

Early Learning Centre



Puddleducks Early Learning Centre

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Welcome to Puddleducks

We are a privately owned, family operated early learning centre. We are committed to creating a caring and safe environment where children, families and educators work collaboratively to foster the best outcomes for your child.

Our Philosophy

Our Philosophy acts as our guiding principle. We evaluate it regularly to see that it reflects our current practice. We are always open to input on our Philosophy.

Our current Philosophy is:

“At Puddleducks we believe in providing a fun, inclusive, age appropriate, creative, active and sustainable program with a variety of choice, in a safe and caring environment.

We believe in respecting individuality whilst challenging the children's growth cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically and encouraging the development of essential life skills.”

The People at Puddleducks

Experienced Owner/Teacher/Directors Kate Hall and Kara McMillan, recognize what an important asset great staff are. Every effort is made to ensure that we employ and retain experienced educators of the highest quality.

We aim to employ a diverse range of people with a broad variety of different skills and strengths to ensure a wide range of experiences and opportunities are offered within our program to your child. All educators regularly attend internal training as well as external professional development courses in order to ensure their skills are kept current and that their understanding of best practice in early childhood is up to date.

Upon entering the service there is a staff wall with photos of educators, their names and qualifications.

Your Role as a Parent/Guardian

At Puddleducks we recognise the important role you play in your child's life as their primary caregiver and encourage you to share any insights or observations of your child with staff as this helps us build a better understanding of them as individuals and also develop open and honest lines of communication. Our centre has an 'open door policy'.

At Puddleducks we prefer the educators' time to be spent on real interactions and allowing children the freedom to be 'in the moment' and play. However, we understand as parents you like to know how your child is tracking and we are very aware of our reporting obligations within the National Quality Framework. We use several different communication methods to let you know what is happening at the centre including our online program Kinderloop where you can view the program, daily reflections, photographs and observations securely from any mobile device, our Facebook page (you can follow our Facebook page by searching 'Puddleducks Early Learning Centre'), emails and newsletters which we send by email (unless you request otherwise).

We greatly value your participation and feedback, but we understand that life can be busy so encourage you to only participate in ways that fit in with your individual schedules. If you would like to be more involved but are unsure of how to do so please don't hesitate to ask the staff.

Educational Program

At Puddleducks we support and facilitate children's learning through our thoughtfully planned programs which are based on an in depth understanding of childhood development. Children are observed on a consistent basis by their passionate educators who then program activities to further extend their development. The educational program caters for each child's individual needs by incorporating their interests, experiences, culture and community along with their developmental abilities to ensure that the program is relevant and meaningful to each child; this allows children to create a positive disposition towards learning. All children have their learning journeys documented in their online personalized Kinderloop portfolio which can be accessed via a secure log in anytime from a mobile device or computer.

While we provide a range of structured activities we also support and encourage spontaneous learning experiences and play. Research shows that children learn through play, by interacting with others and their environment. We have taken great care to design an environment which is welcoming and provides children with varied opportunities for choice; fostering their sense of agency and independence.

The Program and Curriculum Plan, Input Pages and our seasonal Flexible Daily Routine is displayed at the entrance to the service. A brief evaluation of the days activities will be provided daily on Kinderloop.

If you would like to contribute your ideas / your child's interests or ideas to the program please speak to educators or write your input on the sheet provided at the sign in area.

We understand the importance of environmental learning and are passionate about giving the children opportunities to be in touch with the natural world and explore methods of sustainability. We have rabbits, chickens, a worm farm, a native stingless bee hive and a vegetable garden for the children to care for, building their sense of belonging and gaining responsibility.

The children are encouraged to participate in both planned and spontaneous experiences including:

- ♥ Individual and whole group experiences
- ♥ Dramatic play
- ♥ Music and movement
- ♥ Problem based learning experiences such as puzzles, games and manipulatives
- ♥ Exploring the creative arts
- ♥ Language and literacy
- ♥ Physical development activities and experiences
- ♥ Science based activities that involve observing, hypothesizing and discovery
- ♥ Developing social skills such as cooperation, empathy and respect for others
- ♥ Long term projects

We follow the principles, practices and outcomes of the National Early Childhood Curriculum, The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) supporting all children to reach the five learning outcomes of the Curriculum Framework:

Children have a strong sense of identity

Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children are confident and involved learners

Children are effective communicators.

Age Grouping

There are a maximum of 68 children per day divided into 4 classrooms which range in age from 3 months-6 years.

The resources and experiences in each group are developmentally specific to your child's stage and ability.

The educators for each group have a passion and skill to enhance your child's wellbeing and learning.

Nursery – Babies and toddlers up to approximately 18 months.

