

# Parent Handbook

A day care Centre inspired by the philosophy of  
Rudolf Steiner



*A child's world; where creative play is the real work*

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CENTRE HOURS: 7.30am – 4.30pm

OFFICE HOURS: 9.30am – 3.00pm  
Mon/Tue/Fri

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## Welcome

Welcome to Finger Prints Children's Centre! We extend a warm welcome to you and your family. We hope that our time together will be filled with many magical moments, new friendships and connections to deepen the learning journey of your child through their head, heart and hands. We want you to feel an important part of our community.

Our Centre philosophy is Steiner inspired, aiming to provide a loving and caring atmosphere in which young children can grow into relaxed, well adjusted people. Our program is play-based and highly values the importance of play, artistic work and household activities. The children are the heart of the Centre.

***“The very young, pre-school age child comes to know the world and others through the physical, sensory activity. This is an immediate, participative way of knowing, by which the child through physical activity, and above all, through imitation, emulation and play, first comes to know and to make the world its own. The child engages the whole body, not only the head, but the limbs and heart as well. Later on, this unfolds as the thinking capacity.” - Rudolf Steiner - The Child's Changing Consciousness***

In the first seven years, when children are developing physical competencies, they learn mainly through 'doing', via play, movement, games and craft activities. The teacher, in a nurturing, home-like environment, uses the child's faculty for imitation as a main teaching tool.

All care is taken to integrate cognitive, imaginative and active aspects in the learning experiences offered.

## Insights into Steiner

Rudolph Steiner (1864-1925) was an Austrian philosopher, scientist and humanitarian who has profoundly influenced our western culture today. He worked with artists, scientists, doctors, ministers of religion, teachers and Industrialists. Rudolph Steiner is best known for his achievements in founding Steiner /Waldorf Education, Bio Dynamic Farming, Architecture and Anthroposophical medicines. Steiner was the co founder of Weleda- a company that makes and promotes homeopathic and herbal medicines that are available at health food stores today.

Rudolph Steiner was for a time involved with the Theosophical Society of London before founding the Anthroposophical society in Germany which was a society for the Development of Spiritual Science or Anthroposophy – 'the wisdom of man'.

Steiner's background in the above and his observations in life gave us Waldorf Education. Steiner designed a curriculum that is responsive to the developmental phases of childhood, nurturing creativity and *free thinking* in children through art, language, movement, storytelling and generous play times for the child.

Dr Steiner viewed the whole child as having 12 senses which integrate body, soul and spirit.. The sense of touch, life, movement and balance belong to the *will* body. The senses of smell, taste, sight and warmth belong to the *feeling soul sense* and the sense of thought, hearing, speech and ego belong to the *thinking sense*. Thus getting the 3 faculties of the Head, Heart and Hands (Thinking, Feeling and Willing).

Steiner suggests that up until the age of 7, children's *will* development should best be nurtured through PLAY. As the *will* is forming children need to be given opportunities to concentrate on their physical development and also given opportunity to participate in creative and imaginative experiences such as craft, painting, baking, singing, dancing, stories and spontaneous playtimes.

## The Steiner Educator

Steiner defined 'three golden rules' for teachers:

***“To receive the child in gratitude from the world they come from;***

***To educate the child with love; and***

***To lead the child into the true freedom which belongs to man.”***

The reverence and respect felt by Steiner teachers for the special qualities of each stage of childhood shapes the rooms' environment, the way children are spoken to, the materials used, the activities undertaken and the approach to learning at each developmental stage. Teachers are dedicated to creating a genuine love of learning within each child. By freely using art, craft, music and language in conjunction with the teaching of academics, learning becomes a living, creative process. The academic subjects are enriched and enlivened in a way that meets the developmental stages of the children, offering both sensory and intellectual

nourishment. Steiner educators believe that children should not be rushed into adult consciousness but allowed to savour their childhood. *To assist the young people to learn to know and love the world in childhood, to begin to develop good judgement in adolescence, to freely take responsibility for life's journey in adulthood;* these are our tasks as teachers and parents.

During the first seven years children are physically forming and live very much in their imagination. This great capacity to enter into imaginative pictures and stories is a good place to begin the process of learning. Free, creative play is considered the best preparation for self-realising adult life.

The teacher endeavours to create an environment that gives children time to play and encourages them to exercise their imagination and learn to conjure up ideas from within themselves. Simple homely tasks and artistic activities to both *do* and *see* are balanced with storytelling, singing games and generous play times. A rich supply of natural materials provides scope for imagination in play, which refined toys often deny. Activities offered for the three to six year olds are based on the house and garden. These include sweeping, gardening, cooking, building cubbies, looking after animals, singing, listening to stories, helping to prepare the meal table, cutting fruit, painting, bees wax modelling and drawing. Children learn to enjoy building, using the natural materials in the room to make their own constructions and patterns. Practical experience helps the child develop confidence and capabilities.

Steiner education seeks to nurture the senses through watercolour painting and singing, beeswax and clay modelling. The teacher works consistently to provide rhythm and structure to the day, week, year and whole curriculum, to harmonise with the child's natural rhythms.

At this age, children are discovering how to relate socially with a peer group and take part in fundamental life tasks. Through meeting and playing creatively together, children learn vital interpersonal skills. The teacher plays an important role in enabling relationships between children to strengthen through play. Young children develop primarily in their doing, learning through imitation and physical activity. The role of the teacher is to provide a model for the children and a secure space in which to discover the world.

***“The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility – these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education.” - Rudolf Steiner***

The unique quality of human beings is our capacity for conscious thought. Steiner teachings strive to support the development of well rounded human beings who are able to feel deeply and broadly, to think penetratingly and clearly, and then to act rightly out of conscious and free choice.

## **Philosophy and Centre Vision**

***To honour childhood by providing a program based upon the golden experiences of play, work and rhythm.***

At Finger Prints Children's Centre our approach in our work with the young child is based on the indications given by Rudolf Steiner. Within a Steiner approach the educator seeks to work out of an understanding of the human being and flowing on from this, an understanding of the child under their care. Study of Rudolf Steiner's work, keen observation and reflection on the child is required for this task. Within a Steiner Education we aim to educate the whole child, the hands and the heart as well as the head.

The human being is seen as a threefold being; that is the willing, the feeling and the thinking. The child as well as the adult is a threefold being but in understanding child development within Steiner pedagogy, one learns that the child is predominantly in the will realm between 0-7, the feeling realm in the 7-14 years, and after the age of 14 the child is ready to really work in the more abstract thinking realm. Early childhood is seen as the years between birth and seven, where the child lives predominantly through the will. It is therefore recognised in our Centre that the early years are a time of *'doing'*. To learn about life and the environment around them the child must be involved in physical and sensual activity, through *seeing* and *doing*.

At Finger Prints the children are given many opportunities for domestic and artistic activity as well as an emphasis on creative play. Creative play is seen as one of the most important ways a child explores and learns to understand the world. The adult, only when necessary guides the play, and the discovery is left to the child. Being a Steiner based Centre we work from the understanding that the young child is nourished by a strong routine and rhythm. A strong routine and rhythm strengthens the *will* and allows the child to feel secure, confident and therefore, also happy. We work with a strong daily routine but are also conscious of

the weekly and seasonal rhythms. A seasonal table and a seasonal festival are very much an integral part of our Centre.

At Finger Prints the educators work with the knowledge that they are to be role models worthy of imitation. The philosophy works from the understanding that the child under seven, so strongly in the *will*, does what he/she sees and not what he/she is told. Following on from this, it is also recognised that gesture, in place of always using the voice, is much more effective in working with the young child. Too many abstract instructions to a young child can become meaningless and bring the child to the *thinking/head realm* when the child is still very much in the 'will'.

To foster inner-liveliness and imagination, the children are given stories that are rich in vocabulary and image, asking the child to engage in an active inner process. The story is almost always told or presented as a puppet play. Imagination is also fostered through the choice of play equipment. Play materials are simple and not always complete, allowing the child to transform the materials into anything they want to create. A block of wood can be an animal one minute and a train the next.

