



FAMILY HANDBOOK FOR CSCM SERVICES



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT LIMITED

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Welcome

CSCM's history

Children's Services Community Management (CSCM) is a not-for-profit organisation established to promote, support and advocate for quality education and care services to meet the needs of children, families, and the community.

CSCM was established in 2008 with the specific objective of assisting individual services in maintaining community ownership, increasing the level of professionalism, and improving the effectiveness and performance of community-based child care operations.

Our philosophies

Our service philosophies are living documents that reflect the knowledge, beliefs and values of our early childhood educators, children, families, and the wider community. Each service has unique characteristics and cultures which provide the rich context for their individual philosophy, curriculum, programs, and ways of being.

The best interest of children is our primary consideration when referencing and reflecting on our educational programs. We acknowledge that the rights of the child are to be upheld in our daily practice, routines, experiences, and events. This includes evaluating daily practice, the timing of routines, the development of programs and the organisation of staff.

We acknowledge that children are competent and capable within their own right, and come to us with knowledge, skills, and unique ways of being. We advocate that all children have abilities and knowledge to make valuable contributions to society.

Our learning environments reflect a holistic approach to learning and provide endless opportunities and possibilities that support children's wellbeing and education.

Our play spaces are arranged to empower and support children to actively engage in co-constructing their journey of learning. Our environments reflect a respect and an appreciation for the importance of sustainability.

Our partnerships with communities strengthen the capacity to support children and families and show respect for cultural diversity. We acknowledge that children belong first to a family. CSCM advocates for the development of respectful partnerships that rely upon trust, ethical behaviour, and social justice. We are committed to building positive and meaningful relationships with all members of our community. These relationships are nurtured through open communication based on the principals of engagement, respect, honesty, and a commitment to working towards shared goals with families.



We strive to provide access to affordable quality early education and care services that reflect local community culture. All of our services are financially self-sustaining with any surplus reinvested back into the service.

Our curriculum is a collaborative venture, negotiated with children and families, and developed by qualified early childhood educators. We strive for excellence and leadership through delivery of quality education and care services which are innovative and responsive to diverse family and community needs.

Current research and theory informs our early childhood curriculum. We recognise the value and richness of children's play as a catalyst for their learning. The *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *National Quality Framework* guide the planning process in our services. Staff, children, and families discuss, reflect on, and evaluate the curriculum as it unfolds throughout the year. Infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children will be provided with programs that empower, inspire, and encourage them to further develop their knowledge and skills.

As educators we are committed to critical reflection, evaluation and regularly assess the appropriateness of our curriculum and our daily practice. We strive to ensure true inclusion, authentic and meaningful experiences.

CSCM believes that continuous professional development is essential for providing quality early childhood education. Research demonstrates that quality teaching practice is one of the most significant influences on children's learning. CSCM believes professional development is a vital component in enhancing the quality of teaching practice and encourages educators to participate in regular workshops and training.

CSCM strives to be a recognised leader in the provision of quality community-based education and care.



Ensuring quality

Provider approval

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACEQA) is the national body ensuring high quality early childhood education and care across Australia. ACEQA has a national focus and works with the sector and regulatory authorities in each state.

All education and care services in NSW are required to be approved by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) under *The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

Policies and procedures

CSCM has policies and procedures for almost everything that happens in our services. This is required as a condition of our provider approval by the State Government and is designed to ensure that children receive consistent, quality early education and care.

A copy of all service policies and procedures and a copy of the service Quality Improvement Plan is readily available for parents viewing at any time. These documents are usually located in the service foyer/entry or on the sign in counter. We also invite your feedback on these policies and procedures at any time.

Please feel free to discuss them with your service Director.

National Quality Framework

The *National Quality Framework* aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

- a national legislative framework
- a National Quality Standard
- a national quality rating and assessment process
- a national body called the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

National Quality Standard

The *National Quality Standard* sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. The *National Quality Standard* is divided into seven Quality Areas:

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

National quality rating and assessment process

Approved services will be assessed and rated against each of the seven Quality Areas of the *National Quality Standard* and the *National Regulations*. They will also be given an overall rating. The rating and assessment process aims to drive continuous quality improvement at services and provide families with better information for making choices about their children's education and care.

Educational programs and practice

The following is an excerpt from *Belonging, Being & Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

“A vision for children’s learning”

All children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

Fundamental to the Framework is a view of children's lives as characterised by belonging, being and becoming. From before birth children are connected to family, community, culture and place. The earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.

Belonging

Experiencing belonging – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood, and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

Being

Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world.

“If you want to be a mermaid you can imagine.” – Jazmine

Being recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present.