Ducklings – Approximately 18 months to approximately 3 years old.

Ducks – (Toilet trained) approximately 3 years to 4 – 4.5 years.

Preschool – approximately 4 to 6 years old (the year before transitioning to school).

Combining age groups at the start and end of each day

We have periods throughout the day when we intermingle the various age groups. This allows siblings, family members and friends to spend time together if desired. It creates a non-competitive environment and encourages children to build on their personal potential, strengths and interests without being grouped and compared.

The older children love to share their knowledge with the younger ones, and by doing so reinforce what they already know and develop pride, confidence and leadership skills. They develop their emotional intelligence, learning to be patient with others as well as a strong ability to collaborate.

By watching the older children work, the young ones strive to challenge themselves, becoming more independent and learning from more advanced peers.

Our educators are skilled at preparing experiences that can be modified to challenge and suit the learning of individuals.

Theory of Loose Parts- It looks like we are playing with a whole lot of junk!

We incorporate The Theory of Loose Parts into our program and the design of our environment. The theory that was first proposed by architect Simon Nicholson included the belief that it is the 'loose parts' in our environment that will empower creativity. Loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways such as stones, stumps, sand, gravel, fabric, twigs, miscellaneous items and wood.

Having "loose parts" available in a learning environment encourages children to use resources as they choose and can provide a wider range of opportunities. Children using loose parts are developing more competence and exploring creativity and imagination whilst increasing their physical, cognitive and social development.

In the outdoor environment this theory has been proven to encourage further physical development than a traditional layout as the children use their whole bodies to drag, lift, move, manipulate and climb the parts.

Policies and Procedures

Our centre has a comprehensive policies and procedures document outlining the care and education practices to be followed through the centre. There is a copy of this document on our website and at the sign in and out desk, as well as a copy of The Education and Care Law and Regulations. Our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and evaluated, and we encourage feedback and contributions from educators and families.

Fees

Our Fees include the provision of Nappies, Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Tea and Late Snack.
Fees are as follows;
0-2yrs: \$155 per day
2-3yrs: \$148 per day
3yrs+: \$137 per day

Upon acceptance of your placement a refundable \$200 bond. This will be returned when the enrollment has ended and all accounts are finalized.

Statements are emailed (unless requested otherwise) every second Monday or Tuesday and the due amount is debited from your account that Friday using Debit Success. We charge two weeks in advance.

It is your responsibility to read your statement and to check if it the correct amount to come out from your account. If you believe there is an error you need to inform the centre before 12pm Thursday or the fees will still be taken.

Fees are payable on Public Holidays and days of absence.

Waiting Lists / Bookings / Hours of Operation

7:30am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday 50 weeks of the year. There is a 2-week closure over Christmas/New Year where families are not charged.

Public holidays and family vacation days are billed at your regular rate. The reason is as a family operated business we rely on fees to pay the wages and rent etc.

For Public Holidays if you would like 'make up' days as compensation please contact us and we will consider your request and offer days we have an availability.

Inquires as to vacancies can be sent to info@puddleducks.com.au or by phoning the Centre directly on 0420 366 442.

Starting at Puddleducks

Prior to starting at Puddleducks we require that you purchase a Puddleducks hat from us, we wash the hats as needed. The cost of the hats are added to your first fortnights fees.

If your baby/child is in the Nursey group we ask for a 'Daily Routine plan' to be completed and discussed with the room educators at drop off. This plan can be changed upon mutual agreement as your child moves through the early stages of development. We believe in consistency and collaboration to ensure your baby's/child's routine at Puddleducks is like days at home.

Before your child's first day we encourage you to arrange with us at least one orientation visit so that both you and your child can spend some time together in our service, becoming familiar with our educators, classrooms and routines as we aim to make the transition as smooth as possible for you. Parent accompanied orientation play visits are welcome any time.
Some of the following may help:

- ♥ Talk to your child about the fact they will be starting preschool soon and emphasis the aspects of this that they will enjoy e.g. friends, pets the sandpit or a particular toy you know they like that is at preschool.
- ♥ Practice your new preschool morning routine before your child starts (perhaps going out the door to the parks, shop etc) so that you can be realistic about how much time it will take you to get out the door of a morning.

- ♥ Plan to make your first child's first few days at preschool shorter.
- ♥ If you are returning to work try to start your child in preschool at least one week before as it is harder for both parents and children to cope with two big changes at the same time.
- ♥ Expect a change in your child's eating and sleep routine and take the time to read about how their day has gone.
- ♥ Save the centre phone number into your phone so that you can easily call during the day if you want to.
- ♥ Know that you are welcome to call and check on how your child is settling in but be assured that **if your child is unusually upset**, we will call you.

