educator.





Service Fees, Child Care Subsidies and Accountability

Fees

Individual fees, charges, terms and conditions are set by your educator and approved by the service.

For example, some educators provide meals for children in care and other educators require families to provide all the food and drinks for children, educators will advise you of their service practices. Educators are required to issue families with their individual fee schedule (approved by the service) including the terms and conditions of their service. Educators are acting as an agent for the service, and contracts of care are between the family and the service.

Our service encourages all families to, where possible, set contracted care with their educator. Contracts can readily be changed where necessary and it provides both parties with stability and clarity for childcare.

A service support levy per child care hour is payable to the service and is collected in your fees by the educator who then passes this on to the service. Families are welcome to contact the coordination unit to gain a fee estimate before the commencement of care or if they wish to change care arrangements.

Subsidies

Financial assistance in the form of Child Care Subsidy for childcare fees is available to eligible families through the Department of Human Services.

To register for Child Care Subsidy or for more information parents must contact The Department of Human Services T: 13 61 50.



Accountability

Attendance records are legal documents which provide verification of the specific use of childcare for the payment of Government Subsidy's.

Parents/guardians are required by law to sign/Pin children in and out of care on attendance records at the precise times children are in childcare, and are required to sign the timesheet record at the end of the week. Our service can undergo a visit by the Australian Department of Education compliance team at any time and seek the assistance and cooperation of all families by checking and signing all attendance records and documentation to ensure they are a correct representation of childcare and payments.

Our service is also required to send families a statement to confirm childcare usage, absence days and subsidy payments. We urge all families to check the data to ensure they are receiving the correct entitlements.

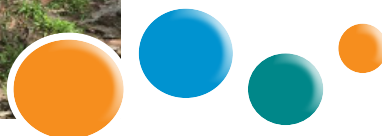
Each child is entitled to 42 absence days per year which can be increased when if the additional days meet the criteria. Families can view their children's absence count and child care usage on the Department of Human Services website: www.humanservices.gov.au

Please be aware that Subsidy's cannot be paid for any first or last day absences from childcare and families will be required to pay for the full cost of childcare for these days.

Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Child Care fee assistance provides extra help with the cost of approved child care for eligible parents undertaking activities such as job search, work, study or rehabilitation as part of an Employment Pathway Plan, to help them enter or re-enter the workforce.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB) covers the cost of childcare up to the Governments cap and is available to grandparents who meet the eligibility test. Contact the Department of Human Services for more information.

Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB) can be approved by the service manager under extenuating circumstances, allowing up to 13 weeks of childcare up to the Governments cap. There are very specific criteria under which this can be applied where a family emergency or event creates hardship or impacts to the ability for children to access childcare. Examples that meet the criteria include: a reduction in the family income due to separation of parents, failure of a business, or serious illness of a family member. Documentation to support the application is required. Please contact the service manager if you need further information.





Parent/Guardian Conditions and Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians must acknowledge the following conditions and responsibilities:

1. Accurately sign each child in and out of care on the attendance record each time they enter or leave care.
2. Comply with The Department of Human Services law to ensure when signing and completing details on all attendance records the information is correct and the parent portion of payment has been paid.
3. Comply with educator fee schedule and pay the educator as per individual agreement.
4. Pay all administration levies and charges (as per current fee schedule)
5. Provide a balanced, nutritious diet for child/ren while in care (if supplying food).
6. Notify and provide a statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register to Greater Hume Children Services Coordination Unit each time your child's immunisation is updated (immunisations must be current for families to receive Child Care Benefit).
7. Notify the Greater Hume Children Services Coordination Unit of any changes to parent/guardian details including change of address or custody arrangements.
8. Notify the Greater Hume Children Services Coordination Unit and your educator of any changes to child details including medical conditions and special needs.
9. Provide details of current emergency contacts who are also authorised persons for your child.
10. Comply with the service policy for medications and administration of medication.
11. Comply with service policy for safe arrival and departure of children including unaccompanied children.
12. Exclude child from care for the period recommended by NSW Department of Health in the event they contract an infectious disease.
13. Comply with additional conditions and responsibilities of individual educators.
14. You authorise for a Greater Hume Children Services staff member to care for your child in an emergency.
15. You authorise the educator/staff member to seek urgent medical, dental, hospital treatment or ambulance service and hereby give written consent for the carrying out of appropriate medical, dental or hospital treatment for your child as specified in Greater Hume Children Services Policies and Procedures and as parent/guardian you are responsible for all expenses incurred.
16. You authorise the educator/staff member to administer treatment in the case of illness, emergency or accident specified in Greater Hume Children Services Policies and Procedures.



17. You give permission for the educator/staff member to carry out an emergency evacuation of your child should this be considered necessary.
18. You give permission for your child's photos to be taken and published or posted on the internet for promotional purposes. Photos may be displayed or used in the educator's home, co-ordination unit, scheme newsletters, newspaper publications and community newsletters and website. If you do not wish for our child's photos to be published please notify the coordination unit.
19. You authorise educators/staff member to apply broad spectrum 30+ sunscreen to your children.
20. You give permission for your Statement of Child Care Usage to be forwarded via email and ensure you keep our service up to date with your current email address.