Becoming

Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. Becoming reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

“When you can keep planting plants you become a gardener.” – Olivia



The importance of play

CSCM believes in the importance of play for children's learning and development. Through play, babies and young children explore and learn to understand the world around them as they come to communicate, discover, imagine, and create. When children play, they are showing what they have learned and what they are trying to understand. This is why play is one of the most important things children will do at our centre. When children play, they approach experiences with interest and empowerment. Educators observe this, reflect on what they have seen, and then make curriculum decisions that will further support and extend children's strengths, needs and learning interests.

Curriculum theory and practice

A curriculum in early childhood programs is everything that happens in a day: greetings and farewells, routines, and daily experiences, play and relationships. The rights of the child, social justice and equity, democracy, respectful relationships, and play are the foundation of our curriculum. We require a curriculum for infants, toddlers and preschool aged children which reflects the unique characteristics and interests of children, the community, and the diversity of cultures within this community.

The goals of the curriculum are to empower children and enable them to consider what is just and unjust and to be empowered to address these issues, to have empathy and respect for another and to accept diversity and to grow with a lifelong desire for learning.

The Australian Government's *Early Learning Years Framework - Belonging, Being and Becoming* describes the principles, practice, and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.

Documenting your child's learning

Documenting children's learning is a powerful tool for viewing the learning process and assessing children's outcomes as per our guidelines in the National Curriculum (EYLF) and the *National Quality Standards*. By making learning visible it immediately becomes a shared communication tool between educators, children, and families. Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities, and interests are the foundation for the program. Educators are responsive to all children's strengths, abilities, and interests. They value and build on these to ensure each child's ongoing motivation, engagement, and learning. They respond to children's expertise, cultural traditions and ways of knowing, the languages spoken by children, with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and the strategies used by children with additional needs to negotiate their everyday lives (EYLF: 2009).

'The learning might appear spontaneous
but it's highly intentional'.

(ECA, 2012)



Individual Portfolios

A detailed portfolio gives children, educators, and families an opportunity to revisit learning. Your child's portfolio is confidential and is available at the service for your perusal. Educators assess all children against the five learning outcomes (EYLF), including their emerging literacy and numeracy skills.

1. Children have a strong sense of Identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

We encourage your input into your child's learning to enhance a collaborative approach to your child's development. Any concerns about your child can be discussed at a confidential meeting with the Director and educator at the service, as well as through less formal, ongoing conversations. A summary of development will be collated at the end of year for children leaving the service for school. This will be done as part of the transition to school program. In addition to detailed observations, your portfolios may also include photos, artworks or any learning stories that provide insight into your child's experience at the service.

Daily journal

Educators complete a daily day book. This is either on an electronic slide show or printed/ written in a book. The day book represents 'a snapshot of the day' or the most significant events for that day. Not every child is photographed or written about each day in the journal. The daily journal is about documenting quality observations, not quantity and may often focus on group interests and activities. More detailed observations can be found in your child's individual portfolio.

Reflective practice

As educators we are committed to critical reflection and evaluation and will regularly assess the appropriateness of the curriculum and our daily practice. We strive to ensure true inclusion, authentic and meaningful experiences and worthwhile interactions. Reflective practice is used to make informed curriculum decisions to improve the outcomes for children. Daily reflections both as individuals and in groups is used as the primary source of planning and are used to influence and guide the daily program.

Positive behaviour guidance

Positive behaviour guidance contributes to a healthy self-esteem and allows children to feel capable and competent, learn to express their feelings appropriately and develop effective problem-solving skills. A positive guidance approach to dealing with behaviours is always empowering and respectful to the child.

Guidance helps the child to learn to direct his or her own behaviour so that it is eventually based on self-control and the understanding of other people's needs, rights and feelings. At CSCM we encourage children and educators to:

- accept responsibility, demonstrate respect for each other and understand the feeling and rights of others.
- resolve conflict in a peaceful way and to use their language skills when doing so.
- use self-regulation and negotiation strategies through cooperative play experiences.

Families are consulted about any issues or concerns regarding their child's behaviour. Family input is sought for a solution in guiding these.

Our *Positive Guidance of Children's Behaviour Policy* has been developed to ensure a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour, and an environment that is consistent, supportive and safe for all. All educators are required to always follow this policy. A copy of this can be found in the centre Policy Folder.

Children's health and safety

Child protection policy

CSCM has an extensive child protection policy in place where:

- children receive such care and protection as is necessary for their safety, welfare and well-being.
- children are free of violence and exploitation.
- children's health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect, and dignity are fostered.

All CSCM employees must ensure that all children in their care are safe whilst in attendance.