Rudolf Steiner also gave indications on the moral education of the child according to the seven year cycle. In the years up to age seven, the attribute that needs to be fostered is 'gratitude'. Gratitude leads to the attribute of love, which is to be fostered in the years 7-14, which in turn can help foster responsibility in the years after 14. In our Centre we foster gratitude through a song of *thanks* before meals, through story and through the role modelling of the adult who needs to feel and express gratitude. Steiner's philosophy is non-sectarian, nondenominational and works to inspire a true morality through the development of gratitude, reverence, love and respect for the world.

Underlying all the stated philosophy is the belief that a child has a right to a childhood as a unique 'soul being' regardless of cultural background, creed, gender or developmental/physical ability. The Centre aims to create a safe, secure, nurturing space and provide a variety of appropriate Steiner inspired activities that allow this vital stage of development to be completed, unrushed and unhindered.

Finger Prints recognises the individuality of each child and family and respects that families may come from a range of cultural, linguistic, economic and social backgrounds possessing diverse ideas, abilities and needs. The Centre highly values and acknowledges parents as the child's 'First Teachers'. We strive to create a close bond with families and a strong connection with home-life and the wider community. We endeavour to provide a variety of workshops and information regarding all aspects of parenting relating to our philosophy.

## Centre Goals

### Learning through the Head, Heart and Hands

***"Our highest Endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction in their lives."* Dr Rudolf Steiner**

- To give each child the opportunity to develop their 'will sense' and imagination in a natural nurturing and creative environment.
- To create a clear harmonious and peaceful sanctuary, where each child's safety is of paramount importance.
- To provide a space that is soft, warm and home-like, showing reverence to the heavenly world. This allows children to feel comfortable and nurtured.
- To provide a structured rhythm of *breathing in* and *breathing out* experiences that provides moments for devotion and room for curiosity within protective boundaries and freedom for creativity. The program reflects many opportunities for the children to acquire skills, which enhance their social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual growth.
- To identify the children's needs and strengths by implementing group and individual programs to improve their skills, enhance their abilities, whilst respecting their confidence, self esteem and differences.
- To give time and support to families and welcome their input into our program.
- To create a feeling of community and connectedness by encouraging families to part take in our seasonal celebrations and by having our doors always open.
- To be committed to learning and growing in the Spiritual Science of the Wisdom of Man - Rudolf Steiner's teachings on life.

## Orientation and Enrolment

Enrolment is limited and taken on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to a visit and availability. However, priority enrolment is given to currently enrolled families, siblings, working parents and children enrolled for Prep at Silkwood School. Finger Prints is a small Centre where the acting Director is also the Teacher/Group leader. It is for this reason, that we encourage and arrange a convenient date and time for a family to visit. Certain times of the day (8.30am-9.30am and 3.15pm-4.15pm) are more appropriate where the Director has time to engage with the family and child, discuss the program and philosophy, give a detailed tour of the Centre and answer any questions.

During the arranged visit, the child/ren and family can stay for a short play and familiarise themselves with the Centre and staff. All relevant information regarding the running of the Centre is given at this time and families are asked to fill in a brief questionnaire collecting information regarding families' expectations, cultural background, health, interests and abilities of the child. It is here that we establish the needs of the child and if necessary plan a course of action to support the inclusion of this family. After this process, the child/ren will be placed on the waiting list. There is no charge to be put on the waiting list. **Finger Prints Children's Centre is not able to hold spots for any reason at any time (unless full fees are paid and CCB is not claimed).** Please discuss any such situations with the Licensee or Director.

If families arrive at the Centre to have a look without an arranged appointment with the Director, and the Director feels that a quick tour can be given without disrupting the routine, then this process will occur. If the staff are busy, and the office is unattended, the family will be asked politely to arrange another time to come in for a tour and their contact details taken.

When there is a position available for the child/ren, and the family has accepted this position, the enrolment fee must be paid and they will be required to schedule a time to come in for another (longer) play visit prior to his/her first day at the Centre. It is a much smoother transition for children, and for all, if the child has been to the Centre prior to their first attendance day. Visits must be arranged with the Director. An Enrolment Pack containing a copy of the Enrolment form, Parent Handbook and relevant information can be obtained via our website or collected from the office. Enrolment forms must be returned prior to the first day of attendance.

Families will be made aware of the location of important and relevant information for their perusal, including the Centre Policies, Child Care Regulations 2003, Child Care Act 2002 and Parent Information folders. The Centre encourages families to familiarise themselves with these documents and locations. To help the Centre's ongoing improvement commitments, families will be asked to fill in a brief questionnaire over viewing our Orientation procedure. This will also ensure that families are thoroughly informed of the day to day running of the Centre.

**The Centre has an informal open door policy where parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit, spend time in the room or be involved in any aspect of their child's time whilst at Finger Prints.**

## Enrolment Procedure to Support Inclusion

*To support an 'additional needs inclusion' within the Centre, staff must first establish exactly what the 'need is' and then how the Centre will meet this 'need'.*

Where applications for enrolment are received for children with additional needs, the Director (in conjunction with the child's parents/guardians and Licensee) will arrange a formal meeting to discuss, define, and assess what the Centre requires to be able to provide and accommodate the actual 'need' in question. It may be the Centre's geographical environment, internal building structure, program, routine, resources, staff qualifications, external support workers or organisations that necessitate extra adaptations or thorough examination enabling a safe, 'fair to all concerned', adequately supported and productive inclusion. Depending on the 'need' of the child, the Centre will, realistically and to the best of its ability, work towards accommodating the inclusion with minimal disruption to the class as a 'whole'. The Licensee, Director, Parents/Guardians and relevant support networks will collaboratively work towards a positive result that will endeavour to meet the interests of all concerned in a fair and just manner.

A trial period of 1 month will determine the level of need of the child and suitability at the Centre (the Director needs to consider the group needs as well as the individual child). If accepted, regular meetings with all concerned will be implemented to establish any strategies or goals that will enrich the child's experiences and support the child's and Centre's ongoing needs.

**Changes in Enrolment details:** It is extremely important to keep the Licensee and Director well informed regarding family details and/or changes in these details; phone numbers, address, immunisation records, custody issues, emergency contacts, persons authorised to collect child/ren, work details or any other relevant changes. Please email / forward a note in the fees box or put these changes in writing via the Parent Communication book.

## Management

Finger Prints Children's Centre is operated by Adam Brown and Rebekah Harrison ATF Adbek Family Trust and is licensed under the Child Care Act 2002 and must comply with this Act and Child Care Regulation 2003 including requirements relating to activities, experiences, programs, staff members' qualifications, numbers of staff members and children.

The Licensee oversees the Director, handles all administration duties, financial and legal concerns and works closely with the Director regarding the general concerns of the Centre, families and staff. The Licensee will ultimately finalise all major decisions/concerns relating directly to the Centre and its well being. The responsibility of the day to day running of the Centre is vested in the Director. The Director manages all other staff and offers unlimited support and knowledge to all staff members.

Please feel free to pass issues or queries through the Director which will then be passed on to the Licensee.

## Age Grouping & Staff Ratios

We are a one room Centre, offering a Steiner Inspired Program with age grouping 3yrs to 5yrs/school age with a maximum capacity of 24 children. The room has a staff to child ratio of 1 staff member to 12 children. This information is displayed in the Foyer.

## Operation of the Centre

The Centre opens from 7.30 am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday. Children will not be admitted before opening hours and late fees are charged if collection is after hours. Late fees are charged at \$1 per min. The Centre operates 48 weeks of the year and is closed on all public holidays (fees still apply for parents). The Centre is closed for one week Mid -Year (usually July) and three weeks between Christmas & New Year. Parents and staff are given 30 days notice regarding these dates. Over the closure period no fees are charged to parents, and staff take accrued annual leave. Staff must be notified if you have arranged for someone else to collect your child. You will appreciate that the Centre cannot release your child to a stranger or non-custodial parent unless previously agreed in writing. A proof of identification will be needed for this person.

In a custody situation, a copy of the Court Order is required if one parent is to have no rights to collect the child. Cancellation of child care requires 14 days written notice; otherwise fees will continue to be charged. The Centre must be informed immediately of any changes of details that were given upon enrolment, as mentioned above.

