Waite Campus Childrens Centre
Orientation to child care

Trusting the care of your child to the educators at the centre is something we hope you can do with confidence.

When parents begin using child care they are often experiencing other changes in their lives, commencing a new job, returning to work, establishing themselves in a new home. Parents may be anxious about their child and need to know that their child will be well cared for and have their individual needs met. If your child is young, especially under 12 months, there are also concerns over maintaining routines regarding feeding and sleeping patterns.

Enrolment
Children all react individually and settle into child care differently. This process of settling in is assisted by a period of orientation for both the parent/s and the child.

We recommend that all parents and children have several orientation visits to the Centre so that:
- the child and parent/s can become familiar with the new environment
- the child can begin to bond with the educators
- the parent/s can discuss their child’s routine and behaviour patterns with educators

The number of orientation visits will depend on the time parents have available.

For children under 6 months and children over 2.5 years this orientation may need only 3 visits for parents to talk to the educator and discuss the centre and room routines/ procedures.

For children 6 months -2.5 years the orientation process will often need several visits before children take up their required booking. Children of this age usually need time to get to know the educators who will be caring for them.

The focus of child care is on the children and we aim to maintain good educator:child ratios throughout the day. There are therefore better times of the day for visiting, when educators are able to spend time talking to new parents without compromising the care of the other children.

For initial visits the best times are:
10.00am - 11.30am
or
3.00pm - 4.30pm

An initial enrolment interview time needs to be made with the Director. After this the orientation visits are arranged with the room coordinator and primary educator in the child’s room.

We recommend at least 1-2 short visits of ½-1 hour with both parent and child at the centre,
- the first visit is for the parents to chat with their primary educator about their child’s need, Centre routines etc
- on the next visit the parent should leave the child with the educator in the room while they remain elsewhere in the building. This is a good opportunity to read the Centre’s Policies and Procedures manual and view the parent library in the reception area.

This can be followed by visits of up to 2 hours for the child without the parent at the Centre. Please discuss this with the educator.

If your child is able to commence care for a few shorter sessions before taking up their required booking this also allows them to gradually adjust to their new routine.

Even after a good orientation some children may be unsettled for a while depending on how often they attend, their general health, and what other changes are happening in their lives.

Children who have been in care for a number of weeks or months can become unsettled for short periods of time, just like sometimes adults don’t feel like going to work sometimes.
Establishing a Routine
Once your child is attending child care regularly it is important to follow a routine which is familiar to your child when leaving them at the centre. Spend 5-10 relaxed minutes settling your child with a favourite experience. Always say goodbye to your child and give them a kiss, a hug or a wave and then leave quickly and smoothly. Both rushing out and lingering too long can add to the anxiety of separation. If you need help discuss this with the room coordinator.

It is also very important to maintain open two-way communication between educators and parents both verbal and written. You are welcome to phone the room at any time to have a brief chat with your child’s primary educator about how your child is. Please read all notices, newsletters and other information. Take the time to have a brief chat with the educators every day, either at the beginning or the end of the visit.

To help children in their first few weeks of child care educators will give more individual attention to your child when they arrive and help them to become involved in the program. It helps for parents to discuss their child’s favourite experiences so that educators can plan for this.

Sleeping at child care
For young children sleeping at child care will be a different experience to sleeping at home. Educators aim for each child to have a peaceful and happy time while they are at the centre and for the centre routines to compliment the child’s at home care. Adequate day time sleep is very important for younger children. Some routines which may soothe and settle your child at home will not be accepted by them at the Centre. Some techniques which haven’t worked at home will work at the centre, or perhaps you haven’t tried them.

All rooms establish a peaceful atmosphere for sleeping by playing relaxing music and dimming lights, and encourage children to settle themselves to sleep. Educators will sit with children and help to relax children. In Room One educators may also try any of the follow techniques to help unsettled or distressed children

- wrapping in a light sheet - “It seems that babies feel more secure when firmly wrapped …it controls the random movements of babies arms which seem to disturb them and wake them up at times” (Settling Your Baby - Child and Youth Health)
- nursing and rocking a child - this is used for very young babies only.

Please remember that each staff cares for 4 children per day and therefore for occupational health and safety reasons they are unable to carry children for long periods of time or walk around rocking children to sleep in their arms.

Please make sure you discuss your child’s sleep patterns with educators.

We look forward to sharing the care and education of your child with you and having your family as part of our centre community.

Thankyou
Eleanor and WCCC Educators