All early childhood educators will be offered regular training on legislation, best practice, risk management, child protection, child safe standards, curriculum and Workplace Health and Safety.

Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct

The *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* imposes an obligation on people who work in children's services to report any child who is 'at risk of significant harm'. If a person working in a children's service has 'reasonable grounds' to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, and the reasonable grounds have arisen during the course of work at the children's services, that person must report the child's name and the details of the concerns to Community Services as soon as practicable. Reporting children at risk of significant harm is mandatory for staff at children's services, and it is a criminal offence to fail to make a report.

Guidance on making a child protection report is available from the *Child Wellbeing & Child Protection – NSW Interagency Guidelines*. <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

Your child's health is our priority.

CSCM has a range of policies in place to ensure we control the spread of infectious diseases at the centre. These policies allow us to manage illness and other conditions to ensure the safety of all children in our education and care services. Your service Policy folder can be found in the reception area.

When your child should not attend the centre

CSCM wants to ensure our services are as healthy as possible for the children, educators, and our families. We work hard at infection control in all our services.

Any place where there are lots of children is prone to be a place where infections and communicable diseases spread more easily, so there are some times when your child should not attend the service.

We know that when you are working it is often hard to take time off to care for a sick child, but if your child is sick s/he runs the risk of spreading their illness to others.

Excluding sick children and staff is one of the most important ways of limiting the spread of infection in our service. CSCM follows the *National Health and Medical Research Council's* standard. Please remember that we have this policy in place to prevent illness in your child. A full copy of the policy is available in the policy folder.

When your child has symptoms or a medical diagnosis that matches a condition with an exclusion period, s/he is not allowed to attend the centre until the exclusion period has passed.

- Children with contagious illnesses will not be allowed at the service.
- Parents must contact the service to report contagious illness.
- Vomiting and diarrhoea – If your child is suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea s/he must be kept at home for 24 hours from completion of the attack. This may be increased to 48 hours at the direction of local health authorities in the case of an outbreak.
- Conjunctivitis – Children must be kept away from the service from the time medical treatment commences and until the discharge has stopped and eyes are clear.
- Colds - If symptoms are present such as persistent runny nose, thick and/or coloured discharge, fever, or persistent cough they should be kept at home until they are symptom free and well enough to cope with a normal day.
- Clearance letters – may be required if in doubt of the child's health. It is our requirement to seek a professional doctor's opinion.
- Ultimately, it is at the Director's discretion to exclude a child from attending due to illness.

Illness

If your child becomes ill while s/he is in care we will:

- Notify you as soon as possible.
- Closely supervise your child until you can come and collect him/her.
- If the child has a fever above 38.5 degrees (38.0 degrees for infants) and is in acute discomfort or pain we will request your permission to administer paracetamol. If we cannot contact you and you have signed the paracetamol permission slip on the enrolment form, we will administer paracetamol.
- If your child is sent home with a temperature of 38.5 degrees (38.0 degrees for infants), you will be required to keep them away from the service for at least 24 hours after the temperature ceases.
- A child who is ill is generally not happy at child care so we will always call you and request you come and get your child if s/he is sick.
- If your child is unwell, please keep them at home where s/he can receive the one-to-one care and attention s/he needs.

Medication

Sometimes your child will need to take medication while s/he is at the service. Whenever you require us to administer medicine to your child it is done in a safe and supervised manner, following a strict procedure. Whether your child is on long term medication or a short course of antibiotics the procedures are the same:

- Children are not permitted to attend the centre within 24 hours of starting a course of antibiotics.
- Medications must have your child's name clearly marked by a chemist label on it along with any measuring devices, serum, nebulizers etc.

- No medicines will be administered without parental permission given in writing.
- The medicine must be handed to one of your child's educators for safe keeping and a medication form completed.
- Medicines to be administered need to be in their original containers.
- We will only give medication to the child to whom it has been prescribed, from a container bearing a pharmacy label showing the child's name and a current use by date.
- These rules apply even when the medication is homeopathic or over the counter medications (eg. teething gels, Panadol, creams etc). These will only be administered when accompanied by a letter with written instructions and dosage from a health professional.

Accident and Injuries

We aim to ensure that your child is always safe, but as a parent you will know that sometimes accidents happen. If your child has a minor accident at the service, we will apply first aid and complete an accident report form, which you will be asked to sign when you pick up your child.

If the accident is more serious, we will follow procedures as outlined in our *Accident and Emergency Policy*. You will be called as soon as possible.

Immunisation

All families who apply for Child Care Subsidy will need to disclose the immunisation status of their child to Family Assistance Office. The most effective method of preventing certain infections is immunisation. Immunisation protects the person who has been immunised, children who are too young to be vaccinated, and other people who have been vaccinated but did not respond to the vaccine.