## Administration of the Centre

All administration concerns can be directed to the Licensee. General enquiries regarding the running of the Centre, concerns about your child or your child's development can be answered by the Director. Enquiries regarding your child's day e.g. sleeping or food intake can be directed to all staff.

## Fees

Fees are currently set at \$58.00 per day and parents may be eligible for CCB relief based on 9 hours of care per day. There is also a non refundable enrolment fee of \$40.00. This must be paid upon enrolment prior to your child's first day. This will hold your days of choice for two weeks. A payment agreement of child care fees incurred is required weekly and will remain 2 weeks in advance. If fees are unpaid for more than 2 weeks the child's place will be withdrawn. Fees are payable for all booked days, including absent days and public holidays. Families will need to contact the Family Assistance Office (**Ph: 136150**) regarding their CCB eligibility, percentage rebate and to inform them that their child will be attending the Centre.

## Payment of Fees

The preferred method of payment is online transfer. **Bank details: ADBEK FAMILY TRUST- Bank of Qld BSB # 124065 – ACC# 20655287** - using your **child's name as payment reference**. If you are unable to access this method please speak to our administration staff to make alternative arrangements. EFTPOS facilities are not available. **Statements recording payments will be emailed out fortnightly**. Please ensure that administration has your current email address. If you do not have this facility, a printed copy will be in the fees folder located near the sign in desk (filed under your child's first name). **If your account is more than 7 days in arrears you will receive a letter of notification allowing seven days for payment**. If after this time the account remains in arrears, your child will be unable to attend until all outstanding fees have been paid. This will run the risk of your child losing their placement.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please discuss your situation with the Licensee and a payment plan can be arranged for any outstanding fees. Please be aware that the Centre has a debt collection policy in place.

## CCB – Child Care Benefit

Families may qualify for Child Care Benefit, subsidised by the Australian Government. This is administered within the Child Care Management System (CCMS) by the Dept of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), accessible at the Family Assistance Office (FAO) counter at Centrelink, Medicare Offices, or online. [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

The rate of CCB depends on a family's estimated taxable income. For more information, phone **13 61 50**. It is the parents' responsibility to lodge the forms with Centrelink. This must be done every 12 months. Forms not lodged by the expiry date will result in parents paying full fees.

CCB for approved care can be received as reduced fees through the child care service OR a lump sum payment direct to families.

## Child Care Tax Rebate

Parents who receive CCB and are working, training or studying may qualify for a tax rebate of 50% of out of pocket expenses for child care, to be claimed on your annual tax return. You will need verification of your expenses such as receipts, credit card statements or bank statements. For further information visit [www.childcarerebate.gov.au](http://www.childcarerebate.gov.au) - or call the **Family Assistance Office (FAO) on 13 61 50**.

## Absences

CCB is paid for sessions of care when your child is absent. Absent sessions are called 'allowable absences'. Each child is allowed 42 days of allowable absences per financial year. Childcare Assistance will be paid for absences from care for up to 42 days.

- A record of each child's absences must be kept by the Centre.
- Childcare Assistance will not be paid for absences in excess of 42 days, except for the following 'Approved Absences' which are **NOT** counted in the 42 days:-
  1. An illness (includes illness of child, parent or sibling) - where a medical certificate is provided
  2. Absences due to non-immunisation during outbreak of infectious disease - written parent statement required
  3. Periods of local emergency

Please inform staff as soon as possible if your child will be away due to a sickness and if a medical certificate will be supplied for this absence.

## Attendance

The Centre will operate for 48 weeks of the year. The Centre will not operate on public holidays and 30 days notice will be given for Centre closure over Christmas and a Mid - Year break.

**Fees are paid for all days booked at the Centre which includes days your child may be ill, public holidays, or if your family is on holidays. Two weeks notice is required for the withdrawal of your child from the Centre.**

## Expectations

### Specific Information relating to your child's Enrolment at this Centre

Your child will be enrolled at Finger Prints Children's Centre. We are a one room Centre with age grouping 3yrs to school age with a maximum capacity of 24 children. Your child's care giver details as at the date of enrolment are as follows:

<b>Position:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Days:</b>	<b>Qualifications:</b>
Director/Teacher	Carina Halliday	Mon-Wed	Diploma – Children's Services
Director/Teacher	Amanda Driessen	Thur/Fri	Advanced Diploma (Currently studying a B.Ed-EC)
Assistant	Lana Harrison	Mon-Thurs	Certificate III (Currently studying Diploma)
Assistant	Jacquelyn Lucas	Thurs/Fri	Diploma – Children's Services
Float	Kim Martin	Mon-Fri	Inclusion Support Worker/lunch relief
Licensee	Rebekah Harrison	Mon-Fri	Admin/Float - Cert III (Currently studying Diploma)

A notice stating the current information is located on the wall near the front door.

Any complaints or compliance issues regarding our Centre can be directed to **The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care: Ph 07 5562 4877 (Robina) or the Child Care Information Service: Ph 1800 637 711 (refer to Centre Grievance Policy and Procedure).**

You are encouraged to ask Directors/Teachers for information relating to the following:

- Your child's enrolment at this service including the activities and experiences provided by this Centre
- The Centre philosophy about learning and child development outcomes and how it is intended the outcomes will be achieved
- The goals about knowledge and skills to be developed through activities and experiences
- Any other concerns that you may have relating to your child whilst attending this Centre

### Policies and Information:

Parents are encouraged to view and discuss our **Centre Policies**. These are located, along with the **Child Care Act 2002, Child Care Regulations 2003** and **Parent Information Folders** in the Foyer. (Top shelf of the bookcase near the entrance to the Kindy room)

We annually review these Policies and will ask for parent input/comments at these times. However feel free to discuss your concerns or clarifications on these if need be. Administration can print or email copies of required policies at anytime for your perusal. You may also request to see your Child's Developmental Portfolios at any time. Finger Prints has an open door policy to all parents.

### Communication

A "Parent Communication Book" is located near the sign in sheet. This is for any information that needs to be passed on to staff e.g. change of pickup times/authorised persons, holidays, emergency contact details, changes in sleeping or eating patterns etc...any information that is relevant to your child or personal information that may be used by the teachers as a resource allowing your child the opportunity to pursue their own ideas and interests within the program and play. This information becomes a wonderful resource for teachers when planning and evaluating the program. Parents are encouraged to speak with their child's teacher about their child's progress, or any concerns they may have. Open communication between parents and staff facilitates positive home/child care relationships based on trust and positive co-operation.

If parents need to have longer talks with staff, it is important to make an appointment with the teacher outside of session times rather than take the teacher's attention away from the children. A 'Day Book' is displayed in the room providing information and photos of the children's day, eating and sleeping patterns. Bimonthly newsletters, notes and other information will be sent out to each family. These contain reminders of up and coming events, issues in Child Care, Steiner articles, favourite recipes and any other information we think will be of interest to you - keeping you informed about the Centre and Centre activities.

## Staff Qualifications

Staff are qualified as per their employment status under the legislation. All staff hold current Blue Cards and First Aid/CPR certificates and are expected to attend various seminars and workshops relevant to the industry, aiding their professional development. Regular professional development is encouraged by Management.

The Director has overall responsibility for communication with parents. The Centre Director works in conjunction with the Licensee regarding matters relating to the operation, Policies and management of the Centre, enrolments, grouping, times (hours) and days of attendance, health issues, exclusion of sick children, fees, staffing (including parent's concerns about staff), referral of parents to other early childhood services, community agencies and support services where necessary.

Directors are responsible for exchanging information with parents about the child's development and progress, his/her performance and behaviour at the Centre, family background and parents' expectations, the daily program including reasons behind it, daily routines, goals and philosophy's of the Centre and for the group.

## Staff Interaction with Children (refer to this Policy)

At all times staff are to be aware that the behaviour and language they use is the model by which the children learn. The Steiner philosophy encourages role modelling as one of the most effective teaching tools. To achieve a welcoming, calm and harmonious atmosphere in the classroom while guiding the children towards a gentle, positive and respectful social behaviour, staff must set appropriate examples of these and understand how the impact created from their own representations bestow upon the children.