By completing and sumitting this registration form you are agreeing to the terms and conditions of Greater Hume Children Services.





Professional Educators

The primary focus when selecting educators is that they must have a genuine interest in children and must be motivated to learn, and strive to provide the best education and care for young children. Educators must also have the skills to develop positive relationships with families as this will underpin quality education and care.

Educators are self-employed and offer their own unique and personal service. Each educator completes service orientation training, and demonstrate the skills and knowledge to understand the complex aspects of a child's development and ability to plan for their learning.

Educators are required to have a minimum of a Certificate III in Children's Services or other qualification that the Service Manager deems adequate.

To become registered, educators must first:

- Attend and demonstrate the required knowledge in a formal interview
- Demonstrate their knowledge and skills on the job in a Family Day Care environment
- Successfully complete Working with Children Checks (also completed by family members over 18)
- Obtain recognised first aid certificates
- Complete reference checks
- Undergo orientation training
- Continue intensive and ongoing service training
- Achieved Certificate III in Child Care studies at a minimum.

Family Day Care educators are required to attend regular training and demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and a commitment to the continuous improvement of their service.



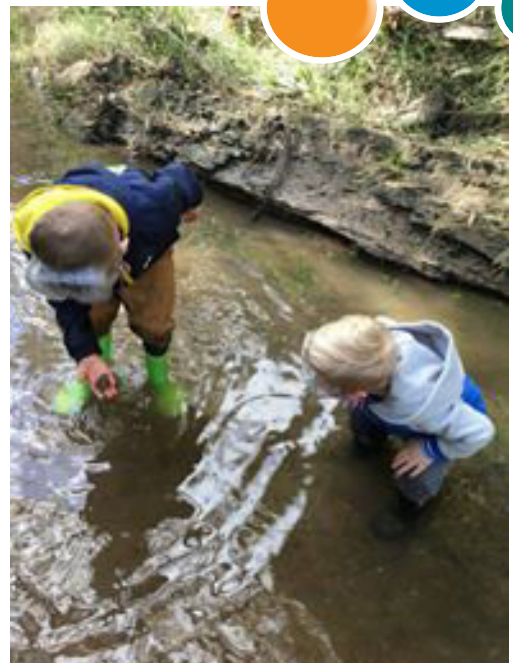


Check List for Family/Educator Interviews

Important topics that you or your educator may wish to discuss at an interview. Please take the time to read through the points and make note of anything you wish to discuss with your educator.

Points for discussion:

- educator's fee schedule
- notification of absences or cancellations
- late fees and charges
- notice for termination of care
- parent sign in/out routine
- educator and or service philosophy
- educator's daily routine and program
- your child's personality likes, dislikes, interests
- any special needs, dietary requirements or allergies
- food and drink
- hygiene and dental hygiene practices
- routine and non-routine excursions
- behaviour guidance strategies
- medications and sick children
- change of clothes
- sun safety
- sleep routines
- homework for school age children /TV and small screen time
- communication strategies
- religious cultural or special requirements
- any other questions.



Please ask your educator for a copy of their Service Information for Families booklet.



Referrals to Educators

Educators Referred to:

Name:
Address:
Tel:
Email:

Name:
Address:
Tel:
Email:

Notes:





About the Coordination Unit

The role of all coordination unit staff members is to support educators and families to ensure children receive quality, flexible and professional childcare and education. The coordination unit has a role to match children and families to an educator who best meets their needs.

Staff roles at Greater Hume Shire Children Services are detailed as follows:

- The **Service Manager** is highly qualified and experienced in children's services and has the role of managing all aspects of the service. The service manager is also the nominated supervisor of the service.
- The **Support Coordinators** are highly qualified and experienced early childhood experts who lead and mentor a team of educators. Support coordinators seek to meet families and children prior to starting when possible and support educators in all aspects of their work.
- The **Educational Leader** leads the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.
- The **Play group Leader** plans play groups in all areas of the service which serve a vital role in allowing educators and children to share experiences and learn from each other.
- The **Administration Staff** are responsible for processing attendance records for families, supporting educators in administrative aspects of their work and meeting the administrative needs of the service.

Our service takes pride in our friendly customer service focus. We encourage families to contact us if they have any questions about any aspects of their childcare.

Please call our office or the after hour's number if your educator is unavailable and you need alternate or emergency childcare: T: 02 6026 3877 or 0417 287 417.

Toy Library

Our service operates a Toy Library available for use by educators and their children in care to extend educators own resources, quality toys, books and puzzles for a wide range of children's interests and developmental levels. Alecting diversity are available for loan. The Toy Library operates from the coordination unit office.



The Educational Programs and National Quality Standards (NQS)



Assessed as **Exceeding the National Quality Standards**.