Under Commonwealth Government requirements, CSCM must ask all families to provide a copy of their child's immunisation records from the Medicare Immunisation Register. If your child has not been immunised, we are not able to enrol them.

Emergency procedure and contact details

In case your child has an accident or falls ill at the centre, it is vitally important that we always have up-to-date contact details for you and any other emergency contacts. When you enrol you are asked to fill out an emergency contact details in the enrolment form. You can help us by remembering to update this if your details change at any time.



Food and meals

Meals provided – Long day care centres.

In our long day care services meals are provided by experienced cook. This includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Meals are designed to fit the National Health and Medical Research Council's dietary requirements guide for young children. Meals are prepared safely and in culturally appropriate ways. A copy of the menu is available at the service. If your child has additional requirements or allergies, please see the service Director.

Meals Preschools

If your child attends a CSCM preschool, you are required to bring your child's lunch. This should include healthy eating options. Meals will be stored in a fridge at the pre-school. Please pack morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea snack, clearly labelled with your child's name. As part of our sustainability policies, we encourage reducing plastics in the packaging, so containers are preferred. A water bottle is also required. Please see your preschool Director for further information or lunch box ideas. If your child has allergies or additional requirements, please see the service Director.

Our services abide by the guidelines in 'Munch and Move' A NSW health initiative.

Some of the guidelines that we support are:

- Eat fewer snacks and select healthier options
- Get active everyday
- Choose water as a drink
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Turn off the TV and computer and get active
- Promoting breastfeeding

Children with additional health needs

If your child has a special health need such as allergies, food intolerances, asthma, or diabetes, please tell us upon enrolment. We may require you to help devise a plan for managing the condition while your child is at the service. For children with severe conditions, your doctor will be asked to assist with the development of the health plan, so that we can provide the best possible education and care.

Smoking

Smoking/ vaping is not allowed on CSCM premises.

Health risks linked with passive smoking

Passive smoking dramatically increases health risks for babies, children and teenagers. Studies show that children exposed to second-hand smoke are at an increased risk of premature death and disease and are more likely to have thickening, irritation and inflammation of their airways.

Second-hand smoke can impair a baby's breathing and heart rate, which can put her/him at a higher risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). If children are exposed to second-hand smoke, they're more likely to develop a range of lung and other health problems, including:

- asthma
- bronchiolitis
- bronchitis
- childhood cancers, including meningococcal disease leukaemia
- pneumonia
- croup
- tonsillitis
- ear infections
- impaired sense of smell
- meningitis

Workplace health and safety

The safety of your child is paramount. Educators are required to conduct routine checks to ensure the safety of building, grounds, and equipment daily.

All chemicals are correctly labelled and stored safely out of the reach of children. Professional cleaners are employed to ensure the services are cleaned on a daily basis.

To ensure the safety of your child we ask that any dangerous substances including medication not be left in your child's bag. If you find a WHS issue at the service, please report to the Director who will rectify the issue.

Rest, relaxation and sleep times.

Opportunities for sleep, rest and/or relaxation are offered in all our education and care services. Younger children have individual cots in a supervised and peaceful cot room. Older children may rest on stretcher beds. CSCM believes it is important to accommodate each child's individual sleep and relaxations routine. This is done in consultation with the families depending on the age/stage of the child.

Excursions and visitors

Throughout the year excursions and incursions are held at our education and care services so that children can engage in their local community. Excursions and incursions are based on children's current projects/interests at the service. When these events are planned, you will receive communication via a note or email. It is a requirement that detailed permission forms are completed prior to the excursion. Some excursions and/or incursions may attract a small additional fee.

Children's clothing and shoes

It is important for children at the service to feel comfortable and be able to move freely while also being protected from various weather conditions.

Children should be dressed in clothing that is comfortable, comfortable footwear that fits and provides adequate support for energetic activities (not thongs), and clothing that is appropriate for the weather conditions. We ask you to provide your child with:

In warm weather:

- A broad brimmed sunhat that protects the face, neck and ears;
- Clothing that protects the shoulders from the hot sun. Tank tops and strappy dresses are not sun safe clothing; and
- Protective shoes e.g. sneakers, sandals.

In cool weather:

- A warm coat;
- A warm woolly hat; and
- Solid enclosed shoes. You may also send gumboots for wet weather play but these are not suitable for general play and climbing.

Children should wear clothing that allows them to participate freely in messy activities, playing outdoors or the general rumble-tumble of childcare.