## Parent Involvement

Parents are recognised as the child's 'first teachers' and staff aim to optimise their continued involvement in their children's day at Kindy. Staff encourage the involvement of parents, carers and families in the Centre's activities and believe that this fosters an understanding, respect and awareness of the important inter-relational link between staff, children and parents. Parents are invited to participate in the life of our Centre at a level appropriate to their personal circumstances and needs.

Here are some ways that parents can offer support and also be involved in the Centre:

- spending time with your child at the Centre
- informing staff regularly of your child's interests or weekend/holiday/daily adventures
- sharing ideas, talents, culture and/or resources with children and staff
- participate in discussions with staff on skills, knowledge and attitudes you would like to have included in the program
- acting as volunteers
- joining the parent fundraising group – fundraising is a vital element within the Centre and aids in keeping fees low and the purchase of extra wonderful equipment
- attending parent meetings and reviewing Policies
- becoming collectors of scrap materials which children can use in creative pursuits
- assisting with festivals and special events
- attending social events –linking family and Kindy

## Separation Anxiety

Some children have more difficulty settling into a new environment than others and it is normal for a child to be hesitant the first few times he/she is left in a new situation. We do advise that once you are ready to leave you make your departure as brief and matter-of-fact as possible. We strongly recommend that parents do not sneak off as this does not help children to build up trust, and may in fact hinder the settling process. There is a window at the front of the Centre that is a perfect place for a loving 'farewell wave' routine for your child. Please see your child's teacher if you or child are not settling, and a program will be put in place.

## **What parents can do at home** - Based on an extract from 'You are your child's first teacher' by Rahima Baldwin

The rushed lives that most of us live make it difficult to provide children with an ideal world for their early childhood years. Yet there is a great deal parents can do for their children by providing an environment filled with love and warmth. By understanding a young child's development and his/her complete openness to their surroundings; we can do our best to provide a stable and nurturing environment within our current living situation.

- \*Attend to your own life and emotions. The emotional environment you create for your child is far more important than the material environment
- \*Honour the spiritual element in life, especially as it is brought to you by your child/ren
- \*Work toward rhythm in family life that can support you and your child/ren
- \*Remember that imitation and repetition are the keys to the young child's learning and will support positive behaviours
- \*Set limits and consistently enforce them: accept that you are the parent
- \*Allow plenty of time for your child's creative free play as well as musical and artistic play. Include time for just being home and 'doing nothing'
- \*Buy or make childlike toys, ones that encourage imaginative play
- \*Avoid pressuring your child to be an early achiever in academics, sports or the arts
- \*Continue to pay attention to what your child experiences, limiting over stimulation from loud music, movies and television
- \*Avoid concerning your child with adult problems through news broadcasts, conversations and so forth

## **Grievances**

### **Any dispute or grievance shall be dealt with in the following manner:**

Families are asked to raise all grievances at Centre-level first. This will give those most closely involved an opportunity to address the issue. Families are asked to remain aware that at any stage of a grievance procedure, they may ask any other person to act as an agent, support, advisor or intermediary on their behalf.

**Stage One** - As soon as a concern or grievance has arisen, the family member in the first instance, shall attempt to resolve the matter with the relevant staff member, who shall respond to such request as soon as reasonably practicable under the circumstances and endeavour to resolve the dispute or grievance.

**Stage Two** - If the grievance or dispute is not resolved, the family member shall refer the matter to the Director of the Centre. Such discussion will, if possible, take place within 24 hours of the initiation of this request in an endeavour to resolve this dispute or grievance. Together the family member and the Director will work out a Plan of Action to assist in rectifying the grievance. At this stage a timeframe will be discussed and a date and time will be set for a reassessment of the situation.

**Stage Three** - If the grievance or dispute is still unresolved, the matter shall be referred to the Licensee. The aggrieved family and the Director shall confer with the Licensee in an endeavour to resolve the dispute or grievance.

**Stage Four** – Parents have the opportunity at any time to contact a representative of The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care to seek further assistance.

**Office for Early Childhood Education and Care – Gold Coast Regional Office  
East Quay, Corporate Park, South Building**

**Level 1, 34 Glenferrie Drive Robina - P.O Box 557 Robina DC Qld 4226 Ph. 07 55624877** (refer to this Policy) Concerns of a financial nature, please contact the Licensee – Rebekah Harrison Ph: 0405 106 750

## **Inclusion, Anti Bias and Promoting Equity Policy**

Finger Prints recognises the individuality of each child and family. The Centre respects that staff, children and families may come from a range of cultural, linguistic, economic and social backgrounds, and may possess diverse ideas, abilities and needs. Finger Prints respects the diversity of Australian society and endeavours to provide a program, within the capabilities of the room and staff, where cultural background, creed, gender or developmental/physical ability is inclusive, richly appreciated and nurtured allowing the child to feel empowered by his/her heritage, beliefs or abilities. (refer to this Policy)

***The Centre does not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others.***

## Australian Indigenous People Policy

Finger Prints acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the original inhabitants of Australia and recognises their culture as part of the cultural heritage of all Australians. The Centre will respect and honour the need for all Australian children to grow up in a society that acknowledges, understands and addresses past histories and current realities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Centre incorporates Indigenous culture into the curriculum and promotes understanding of its importance. (refer to this Policy)

[http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social\\_justice/bth\\_report/index.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/index.html) 'Bringing them home' – Australian Human Rights Commission Inquiry into the Stolen Generation

## Centre Programs and Routines

### Daily Rhythm

Rhythm is essential for a healthy childhood. It is present in children's daily, weekly and seasonal lives. From the daily rhythm of sleeping and waking, to the yearly cycle of the seasons and the procession of the stars and the moon, rhythm forms part of life's experience for us all.

Each day flows with a sense of *breathing in* and *breathing out*, from quiet settled times to active times of work and play. Consistency through daily rhythm provides the children with a predictable pattern by which they can mark time and look forward to particular activities. When children are provided with a balanced and predictable daily program they feel safe, happy and relaxed. **A copy of the daily rhythm is displayed in the classroom and may change seasonally.**

One of our most important goals is to provide a strong rhythm for the children. Rhythm is different to routines. Rhythm guides and moves children gently through their day in a flowing sequence from one experience to another. A strong consistent rhythm of the day gives children a deep sense of security within themselves and their environment. In our world there are many rhythms including moon cycles, seasonal cycles, day and night, life and death cycles etc. In our lives we have daily rhythms, weekly rhythms (work Mon-Fri), monthly and yearly cycles like our birthday etc., all of which provide us with a strong sense of balance and security in our lives.

### Programming and Children's records

Finger Prints Children's Centre provides a Steiner program based on the teachings of Dr Rudolf Steiner. Programs are to be age/stage developmentally appropriate, based on Child Study, individual child observations and in accordance to the Waldorf method. Staff consult with parents on the program so that they can identify each child's individual needs and interests. Programs involve all children actively in learning. Weekly Programs are displayed on the Parent Information wall.

We understand there is great need for flexibility within the weekly program, allowing room for spontaneous events which may arise from the children's or families input. This is displayed in our daily diary. The program is planned to complement the Centre's philosophy and goals. It reflects the needs, strengths and interests of the group and also each individual child. Each child's portfolio will have samples of their drawings, artwork, photo's and observations.

The program incorporates learning experiences appropriate for each child, smaller groups of children and the whole group. It provides activities and experiences for the children which enhance all developmental areas such as physical, intellectual, social, emotional, language and self-help skills. It also fosters their security and sense of trust and encourages independence.

Materials and experiences are organised to help children learn important life skills and develop the '*will*' sense of the child.

Developmental portfolios are maintained for each child to provide evidence of the child's progress in learning and development and are readily available to parents and guardians.

The program will allow children the opportunity to make choices and to take on new challenges.

Staff respect each child's right not to participate in some activities. Children's suggestions and ideas about material and activities are regularly incorporated into the program. Staff encourage children to appreciate the capabilities and limitations of children with additional needs and to actively support them. It encourages cross-group friendships (age, sex, cultural background) and gender equality using a non biased and non

stereotypical approach. The program will provide a balance of daily activities for children to develop gross motor as well as fine manipulative skills, both in and outdoors.