The National Quality Standard from 1 January 2012 sets a new benchmark of quality for mainstream early childhood education and care services across Australia. A national body oversees the quality assurance and rating: Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. More information is available at their website: www.acecqa.gov.au

Each service must undergo assessment and compliance visits on a regular basis to measure their proficiency. Services are assessed on the educational programs they provide for children, the relationships they form throughout the organisation and within their communities, the standards of health and safety and the governance of the service. The assessors spend time visiting educators and appraising the coordination unit. Our service has a long and proud history of success when being measured against early childhood quality standards. We welcome families enquiring about our service rating. More information is available at www.mychild.gov.au.

Our service provides programs based on the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) – the national early childhood curriculum for children prior to starting school and My Time Our Place (MTOP) for school age children.

Each educator must offer a professional, planned program for each individual child and the groups of children in their care.

The EYLF curriculum is based on early childhood educational theory and research and is specific to the needs of under school age children. It is reflective of the essential needs of Belonging, Being and Becoming and once a child feels supported, their 'play' is fundamental to learning and growing.

Our service is excited about the greater emphasis on educational programs for young children but we want families to know this is not to be confused with a more structured school-like environment. If you have more questions about what are the best environments for early childhood learning please ask any one of our staff or educators.

The framework is based on the following 5 outcomes for children:

- children have a strong sense of identity
- children are connected with and contribute to their world
- children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- children are confident and involved learners
- children are effective communicators.

The MTOP curriculum is based on the needs of school age children in their leisure time away from school.

We recognize our service is part of a much wider community where many services exist to support families and children. We actively build relationships with additional services to support children and families. School and pre-school transition is recognized as a challenging time for many children and families, where our active participation and engagement with the local community is beneficial. Our service is readily able to link children and families with early childhood experts and professional services where ever required.

Service Policies

Our service has developed a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to guide practice.

A copy of The Policy Manual and Procedures Manual is available at the coordination unit and each educator has access from their premises. Policies are also available on our website: www.ghchildren.com.au

Some educators have developed their own additional policies or rules for their service and will fully explain them at the family interview.

All service stakeholders are regularly asked to give feedback on new and revised service policies. Your feedback and comments are appreciated and valued.





Some Important Policies

Dealing with Medical Conditions

It is a requirement under Education and Care Services National Regulations that specific and up-to-date information is collected and maintained for all children who are diagnosed or have a suspected diagnosis of any serious medical condition including asthma, diabetes and risk of anaphylaxis or any other significant health care need that has specific requirements.

A family with a child with a significant health care need will be provided with the service Medical Conditions Book which they must complete with their educator. Families are required to provide their educator with a Medical Plan developed by a medical practitioner, work with their educator to develop a Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation Plan and ensure all information is kept up to date with a Medical Communications Plan that must be reviewed at least annually.

Excursions

Our service believes that well thought out excursions expand and compliment educator's programs to ensure children are offered a wide range of experiences and allow children to be connected and make contributions to their world. Educators in many instances also provide drop-off and pick-up services to facilitate the inclusion of children and meet the needs of families. Educators must ensure families are consulted when deciding whether to go on excursions and must consider all aspects of safety.

The service has a stringent procedure to assist educators when planning excursions and requires all excursions to be authorised by a parent/guardian or another person authorised by the family. Many routine excursions will need approval at the beginning of the year.

Dealing with Infectious Disease

The successful implementation of infection control in a Home Based Child Care environment is reliant upon the strategies and professional standards of individual educators and staff and the cooperation of parents/guardians.

We remind all families to be vigilant to ensure sick children do not come into childcare as this affects everyone else at the service. Some illnesses including Chicken Pox, Diphtheria, Measles and Whooping Cough require children to be excluded from care when unwell and if contagious as per Exclusion Guidelines National Medical Health and Research Council or until a clearance letter from a doctor is provided.

Health and Safety: incorporating sleep, nutrition, administration of first aid, sun protection and water safety

Our service is aware that fundamental to providing for children's wellbeing is to ensure that routines, activities and experiences support children's individual requirements for health, nutrition, sleep, rest and relaxation. Staff and educators will stay abreast of best practice for children and implement the practices in all aspects of the service.

Dealing with Complaints

Communication is at all times encouraged between the parties directly involved. We highly value your feedback about our service and encourage you to make contact with us at any time. All matters are dealt with in the strictest confidence.

If you have a complaint regarding any aspect of our service which cannot be resolved without assistance please contact the Service Manager. E: mail@ghchildren.com.au T: (02) 6026 3877.

Alternatively contact the Greater Hume Council E: mail@greaterhumeshire.nsw.gov.au T: (02) 6036 0100 or mail to PO Box 99 Holbrook NSW 2644.

Australian Care and Education Quality Authority

1300 4 ACECQA (1300 422 327)*

+61 2 8240 4200

PO Box A292, Sydney, NSW 1235

Level 6, 175 Liverpool Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

All service policies are available at the educator premises, at the

A regular review of all policies and procedures is conducted and fee

T: (02) 6026 3877

E: mail@ghchildren.com.au

W: www.ghchildren.com.au







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