Sun protection

Children and adults are vulnerable to sunburn and skin damage from exposure to the sun. All CSCM services follow *Cancer Council Guidelines*.

Children are expected to do the following:

- Children under 12 months will not be exposed to direct sunlight. Exposed areas will be treated with a sunscreen suitable for children under 12 months.
- Wear hats that protect the face, neck, ears and crown of the head at all times when outdoors. These include a legionnaire's hat or a hat with a brim of no less than 5cm.
- Wear clothing that protects as much of the shoulders, back and chest as possible when outdoors.
- Sunscreen will be applied before each outdoor period.
- Schedule outdoor activities wherever possible before and after peak UV times. From October to March before 11am and after 3 pm. From April to September outdoor activity may take place at any time during the day.
- When catering to children's needs and interests requires outdoor activities during peak sun times, staff will ensure that children remain in the shade and continue to use sun protection.

More information on sun protection can be found at: www.sunsmartnsw.com.au

Pets at our service

CSCM education and care services may have small pets so that children can learn about the life cycles, enjoy their company and learn lessons of responsibility in caring for other creatures. Children love to care for the animals. We may ask from time to time that families assist by looking after our pets on the weekend or during school holidays. This may include coming to the service to feed the chickens, guinea pigs, birds, or fish, or occasionally taking these animals home for short periods.

Physical environments

Environments – Building a sustainable future for our children

At CSCM we offer environments that:

- are inclusive, promote competence, independent exploration and learning through play;
- have resources that convey and reflect respect for children and their play and learning;
- reflect beauty and aesthetics where natural resources and materials are inspirational as well as functional;
- represent the local community culture and the lives lived beyond the service;
- are open to many possibilities, and incorporate children's choices and ideas;
- support the learning program;
- contribute to a sustainable future; and
- Embed sustainability practices that support children to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

Children are expected to respect the equipment and look after the environment both indoors and outdoors. This is modelled by the educators. Children are encouraged as part of the daily routine to complete activities and pack away as the day progresses.



Staffing arrangements

Qualifications

CSCM aims to employ qualified Directors/Nominated Supervisors who have a three- or four-year teaching degree. They must also have leadership skills and curriculum knowledge to guide and mentor the team in all areas of the *National Quality Framework* and the *Early Years Learning Framework*. CSCM Directors ensure high quality practices are embedded into the education and care for all children.

- Teaching staff have as a minimum an undergraduate degree from a University.
- Diploma qualified educators have a Diploma in Children's Services studies granted by a TAFE college or Registered Training Organisation.
- Other educators either have a Certificate III in Children's Services studies (or are working towards Certificate III) as well as practical experience in working with children in education and care services. Support staff may have a range of qualifications suited to their position

CSCM aims to employ educators with higher qualifications than required under the regulations because research has proven that the more qualified the educators at a service are, the better quality education and care the children will receive.

Nominated Supervisor

The Nominated Supervisor is the person with responsibility for the day-to-day management of an approved service. The National Law requires that approved providers must not operate a service without a Nominated Supervisor for that service. In the absence of a Nominated Supervisor a Responsible Person will need to consent to filling the Nominated Supervisor role. In most cases the Nominated Supervisor will be your service Director.

There is no maximum number of Nominated supervisors per service. An Approved Provider should assess how many staff may need to be a Nominated Supervisor based on the service's unique operational needs.

Responsible Person

In the absence of the Nominated Supervisor a Responsible Person will be placed in charge of the service. A responsible Person will be a staff member who has an appropriate qualification and knowledge to fulfil this role.

Educational Leader

The role of the Educational Leader is to lead the development and implementation of the educational program (or curriculum) in the centre. The National Regulations require the Approved Provider to appoint the Educational Leader in writing and note this designation in the staff record of the service.

The Educational Leader at the service will guide, mentor, and support the staff with curriculum knowledge and research.

Students/Volunteers/Visitors

CSCM believes it is important that those studying early education and care should be able to access appropriate services in which to undertake practicums. For this reason, educators will be required to provide appropriate supervision for students when they are doing a placement within the service. Students as well as volunteers are constantly supervised during their placement and are not permitted to be alone with the children. If a student is required to take observations of the children express written permission from parents or guardians will be sought.

Staff ratios

The ratio of educators to children is one of the other factors that determine the quality of an education and care service. CSCM aims where possible to staff our services at above required ratios.

First Aid

CSCM requires all educators to have a current first aid certificate. Asthma and anaphylaxis training is also required.

Working with Children Checks

All educators including students and volunteers are required to obtain a *Working with Children Check* prior to employment. The *Working with Children Check* is a pre-employment check. It is a condition of employment, and a legislative requirement, that all employees hold and maintain a current *Working with Children* clearance.