It encourages language development by creating opportunities for children to communicate about daily events, experiences, objects and people that are of interest to them. Children are given time to express themselves in one on one interactions and in group situations.

The program will be evaluated for the inclusion of children with additional needs upon acceptance to the Centre. Collaborative consultations with the parents, relevant resources, professionals and organisations, if warranted, will be conducted allowing (within the capabilities of the staff and Centre) for various modifications if required to accommodate such needs. (refer to Enrolment and Orientation Policy)

The program planning is to encourage children to think, reason, question, experiment, comprehend and value respect and express themselves creatively. It will show links between the Philosophy and Centre Goals as well as individual child planning objectives. It is evaluated daily and provides information for further planning and improvement. The results of the evaluation are then used to plan both immediate and long-term objectives for the children.

## Out Door Program

Outdoor program time is equally as important as the indoor program. Children will have the opportunity to work and play in nature and experience and explore an array of sustainable activities. All staff are expected to plan for the learning that takes place and to use innovative and creative ideas when setting up the equipment, allowing for the different ages and capabilities of the children using the equipment and safety requirements involved. *'If a child has been able to play, to give up his whole living being to the world around him, he will be able to, in the serious tasks of later life, devote himself with confidence and power to the service of the world.'* - Rudolf Steiner

## Accreditation

The aim of Accreditation is to foster practices that ensure the ongoing quality of care regarding children, families, programming, experiences and learning, safety, nutrition and management within the Centre.

The QIAS is an Australian Government initiative linked to the funding of Child Care Benefit to Centre Long Day Care. The QIAS is administered by the National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc (NCAC). While there are voluntary accreditation systems for children's services in other countries, the Australian QIAS is unique on an International scale, as it is the first quality assurance system for child care services in the world to be linked to child care funding through legislation and to be itself funded and supported by a Federal Government.

**The QIAS Quality Practises Guide outlines 7 Quality Areas that are described by 33 principles:**

The 7 areas are:

- 1: Staff Relationships with Children and Peers
- 2: Partnerships with Families
- 3: Programming and Evaluation
- 4: Children's Experiences and Learning
- 5: Protective Care and Safety
- 6: Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing
- 7: Managing to Support Quality

The Centre makes a Self Assessment of the quality of its practice by consulting with all staff and families and rates each of the 33 principles. This result informs the Centre's Continuing Improvement Plan. The collected information is summarised into a Self Study report submitted to the NCAC.

A Validator visits the Centre and presents a report to Moderators together with the Centre's Self-Study Report. The Moderators then recommend the standard of Accreditation the Centre should receive to the National Childcare Accreditation Council. (Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Good Quality or High Quality) The Centre, if successful, is then given 2.5 years accreditation.

Accreditation is an ongoing assessment of the practices in our Centre. This means that Accreditation is a continuing process and does not stop at the end of the Validator's visit. A reclassification of the quality standards has been undertaken and following the Validation visit will be the Quality Assurance documentation used to guide the practices in the Centre.

## Early Years Learning Framework

Finger Prints Children's Centre is implementing the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia as developed and endorsed in July 2009. The Council of Australian Governments has developed this Framework to assist educators to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning. Their vision is that: *"All children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the Nation."* Fundamental to the Framework is a view of children's lives as characterised by **'Belonging, Being and Becoming'**.

The Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning from birth to 5 years and through the transitions to school. It communicates these expectations through the following 5 Learning Outcomes:

***Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity***

***Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world***

***Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing***

***Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners***

***Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators*** (refer to this Policy)

## Safe Sleeping

Finger Prints Children's Centre believes it is important to incorporate into a Steiner based early childhood program, a balance of experiences which include opportunities for rest and relaxation.

Our Centre caters for the needs of all children which includes physical and mental needs, e.g. the need to relax body and mind after a very active and stimulating morning. Rest time provides a balance between activity and relaxation. It enables the child to learn to relax without props and other people. A child who learns to relax without props and in a group situation as well as alone, will mature with a much envied ability to cope with the normal stresses of life.

Rest time is an important element of our program. To rest mentally and physically is vital for healthy growth. At our Centre, rest time is viewed as a relaxation period, consisting of approximately 45 minutes of peaceful relaxation followed by 15-20 minutes of quiet time, reading books or individual hand work activities. This time is flexible and dependent upon the needs of the children and the atmosphere of the room during that particular day. Children experience no expectations from staff to sleep, but rather a chance to learn to relax. Parents can ask to wake a child after one or more hours sleep or to not assist a child to go to sleep. We acknowledge that some family's routines at night may become affected when children sleep during the day, however, we will never prevent a child from falling asleep naturally at rest time. Although we cannot stop your child from sleeping, if rest time becomes a major problem for your family, you are welcome to discuss this with the teacher and implement some strategies that may help. Children are able to bring a cuddly toy/security blanket only for rest time in the room. These items are to be placed in their locker on arrival and returned to the locker after rest. (refer to this Policy)

## Positive Guidance of Child Behaviour

Finger Prints aims to ensure that children feel safe and secure whilst developing self awareness, control and consideration for others. We aim to enhance each child's self esteem and encourage an understanding of the limits to acceptable behaviour. Finger Prints Children's Centre promotes a positive approach to managing the behaviour of all children. Positive Guidance of behaviour within the program has two primary goals. First - staff strive to find a solution to the current situation. Second - staff attempt to help the child process feelings, recognise consequences, explore alternative solutions and outcomes, and develop internal self-control. To accomplish these goals we use the following techniques on a daily basis.

### Prevention

Providing a calm, aesthetically pleasant and nurturing environment for the children is vitally important to the mood and energy of the child (according to Rudolf Steiner's indications). A well designed and well equipped classroom tailored to the developmental level of the children prevents frustration, interruption, and hazards. It offers privacy, independence and easy adult supervision. In addition, the daily routine provides enough time for play, a sense of security, little waiting and few transitions. Staff are expected to actively prevent inappropriate behaviour via astute supervision and predicting child behaviour.

## **Positive Redirection**

The basic procedure used in the classroom is positive redirection, which is redirecting unacceptable behaviour to an alternative. Our aim is to enable children to be self-directed so that their individual needs and interests in turn become clearer to themselves and to those around them. This is enhanced by acknowledgement and verbal praise. Staff praise children for their appropriate behaviour and successes by describing what we see and how we feel. "I see the books are all on the shelf. It's nice to have such a clean room". Staff adopt positive guidance techniques that are developmentally appropriate, with it never being seen as a punishment, but a way of changing unacceptable behaviour. Verbally expressing how children feel is encouraged so that each child develops an understanding and appreciation of other people's needs, rights and feelings, including their own. Consistent approaches by staff in relation to strategies are paramount to the overall success of a positive behaviour. Staff suggest rather than direct when possible in a positive form e.g. "let's pack away the blocks" rather than "tidy up now", or sing songs like "everything has a place" or "there was a little dusty gnome, who said its time to clean their home, splish splash clean their home."

## **Modelling**

Staff value the importance of role modelling (as children of this age are imitative beings) and communication at all times (verbal and non verbal). Staff are aware that children will use them as a role model and as such must always display responsible, professional and caring behaviours.

## **Limit Setting**

Finger Prints have a few clear, simple rules that vary according to the developmental level of the children. In establishing rules, each staff member follows these guidelines:

\*Explain to children what they are to do in a calm positive tone.

\*Explain rules to the children and apply rules consistently.

## **Problem Solving**

Staff appeal to the child's growing intellectual and moral reasoning by using natural and logical consequences and by asking questions to encourage problem solving. Staff attentively listen to the children to help identify their needs, feelings, frustrations, causes, alternatives, and choices. Staff provide cues such as the statement, "use your words", and encourage do's not don'ts with clear brief explanations. Staff endeavour to source what factors could be influencing a child's behaviour e.g. emotional, medical, environmental etc, observing sensitively the child as a 'whole'. Staff are to remain calm when solving conflicts in the class room and give the children choices – but only when the choices can be accepted. Staff will avoid trying to change behaviour by methods which may lead to loss of self respect such as shaming, labelling, humiliating, frightening or threatening the child. Staff will never compare a child against another.