Please bring the following labeled:

- ♥ Bag
- ♥ Drink bottle with a pop top lid (water only) please take this home every day and wash
- ♥ Sheets for their bed – a fitted cot sheet and a small blanket which you will need to take home every day and wash when needed. If you forget to bring sheets we will provide our spares which we will then wash and add a \$7 laundry fee to your account.
- ♥ Spare underwear and clothing that is appropriate for the weather
- ♥ A raincoat and gumboots when wet (we still play outside)
- ♥ Sensible shoes

Signing In and Out / Collection of Your Child

It is a legal requirement that you sign your child in and out for each day that they attend the centre. We use the program *Kiosk* on our Ipads which is located at the entrance, educators will assist you to set up your login.

On the enrolment form there is a section where you can provide a list of the adults (other than parents/guardians) who are authorized to collect your child from the centre (they must be at least 18 years old).

Staff will not allow your child to go home with someone who is not on this list unless a prior notice has been given to the centre. Notice must be given in writing and must include the full name and contact number of the person who will be collecting your child. This notice will only be good for a one off collection and if you want this person to be able to collect your child regularly then they must be added to your authorized collection list.

If the person collecting the child is not known to staff (even if they are on the authorized collection list) then photo identification must be provided (i.e. driver's license or passport). In the case that identification is not provided then, the child will not be permitted to leave the centre with that person.

Chatting with our Educators

Friendly relationships with parents help the children feel a sense of belonging. The staff are more than happy for a quick chat at drop off and pick up. This is an important time for the mutual exchange of any information regarding your child and the Centre. Please be mindful if you have a topic that may take a bit of going into, email us ahead of time so we can prepare the information you need or make an appointment for a lengthy discussion. You may also use SMS or comment on Kinderloop as a way to share knowledge.

Early Drop Off / Late Pickup

Entry on the premises will not be permitted prior to 7:30am due to insurance, we ask that you wait outside our gates if you arrive early.

Collection after 6:00pm will in the first instance receive a warning and in the subsequent instance be charged a late fee of \$15 per family per fifteen minutes or part thereof. Wherever possible parents should advise the centre when they will be late to collect their child.

Immunisation, Illness and Infectious Disease

Since January 2018, parents who refuse to vaccinate their children are not allowed to enrol them in Childcare.

Prior to enrolment proof of a child's vaccination status being 'up to date' from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register is required or proof that they are on a recognised catch-up schedule, or that they have a medical contra-indication to vaccination. It is a requirement of parents and guardians to continue to provide the proof of these being up to date as a condition of enrolment.

We aim to provide a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health of children. The needs of a sick child cannot be met without reducing general levels of supervision, therefore parents are asked to keep sick children at home or collect children who become unwell. Children or staff with infectious diseases will be excluded from the centre for the period recommended by the NSW Department of Health

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_childcare_5th_edition_0.pdf.

Catering

At Puddleducks the food is provided by the catering company *Kids Gourmet Food*. As our program is flexible and we allow room for daily changes we have approximate meal times: breakfast is provided upon request from 7:30-8am, morning tea at 9:30am, lunch at 12:00pm, afternoon tea at 3:30pm and a small late snack is offered between 5:15 and 5:30pm. The food is nutritious, healthy, well planned. Allergies / sensitivities / cultural decisions can be catered for. If you would like to find out more please go to <http://www.kidsgourmetfood.com.au/> or speak to the centre manager. Our Menu is displayed below our Health and Safety Board at the entrance to the service.

Birthdays

We would love to celebrate the children's birthdays and important events, if you would like to bring in some food / activity to share that would be fantastic but please bring in a complete list of ingredients as we may have children with allergies / anaphylaxis.

Sun Protection

At Puddleducks we aim to provide a sun safe environment and schedule activities in such a way as to avoid having children outside during the hottest part of the day. We check the UV index daily and educators apply SPF 30+ broad-spectrum sunscreen to exposed areas of children's skin as well as their hat when needed. All children with sensitive skin needing specific brands are asked to bring it in labelled with your child's name. We require that children always have their shoulders covered with a tee-shirt.

Mosquito Repellents

The Centre provides aero guard brand roll on and will put it on the children if deemed necessary or requested by the parent. All children with sensitive skin needing specific brands are asked to bring it in labelled with your child's name.

Grievances

Should you have a grievance please do not hesitate to talk to the staff. If you feel that you cannot talk to the staff for whatever reason you make contact the owner directly or can refer your grievance to The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) or The Department of Health, Community Services (previously DOCS).

Notice Period

There is a four-week cancellation policy. Please provide written notice of any changes in days of care or cancellation of enrollment to the email address info@puddleducks.com.au or hand it to Centre management in person.

Think before printing this document