- There can only be two results for a new *Working with Children Check* – a clearance or a bar. People with a bar may not work or volunteer in child care related roles.
- Should an employee cease to hold a *Working with Children Check* at any stage, their employment will be terminated immediately.

ECA Code of Ethics

All staff employed by CSCM abide by Early Childhood Australia's *Code of Ethics* which provides a framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals.

Code of Conduct

CSCM considers bullying and harassment as unacceptable behaviour that will not be tolerated by educators, parents or any other person within the services. Workplace bullying includes behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates a person. CSCM has grievance procedures to deal with such behaviour. Any reports of workplace bullying will be treated seriously and investigated promptly and confidentially.

Relationships with children

Children's rights

CSCM is strongly committed to upholding the "The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child".

This affirms that all children are entitled to:

- the enjoyment of the rights mentioned below, without any exception whatsoever, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion or nationality;
- special protection, opportunities and facilities to enable them to develop in a healthy and normal manner, in freedom and dignity;
- a name and nationality;
- social security; including adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services;
- special treatment, education and care if handicapped;
- love and understanding and an atmosphere of affection and security, in the care and under the responsibility of their parents whenever possible;
- free education and recreation and equal opportunity to develop their individual abilities;
- prompt protection and relief in times of disaster;
- protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation; and
- protection from any form of racial, religious or other discrimination, and an upbringing in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.

CSCM expects our educators and families to uphold these rights.



Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

The importance of parent and community partnerships

Having families involved in our services builds a sense of community and ownership that allows educators and families to work in partnership to provide high quality care and education for children. Effective collaboration regarding the education and care of your child is invaluable.

We encourage families to be a part of the everyday routine by spending time at the service. This can be at arrival and departure times, by visiting the centre and engaging with children's activities, or working on special projects with your child.

Families are invited to assist with service working bees from time to time. These events help maintain the service equipment and environment. Family evenings and events are held within our services to support and encourage families to develop friendships in the local community.

CSCM services invite parents to share any changes or issue that may impact on the child's day with the Director and their child's educators.

Communication

CSCM believes strong communication is the key to positive relationships. We provide many opportunities for not only in your involvement at the service but other forms of communication may include:

- Regular email correspondence
- Daily feedback
- Daily journal
- Newsletters
- 1:1 meetings
- Social events
- Annual surveys
- Feedback forms
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Your feedback is always welcomed and encouraged.

Fundraising

There may be times when fundraising is organised at the service. To support our partnerships with families and the wider community, we ask families to participate where possible.

Arrival and departure

Settling a child into a service takes time, care and consistency from both educators and families. Having predictable routines at arrival and departure times assists children to build confidence in their separation skills. We ask that you follow some important procedures during these times:

- Parent/guardians must accompany their child/ren into the service.
- Parent/guardians take their child to the appropriate room and must ensure that an educator is made aware of their arrival.

- An attendance record will be provided for each of the children's rooms. For centres with electronic sign in parents will sign their children in on arrival using the IPAD and will also sign them out on departure. For our services using paper sign in/out, parent/guardians are required to complete the child's name, time of arrival or departure and their signature.
- If your child requires any medication, ensure that this is handed directly to a staff member together with a signed medication consent form.
- Please say goodbye to your child before leaving the service.
- If it is intended that a person other than the one who has signed the child into the service will be collecting your child, it is essential that educators are informed.
- If there are changes to collection during the day, please inform the service Director as soon as possible.
- If your child is going to be absent, please contact the service by 9am.

Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety occurs when children feel distress about being away from their parents or other close carers. Separation anxiety is normal. Most children will experience it when placed in the care of others. For parents, their child's separation anxiety can be the most difficult part about going back to work. CSCM educators are here to help. Our team of educators will concentrate on forming relationships with each child and making routines and transitions as smooth and consistent as possible. Communication between parent, child and educators is critical in helping children and parents adjust to this new arrangement. Some other tips to assist are:

- Positive conversations with your child about their new teachers and the service prior to each visit will help them prepare for the day.
- If you have the time, spending a few minutes reading a book and/or playing at an activity creates a positive experience for your child.
- Always let educators know about your child's night and morning.
- When you leave please inform an educator – we can support your child if s/he is feeling anxious. Saying goodbye is sometimes easier with a "hand to hold".
- Please resist the temptation to 'sneak away' – this only creates further anxiety for your child and educators.
- Let your child know that you will be back.
- When you are ready to leave, it's important that you do so without too much hesitation.
- Children will develop a sense of security if routines are consistent.