**Crying** is an obvious release of emotions that children and adults do for many reasons.

Staff believe that responding as soon as possible to an upset child is essential, as children need to develop a sense of trust and security. Each child's situation deserves attention and confirmation that it is ok to express their distress through tears, and in actual fact, is very healthy and good. Asking or expecting a child to stop is denying that child's individual need to be met.

## **Managing Behaviour Outbursts**

When a child has a physical or emotional outburst, staff provide comfort and privacy. This allows the child to regain composure and insures the safety of other children and staff. 'Quiet time', will be used only as a last resort, when a child is unable to break a pattern of negative or attention seeking behaviour. This is not a punishment, but rather a 'quiet time', a time of renewal and reflection for the child. When the child has regained control, he/she will be allowed to join the group. In any event the amount of 'quiet time' will not exceed the number of minutes corresponding with the age of the child (for example three minutes for a three year old). Children should already be aware of the negative behaviour and have been instructed as to the correct way to deal with the incident. If a child consistently performs behavioural outbursts that repeatedly disrupt the remaining children's positive experiences within the classroom and the above strategies are not working, the Director will arrange a meeting with the parents to discuss a plan for managing the situation. Empathy and confidentiality will be exercised.

## Birthdays

A child's birthday is a special celebration for the child. The class teacher will conduct a simple but beautiful ceremony on a child's birthday. A birthday story is told, followed by singing, a festive morning or afternoon tea, and a small gift is given from the teacher to the child.

Parents and family members are welcome and encouraged to come along to the Centre and celebrate with us. It can be very insightful to see how simplicity and reverence can have a more powerful impact than the usual sensory overload and frazzled nerves that come with children's birthdays. You are welcome to bring in a healthy cake or muffins to share for this celebration (preferably with no icing).

### **A verse for the night before the birthday**

When I have said my evening prayer  
And my clothes are folded on the chair  
And mother switches off the light  
I'll still be ... years old tonight.  
But from the break of day  
Before the children rise and play  
Before the darkness turns to gold  
Tomorrow I'll be ..... years old.  
... kisses when I wake.... candles on my cake

## Children's Belongings and Toys

Toys and items of value should remain at home. Within the Centre, children feel that all toys are to be shared, and conflict situations can arise. A special safe, small snuggle toy is permitted at rest time.

## Festivals

At the Centre we mark the rhythms of the year by celebrating the changing of the seasons with festivals. As the year weaves from one festival to another we are provided with a true reason for preparation and celebration. For the young child the preparation is half the joy. Children love decorating the room, baking special treats and learning songs and verses for a particular festival. The stories that are told give the children a pictorial understanding of the festival and speak very deeply to them without our having to explain anything.

The room has a nature table which changes with the seasons, bringing into the room a way for the children to display these changes. Autumn brings fruits, nuts, berries, grains and boughs of changing leaves. The Winter garden is bare and simple but probably most awe-provoking. Spring bursts forth with bulbs. Children love this table. You may like to encourage your child to have a small table or window sill at home to create his or her own nature table with things from walks or outings. A lovely sense of community is felt during our festivals and we look forward to sharing them with you.

We hope to bring a better understanding of these seasonal festivals in our parent evenings. For it is the celebration of festivals in our community which is one of the most deeply fulfilling experiences for both young and old. We may also add celebrations that honor the culture or religious traditions of our families throughout the year.

## Centre Pets

At Finger Prints we consider animals to be a wonderful part of the daily learning experiences we provide for our children. Children are able to develop respect and a sense of responsibility when caring for animals while adults' role model appropriate behaviour. When children and animals interact, safety and health are important, first for the child, but also for the animal. Parents are encouraged to bring in their family pets at the discretion of the Director due to safety precautions. (refer to this Policy)

## Television and Children

How media and television affect the development of children can often create emotionally charged debate and can prove challenging to new parents fitting into the culture of the Centre.

Children who watch television are more likely to play out images they have seen, exposing them to other children 'second hand'. They may dominate the child's play and thoughts. This is a very different process than the child creating his or her own images from hearing a story, where the child requires an inner imaginative effort. This helps develop the faculty of imagination. TV images are often not what we would consider images of childhood. The effects of television on children is well documented; for example hyperactivity and lack of attention span, or inability to complete tasks. Perhaps the greatest loss is the dimming effect it has on the child's wonderful imagination. It is the imagination which provides the foundation for learning and growth.

There will be no television or any other substitute for the human voice such as taped music, CD's or computer games at Finger Prints Children's Centre.

<http://www.steinerbooks.org/author.html?au=922>

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/tv\\_affects\\_child.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/tv_affects_child.html)

<http://www.jgs.net/ecf/jan961.htm>

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=114&np=301&id=1839#1>

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/84318.php>

## What to do when you arrive

Children must be accompanied into the preschool by an adult. To help establish a good routine, we ask you to help your child with the following:

- \*Sign your child in on the Attendance Sheet
- \*Check the Communication Book for any new messages
- \*Help your child put their bag into their locker
- \*Help your child put their fruit into the fruit basket, their lunch tin on the trolley and afternoon tea or perishables into the appropriate basket
- \*Take your child to the toilet and help them wash and dry their hands (please also wash and dry your own)
- \*Allow your child to enter into free play or morning activity or present your child to the teacher

It is important that you **remember to sign your child in and out** each day.

## Daily Checklist for Finger Prints

In your school bag there should be:

- \*A cot size fitted sheet with top sheet/blanket (depending on season) and a very small pillow if desired. You may also bring a special rest time comfort (cuddle toy etc) if needed
- \*2 pieces of fruit
- \*Labelled spare clothes
- \*Wide brimmed hat
- \*Inside soft soled shoes
- \*Lunch pail with a healthy assortment
- \*Afternoon Tea - a separate labelled paper bag with a non perishable snack
- \*Stainless Steel (if possible) drink bottle with lid - water only (this is for afternoon tea)

## Health

### Clothing

In accordance with the stages of a child's incarnation, the young sensitive soul is more related to the seven colours of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, dark blue, violet). Just as at the beginning of the day, pink is the colour of the sky, so the human soul feels pink at the dawn of life. The skin is a tender organ, the outer boundary of the body; it excretes and breathes, so it continuously creates and recreates a relationship between the body and its surroundings. Inorganic fibres in clothing can curtail the functions of the skin and even a healthy skin may get irritated. Finger Prints Children's Centre encourages children to

dress in the colours of the day in accordance to the colours of the planets and the earth from Dr Rudolf Steiner's indications and also in preparation for their possible future transition to Silkwood School.

*Monday – Purple, Tuesday – Red, Wednesday – Yellow, Thursday – Orange, Friday – Green*

**Inappropriate clothing includes:**

- \*Black garments, advertising or commercial images/clothing showing slogans
- \*Super Hero logos such as Spiderman, Barbie, Disney etc
- \*Singlet straps, 3/4 tops
- \*Thongs

Parents are encouraged to dress children in comfortable clothes and shoes suitable for active play. Safe footwear for play experiences such as climbing and running require closed in shoes with adequate grip.

**NO THONGS, CROCS OR SANDLES**

**Finger Prints Children's Centre encourages:**

- \*Soft indoor shoes
- \*Safe sleepwear
- \*Sun protective clothing, including hats, T-shirts with sleeves and collars (Please refer to Sun Smart Policy)

Children need to be dressed appropriately for weather conditions and temperature of play environments. Staff will role model appropriate clothing attire for each season.

Older children should be encouraged to judge for themselves when they are too hot or too cold.

The Centre provides protective clothing for messy activities where possible, e.g. smocks. It is preferred that children be dressed in 'old' clothes which are easily laundered, as children's clothes may get dirty during an active day at the Centre. Children are encouraged to develop independence in dressing themselves. Clothing should be easy for the child to put on and take off, e.g. pants and trousers with elastic waists are easier to pull up/down for the child to manage when toileting rather than zips, studs or buttons. Other examples of clothing to facilitate self-help are: tops with large necks, cardigans, slip on shoes or shoes with velcro, larger buttons rather than small buttons or studs, shorts with elastic waists instead of long skirts or dresses for girls, as these inhibit climbing and can be hazardous in the playground etc. Parents and staff are to be aware that cords and strings on children's clothing can pose as safety hazards, e.g. catching on climbing equipment or wrapping around the neck at rest time. Where possible it is preferred that clothing worn to the Centre will not have strings or cords.