Leadership and service management

Enrolments and fees

Priority of Access – Long Day Care

Under State and Commonwealth government funding agreements, we are required to follow priority of access guidelines for Child Care Services:

If there are more families requiring care than places available at our services we must fill them according to the following priorities:

- Priority 1: a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2: a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test
- Priority 3: any other child.

Priority of Access – Preschool

Preschool Services are required to give equal priority of access to:

- children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school
- children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July in that preschool year and from low income and/or Aboriginal families
- children with English language needs
- children with disability and additional needs
- children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective).

There is no order of priority assigned to the list of points above. Priority must be given to the groups outlined above before any other groups, including non-equity three year olds.

Fees

Security Bond

After your position has been offered a security bond is payable to the service. No offer of placement will be deemed accepted by the service until the bond is paid. Should the family choose not to start care after the bond is paid then money will not be refunded.

The security bond is held by the service until the child ceases care. At this time, the bond will be either credited to the family's general account or refunded. In the case of non-payment of fees, or lack of 2 weeks notice, the security bond will be forfeited to cover the debt or costs incurred. Two weeks' notice is required to end care.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

If your child is enrolled at a long day care service you may be entitled to Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This does not apply to preschools. CCS is available to all families who meet the eligibility set out by the Family Assistance Office. CCS is a payment to assist with the cost of fees for long day care education and care services. Many families are entitled to a reduction in fees through the CCS system. Under this system families CCS is paid directly

to the approved service, reducing your fees. Please ensure to put your family customer reference number (CRN) from the Family Assistance Office and your child's CRN on your enrolment form so the service can link you to the government's Child Care Management System. Families will be required to pay full fees until they are registered with Centrelink and we have received notification of your CCS entitlement. It is always best to set up your CCS prior to enrolling.

Payment of fees and overdue accounts

CSCM services are cashless. Fees must be paid two weeks in advance by BPay or direct debit from your bank account. If you wish to pay by direct debit we will ask you to log into your Hub Works account and enter your account or card details. You then need to contact the centre Director and to have them set up the frequency of payments (weekly, fortnightly or monthly), the amount you wish to pay and what day/date you want your debit to commence. Any alterations needing to be made to Direct Debits must be provided in writing to the Centre Director.

As accounts are required to be two weeks in advance if your account does go into arrears, the following procedures apply:

- You will receive a friendly reminder that fees are in arrears. You need to respond to this immediately. Payment options may be discussed with the Centre Director at this stage to ensure continued enrolment.
- If no payment is received, or you do not speak with the Centre Director regarding your account, you will receive a formal overdue account notice. This notice will provide you with notice that care will be restricted if payment is not made within 14 days.
- You will receive a follow up phone call.
- If no payment is received within the 14 days, you will receive notice you're your child's enrolment is restricted immediately. You will need to speak to the Centre Director and agree to a payment plan. Failure to meet fee requirements or make a payment plan may result in your child's position being cancelled.
- In circumstances where no communication is received or payment plans are defected, accounts more than two weeks in arrears will be sent to a debt collection agency, with families being responsible for any costs incurred. This may affect your personal credit rating.

Families experiencing difficulties in paying fees should contact the Director immediately.

In our long day care services fees are payable for all absences including sickness, holidays and cancellation of booked days. Families are entitled to 42 days of allowable absences in each financial year. Once a child has reached the limit on allowable absences, full fees will apply as CCS cannot be claimed. CCS is not payable if a child is absent on their first of final booked day and full fees will apply.

Late fee charges

Due to licensing regulations, it is important to ensure all children are picked up on time and have left the premises by closing. If you know you are running late, please phone the centre to let us know. If you are late picking up your child our educators must stay back to care for your child. For child protection reasons, two staff must be always present while children are on site. We understand that occasionally parents may be unexpectedly delayed but because educators must be paid for working overtime, we maintain a strict system of charging for late collection.

If you are late to pick up your child you will need to pay the late fee of \$10 for the first 5 minutes and \$1 for every minute thereafter, charged to your account.

Signing in and out

CSCM requires each child to be signed in and out of the service by a responsible adult on each occasion they attend. On departure, this person needs to ensure they have made educators aware that they are leaving the premises and are taking their child. Families are responsible for signing each child in and out of the service upon arrival and departure on the official sign-in sheets with a full signature or using the electronic sign in device if available. This is a legal requirement by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC). Service sign-in sheets will also be used for emergency evacuation and licensing requirements.

If electronic sign in/out is available the following process needs to be followed:

- Enter your mobile phone number (this must be kept up to date in our Hub works software in order to access the sign in application)
- Enter your 4 digit pin. (this is set up on your first log in)
- Press sign in/ sign out as applicable on the screen
- Press save
- You will see an acknowledgement on the screen.
- Ensure staff are aware that your child has arrived/ is departing.

When you arrive at the service we ask that you communicate any changes of routine to educators. It is important to keep educators and the service Director up-to-date with your child's needs, such as medication, a person other than a known responsible adult picking up your child or a change in time of departure. This will assist the service to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each child.

Enrolment

Family responsibilities

For there to be an effective collaboration between CSCM services and families we require that all families adhere to our policies and procedures. This includes the obligations of adhering to our fee policy. Some further responsibilities are:

When you enrol your child at this service you should receive:

- An enrolment pack specific to your service.
- An enrolment form including details for emergency contacts.
- Current fee structure and payment details.
- ECA *Code of Ethics* brochure.
- An orientation checklist.
- Feedback form.
- Family handbook (may be emailed to you)
- Tour of the service.
- Shown where to access service policies and procedures that relate to the service operation.

You must return your completed enrolment form to the service before your child starts. For every enrolment there is a non-refundable \$25 administration fee to secure a place in the service.

- Supply a copy of your child's current immunisation's status and updates as per the schedule.

All families will be encouraged to attend orientation visits where you remain on the premises with your child. Visits will be scheduled to fit in with your family routine and allow your family and child to spend time getting to know the service, educators, other children and the daily routine.

Fees can be paid by either BPAY or Direct Debit and you will be required to pay a bond of one weeks' full fees upon enrolment.

As part of the enrolment families are required to provide the centre with:

- Current immunisation records for your child.
- Your child's Birth Certificate or Passport.
- Current contact information for parents and emergency contacts.
- Information on any additional needs your child has (including health and developmental concerns such as an allergy plan).

Following enrolment we ask that you:

- Inform the service of any changes to details, including contact numbers.
- Communicate any changes that are significant in your child's life that may have an impact of his/her development.
- Comply with the service policies including infectious disease and medication policy.
- Be aware of our arrival and departure policy and procedures including late fee.
- Sign your child in and out daily.
- Be aware of the service healthy eating guidelines when bringing in your child's lunch (preschools).

Your child's first day

- On arrival your child will be welcomed by an educator from the room you are joining.
- Your child will be provided with a personal space for bags, hats, and other belongings.
- You and your child will be invited to join the group to play, to build, to paint, to read or to just sit quietly and watch
- You will be encouraged to stay until your child is settled. However, if a child is finding it difficult to separate, educators may support and help.
- Once settled, your child should have a great day – be reassured. Families are welcome to call the service at any time to check on how your child's day is going.

Access to children and pick-ups – Court Orders

Unless a Court Order forbids us, either parent or guardian is welcome to pick up your child at any time. If a Court Order or parenting plan is in place for your child, please inform the service Director on enrolment or when they come into force.

If you will regularly need someone else in your family or a friend to pick up your child, please ensure their names are written on the enrolment form in the authorised pick up or emergency contact list.

Photographs

Photographs and or recording of your child will be taken as a method of documenting your child's participation in the program. These photographs will be used only within the service but may also be recorded in other children's portfolios. Photos may also be used for service publicity and for teaching. You will be asked to give permission for this to occur on your child's enrolment form.

Babysitting and transporting children

It is not appropriate for educators to provide out of hours babysitting services to the children in their care. CSCM's policy does not allow this in the interests of ensuring all children are treated in the same manner while on premises.

Because of insurance and regulation requirements educators are unable to transport children to or from the service.

Transporting children

In the event of emergency educators are not permitted to transport children in their own personal cars. If arranging taxi transport for your child, we ask that an adult accompanies them. Please advise the service Director and educators if your child is to use a taxi service.

Dispute avoidance and grievance procedures

CSCM believes that disputes and grievances are best managed through an open, transparent and immediate communication. The partnerships between educators and families are crucial to the high-quality education and care we provide.

We seek to ensure early resolution of complaints, grievances and appeals in an impartial manner. Treatment of all parties will be fair and dealt with promptly. All complaints will be viewed as an opportunity to learn, review practice and procedures and respond to the families' requirements.

Family feedback will be requested regularly when we review our services policies and procedures. Feedback forms are available to families from your child's education and care service. Feedback forms are for general comments, compliments and informal and formal complaints.

A straightforward complaint may be easily dealt with by telephoning the Director of the service. Should a resolution not be arrived at quickly, families should notify the CSCM Manager in writing. This can be done via email or letter. Please ensure you have provided sufficient details for your complaint to be investigated, including staff members name, dates and times when you are describing an event.

Please remember, compliments also help us know we are doing the right thing.