## **Sun Smart**

The purpose of this Sun Smart policy is to ensure that all children attending the Centre are protected from the harmful effects of the sun throughout the year. (refer to this Policy)

**Parents are required to:**

- Provide the appropriate hat and clothing for their child/ren  
[http://www.cancerqld.org.au/page/prevention/skin\\_cancer](http://www.cancerqld.org.au/page/prevention/skin_cancer)
- Help by applying sunscreen daily to their child/ren at home before coming to child care (to ensure it is applied at least 20 mins before outdoor play), or apply on arrival
- Note time of application on sunscreen daily record sheet (located outside)
- Wear broad brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats while involved in Centre activities

**Parents should note that sunscreen will be applied to all children as per this Policy unless parents specifically request in writing that the Centre supplied sun cream should not be applied to their child.**

In this circumstance, children are to wear long sleeved shirts and must play in the shade. Parents are welcomed to supply their own child with natural sun cream. <http://www.soleoorganics.com/>

## Immunisation regarding Children at the Centre

The following rules apply:

\*Information on Immunisation is available at the Centre (Parent Information Folder)

\*The rights and responsibilities of parents and caregivers and the decisions they make in regard to the health and well being of their child is personal

\*Vaccination is on a voluntary basis

\*To receive CCB from the FAO, your child's immunisation must be up to date or you must have an exemption form from your Doctor

\*Children's Immunisation Records are reviewed annually by the Director and a copy (or conscientious objection) must be given to the Centre upon enrolment

Immunisation History Statements, which contain details of all vaccines administered to the child and recorded on the ACIR, and those that may be missing, are automatically generated when a child turns 12 months, 2 and 5 years of age and on completion of the childhood vaccination schedule. Statements will be mailed to the address most recently recorded on the ACIR for that child.

To find out your child's immunisation history - **PH: 1800 653 809** or go to

<http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/services/acir/keeping-track.jsp#N10024>

### **Exemptions can be achieved in two ways from your Doctor:**

1: A medical condition – Medical Contraindication form

2: A personal, philosophical, religious or medical belief- Conscientious Objection Form -

<http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/pubs/forms/files/conscientious-objection-form.pdf>

**Children who have a Conscientious Objection Form will be excluded from the Centre if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease. Even if the un-immunised child appears well, children still need to be excluded from the Centre for a period of 21 days.**

The Centre honours personal choice for child immunisations. We are aware of the indications from Rudolf Steiner of the effects immunisation has on children under the age of 1 year, and the shock that the child's physical and vital energy endure by introducing these illnesses into the body so young. The Centre also acknowledges how immunisation has eradicated numerous childhood diseases. (refer to this Policy)

### **Communicable Conditions/Illnesses and Exclusion Policy**

**Aim:** To prevent cross infection between children and staff within the Centre.

**It is important that children are kept away from the Centre whilst they have a Communicable Disease. We ask parents to immediately notify the Centre and to keep their children at home during the period of their infection. A confidential record of this illness will be kept at the Centre and can be an important factor in preventing the spread of infection and a valuable resource if an outbreak occurs.**

All notifiable diseases are dealt with in accordance to the guidelines set out by the Health Department.

Finger Prints adheres to the minimum exclusion periods for infectious conditions adapted from the National Health and Medical Research Councils' recommendations for children and staff with contagious diseases. (chart located in room) <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/fullhtml/exclusion.htm> (refer to this Policy)

**Where a parent fails to produce a record of immunisation or incomplete immunisation for a child, the child will be treated as unimmunised and excluded accordingly if an outbreak occurs.**

Parents and children are encouraged to follow Centre hygiene rules and practices. Effective hand washing/drying of both parent and child upon arrival and departure at the Centre reduces the risk and spread of infection. At the Director's discretion, a child will be excluded if they are not well enough to participate in the normal program or if looking pale, weak or tired upon return to the Centre after suffering an illness. Children will be excluded if their body temperature reaches 38 degrees.

Parents are encouraged to obtain a doctor's certificate stating the child is free of illness before returning to the Centre after having an infectious disease.

## Infectious Diseases – Exclusion – Sick Child

Infections move swiftly through children in group situations. We must try to prevent outbreaks of infections by immediately excluding children when they have the following symptoms/infections:

**Vomiting** - The child must be excluded from the Centre for 24 hours from the cessation of the vomiting.

**Diarrhoea** - The child must be excluded from the Centre for 24 hours after the last loose bowel motion.

**Generally Unwell Children** - If a child displays symptoms or an illness which stipulates exclusion from the Centre, the child will be separated from the other children, comforted and the parent/emergency contact will be notified to pick up the child. (refer to this Policy)

At the Director's discretion a clearance letter may be needed for such infections.

## Head Lice

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. The Centre Head Lice Policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the families to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner. Children with live head lice will be excluded until appropriate treatment has commenced. We ask that parents act responsibly and respectfully and that a sympathetic attitude is maintained to avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures around issues of head lice. Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, Finger Prints Children's Centre will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively. (refer to this Policy)

## First Aid Policy

**"First Aid means the immediate care given to an ill or injured person until more advanced care arrives or the person recovers"**

Finger Prints Children's Centre shall ensure that immediate, appropriate and adequate First Aid treatment is provided for the initial treatment of persons suffering injury or illness. All staff are trained in First Aid. It is the responsibility of the parent, staff member or visitor attending the Centre to inform the Director of any high risk illness (such as epilepsy, asthma, anaphylaxis or diabetes) that will need an individual Action Plan implemented and must be left on the premises in case of an emergency. (refer to this Policy)

## Medication

Administering medication to children at the request of the parents is a task that requires attention to detail, meticulous record keeping, team work and common sense. It is a responsibility that is taken seriously for obvious reasons. The Centre strongly advocates that whenever possible, medication should be administered at home. If your child requires medicine whilst attending the Centre, parents must fill out a medication form supplied to you by the Director. This form is valid for **1 DAY ONLY**. All medicines are kept in the kitchen, locked in the safety box inside the fridge or locked in the First Aid cupboard. **Under NO circumstances should medicine be left in a child's bag.** This action could prove to be FATAL. All medicines should be given to the Director. Wherever possible, all medication will be consistently administered by a designated staff member who will check the medication form continually throughout the day, and will sign and have witnessed by another staff member all entries on the form when the medicine is administered. If a child attending the Centre suffers from a medical condition that may require First Aid treatment, (e.g. severe allergies, anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or other) a signed First Aid Action Plan and required medication (inhaler, epipen etc) must be provided for storage at the Centre and updated regularly. Staff will **ONLY** give prescribed medicine if they are able to follow the doctor's guidelines, which they can see on a pharmacist's dispensing label. This will include:

\*The child's name, dosage, frequency for administration, the date of administration and the expiry date

\*If a child requires a different dosage than that recommended, the Centre would require a letter from the doctor/or pharmacist outlining the exact directions.

Staff are unable to administer other non prescribed medicines, e.g. cough/cold syrups or mixtures. However, we do encourage and welcome parents to visit the Centre and administer the medication at the time required. Alternative medicines, especially homeopathy, are supported; however, staff are unable to administer these healing tonics without written consent from a registered practitioner.

## Hygiene and Infection Control

Finger Prints Children's Centre recognises the rights of staff and children grouped together in early childhood settings to work and be cared for in a healthy safe environment. Finger Prints acknowledges that effective control and prevention of transmission of infection is based on standard and additional precautions. Children grouped together for care and education are at greater risk of acquiring infection than in family settings, therefore all staff members observe strict health and hygiene practices, as recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council. These standards are maintained to minimise health risks to children and staff in our Centre. (refer to this Policy)

## Food and Nutrition

Physical activity, combined with a nutritious, balanced food intake, contributes to a child's health, wellbeing and self-esteem. Children are growing rapidly, developing new skills and learning every day. At this stage of life, their need for good nutrition is essential. (refer to Food and Nutrition and Dental Hygiene Policies)

### Food to bring

We aim to have a minimum impact on our environment. Lunches that come in pre-packaged containers create a larger amount of unnecessary waste. Wherever possible, please do not use pre-packaged foods in the children's lunch tins. We strongly encourage healthy eating. **Any food or drinks that are unsuitable will be sent home.** You may purchase a lunch pail from the camping shop and decorate it so that your child can easily identify their own.

**Morning Tea** - 2 pieces of fruit

**Lunches** should be made up of fresh fruit, salads, wholemeal grains, pasta or any other healthy fresh whole foods. We encourage homemade foods and discourage foods high in processed sugar, artificial preservatives / colours or foods containing chocolate. Foods high in fat and sugar, such as Nutella, lollies, chocolates, chips and processed food products should not be packed in your child's lunch.

**Perishable Food** -At Finger Prints we only have a limited refrigeration capacity and we ask parents to be aware of this when packing your child's daily food. Perishables can be placed in the "Fridge Basket" upon arrival. These need to be in a separate paper bag clearly labelled with your Child's name.

**We ask that you please inform a Staff member when you place an item in the basket so that it can be attended to promptly for food safety precautions.**

**Afternoon Tea** -A separate labelled paper bag filled with some non perishable afternoon tea must be provided and placed in the afternoon tea basket on arrival. *Please be aware that we may have children attending our Centre with a nut and/or egg allergy.*

Water is provided for the children to drink, however a **drink bottle with a lid** is needed for afternoon tea. Please do not send juice or cordial.

A daily record of your child's eating habits will be recorded and available for you (Daily Diary). This will be brief and in a table format of - all/most/little. We do not return perishable foods back into lunch tins due to food safety issues. You will be notified if any changes occur in your child's eating habits.

**At Fingerprints Children's Centre we do not provide meals or reheat foods due to time and space practicality, food safety temperatures and precautions. We advise parents of this upon enrolment and ask that they pack accordingly. Lunch box suggestions are displayed in the room.**

**It is the responsibility of the parent upon enrolment to provide details of their child's special dietary needs and supply foods that are appropriate and accommodate these needs.**

Further information for parents and staff, is available from the parent borrowing library, parent evenings and in the Parent Information Folder (located in the foyer). Please also refer to our Food Safety Policy.

## Toileting Policy

At Finger Prints, children should be able to toilet independently before commencing their enrolment. There is a provision for nappy changing; however this was installed specifically for including children with additional needs. Centre staff will encourage children to become responsible for their own toileting needs and will endeavour to support parents, and make this a positive and pleasant experience for the child/ren.

**Parents are to supply several changes of clothing for the child to accommodate for any occasional accidents.** (refer to this Policy) **Children's soiled items are not washed at the Centre to prevent Cross Infection.** (refer to Soiled Items Procedure)

## Safety

### Arrival and Departure of Children

To ensure the safety of children during the transition to and from the Centre, the following strict guidelines must be adhered to:

- Each child must be brought to and from the Centre by a responsible adult over the age of 18years.
- On daily arrival and departure, parents must record details in the sign-in/out sheet (located in the foyer), i.e. arrival and departure times, parent's full name and signature.
- Parents are not able to leave children in the care of a staff member until after 7.30am.
- Parents are to deliver each child to a staff member. Staff must be aware in the event of an emergency, such as a fire, the exact number of children who are at the Centre at all times.
- Medications need to be written up on a medication form on arrival by parents (obtained from a staff member). These are valid for 1 day only.
- On departure please ensure that a staff member on duty knows that your child is leaving.
- No child will be permitted to leave the Centre with a person other than the parent unless prior arrangements have been made with the Director and written authorisation has been given by the parent. Details of this person must be documented on the child's enrolment form for reference.
- Any person collecting a child, who is not known to staff, will be asked to show identification.
- Staff are not permitted to bring children to or from the Centre unless permission in writing from the parent is given to the Director.
- On departure, parents must check with staff if there are any incident reports or other messages regarding your child.
- Staff will display information on each child's day. This can be viewed via the Daily Dairy located near the sign in sheet in the foyer.
- All children must be collected by 4.30pm. If failure from a parent/caregiver to pick up a child by this time occurs, legal procedures are in place. (refer to Centre Emergency Procedures Policy)

### Supervision

To ensure children are supervised in a safe, secure and learning environment, careful supervision is the most important responsibility of staff and is vital in ensuring the safety of all children at all times. It is the Director's responsibility to utilise staff effectively to provide safe supervision of the whole group at all times. Many accidents and physical confrontations can be avoided by careful supervision and by taking action BEFORE the mishap occurs. This means being constantly aware of what the children are doing and being able to anticipate what they are likely to do next. **It is the parent's responsibility to supervise siblings when at the Centre.** (refer to this Policy)

### Injuries /Accidents

All incidents/accidents, or emergencies that occur to children, staff or visitors are to be reported on the services accident/incident form. Parents must sign the form when they collect their child. Parents of an injured child will be notified at the discretion of the Director. Any head injuries are to be treated as serious, and vital signs will be checked. Parents will be informed immediately. Should the child or staff member require medical attention/treatment, staff will follow the appropriate First Aid and Centre procedures and the Licensee will be notified. (refer to this Policy)

### Child Protection

"Child Protection" refers to keeping children safe from harm. Child abuse is the misuse of power by adults over children that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. Finger Prints Children's Centre is committed to protecting each child and to developing and maintaining a child safe environment. All staff have an overarching duty to ensure that a duty of care is maintained and that children are not exposed to any risk of harm whatsoever. All staff are trained in 'Child Protection' by an authorised training organisation. (refer to Centre Child Protection Policy) **The Centre is open to referrals from support agencies and works with them to develop programs for children with protection needs.**

## Workplace Health and Safety

All staff have regular recognised training in Workplace Health and Safety procedures and adhere to Centre procedures and personal responsibilities regarding the safety of themselves, others and the children attending Finger Prints. (refer to this Policy)

Staff must identify hazards and perform risk assessments concerning the Centre and its equipment to provide a safe environment for all children at all times. (refer to Centre OHS, Protective Care and Safety Policies)

## Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

Finger Prints has appropriate security and emergency procedures to ensure the health and safety of children, staff and families. Emergencies can occur in spite of the best preventative planning and the Centre must have in place the expected course of action for staff and children. Evacuation plans are posted near all exits in the Centre and staff are trained in all evacuation procedures. Staff regularly perform fire drills with the children in case of an emergency. (refer to this Policy)

## Publicity and Photography

At Finger Prints, your child will receive a portfolio of their achievements, observations and many photographs that are taken throughout the year. However, many photos are taken as group observations and have other children who attend Finger Prints, pictured in the photo. For privacy and respectful reasons, your authorisation is needed to allow your child's photo to appear in group observations which will be in other children's portfolios, Centre displays and also our daily diary book. All parents are asked to sign a permission form for internal photo use only (on enrolment form).

In the event of any media coverage of the Centre, only the Licensee is authorised to deal with the media. No person is to take photos/video of the Centre internally or externally without the formal permission of Licensee. If there is a need for photographs to be used outside the service, the Director/Licensee will have a parent/guardian complete a relevant permission form. This form will provide the parent with clear knowledge and understanding regarding the purpose, use and format of the picture being taken.

## Privacy Policy

Finger Prints must collect personal information by lawful, fair and unobtrusive means and will use and/or disclose this information only for its original collected purpose, unless consented otherwise. All information is stored in a secure and confidential way, and is managed in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Finger Prints is committed to protecting privacy and abides by the National Privacy Principles contained within the Privacy Act. Privacy of families/individuals personal information is important to us and staff maintain respect and integrity in daily operation.

All enrolments and personal details are stored in a locked filing cabinet. Information given to staff in confidence will be kept confidential and any enquiries by an unauthorised person regarding the attendance or non-attendance of a child at this Centre will be neither confirmed nor denied.

Welcome again, and we strongly hope that enjoy your time at Finger Prints. If you have any questions that have not been answered in this handbook, please do not hesitate to call the Centre Staff, and they will be more than happy to assist you.