



Centre

Information

FAMILY HANDBOOK

thefernelc.com.au



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Welcome

We are a unique team of dedicated early childhood professionals, who are committed to providing the highest quality care and learning for all children and families in our community.

Each room is dedicated to a specific age group with age appropriate programs and resources. We are committed to provide a pleasant, hygienic, spacious and friendly environment that caters for each child's individual needs.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Fern Early Learning Centres acknowledge the traditional custodians of all lands across Australia.

We recognise and celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians, including their role in the education and care of children.



About Us

Governance

In Australia the Early Childhood Education sector is regulated by Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). ACECQA facilitates the National Quality Framework that is underpinned by the National Quality Standards, Education and Care Services National Law, Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the Early Years Learning Framework.

Al-Ishraq Pty Ltd is the Approved Provider company for The Fern ELC. The Approved Provider oversees the governance and management of all our centres. Our parent company i9 Education guides operation provides support and works in collaboration with the management team consisting of the Centre Director, Head Office Team and Nominated Supervisors.

The Fern Philosophy

The Fern Early Learning Centre (ELC) provides the highest quality of care for all our children. We believe every child is unique and has distinctive aptitude, ability, and talent. Early years positive experiences lay a solid foundation for rest of their life. Our commitment is to provide them a creative, stimulating, safe and intrinsically motivating environment to unleash their unique potential and raise them as a valuable contribution to the future society.

The Fern ELC quality play-based program furnishes endless opportunities to learn and practice progressive exploration, critical thinking, life skills for interaction, sharing and resolution, to shape a positive self-image.

Children are invigorated to learn independently, explore in their own-ways, and make choices of objects and natural materials from their environment. We embrace the concept that young children are swift, imaginative, creative, and enthusiastic learners. Children own a natural faculty to control their own learning patterns. Our experienced and professionally qualified educators facilitate, guide, and extend these learning patterns in their educational program for children to become confident learners. We believe that by providing an effective and positive transition to school, we lay a strong foundation for children's future learning. Sustainable practices are embedded in our daily program to promote respect for the environment and sense of responsibility amongst our children.

We always emphasize the importance of family input, participation, and involvement in our program. Our team makes every effort to establish an open, positive, and trusting relationship with our families.

We believe children and families have the right to be treated unbiased and equally. We respect and positively acknowledge each child's needs regardless of race, culture, gender, class, disability, and age. We embrace cultural diversity and encourage children to respect and value differences in others and themselves.

Our Educators endeavour relentlessly to maintain excellence in their role as learned educator, compassionate role-model and caring nurturer of children's learning and development.

Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure our children will:

- feel a sense of belonging,
- receive the best possible care,
- learn and grow in a warm, safe, and play-based learning environment,
- learn to respect diversity and interact with children from other cultures and backgrounds,
- learn to build social connections with wider community,
- have a fundamental understanding of the world around them and
- feel comfortable in the transition between early years care and primary school.

Our Aims & Objectives

- To demonstrate a strong and consistent understanding of expectations, regulations, and law.
- To ensure safe, productive, and positive environment for all educators working in the centre.
- To utilise resources effectively and efficiently.
- To encourage a sense of belonging for children and families. An environment where families are supported in caring for their children and their confidentiality and privacy is respected.
- To provide a high quality, play based educational program rich in learning opportunities, designed to suit each individual child and encourage the growth and development.
- To provide an environment where children feel welcomed, safe, and happy in their surroundings.
- To encourage family participation and input. Educators work in partnership with families to cater to the needs of all children and their families.
- To provide experiences that will challenge children and encourage their thinking skills.
- To build strong connections and working relationships with community organisations to enrich our children and families learning, sense of community and support.
- To learn and understand how we can lessen our environmental footprint on the world while encouraging our educators, children, and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

We Believe

- In providing high quality care and education
- In fair, truthful, and open communication
- In respect, equality, and support
- In the diversity of cultures in Australia, and respect for the values, beliefs, and practices for all cultures

Parent Partnership

Enrolment Process

You can express interest for your child enrolment at The Fern ELC in multiple ways. You can fill an online enquiry form on our website or simply walk into the centre. Our friendly team will assist you in the step by step enrolment process. We encourage families to book a tour to initiate the enrolment process.

Centre Tour

During the tour, the educator conducting the tour will give the family information about the centre including, Indoor and outdoor environments, our nurturing program, nutritious menus, policies, and procedures. You will be introduced to our friendly qualified educators in the rooms.

You would be able to discuss with the Centre Director, availability of days, preferred start date and tailoring an orientation process to suit your family and child's needs. Families are encouraged to ask any questions they may have during the tour. After the tour you will receive an email with our online enrolment step by step information. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to discuss with our Centre Director who will be happy to assist you.

Research shows

children are much more likely to reach their full potential in life when their family and education and care service work together. (ACECQA)



Enrolment

At The Fern ELC, we manage all our waitlist and enrolment requests through "My Family Lounge". To complete the enrolment process, you need to provide all the documentation of the child including any child's medical needs, action plans, court orders, parenting plans or parenting orders, etc. My Family Lounge also allows parents to update and manage contact details, your child's medical information, request changes to permanent booked days, apply for casual days, and update bank account details. You will have access to all centre policies and procedures via the link provided during completion of the enrolment Form.

For children to enrol into our Funded Four-year-old kindergarten program, parents will receive an additional email to confirm your child's Kindergarten place. Parents will need to complete the 'Parental Education and Occupation Details Form' and 'Kindergarten Offer and Acceptance Form.

Immunisation

In accordance with the No Jab, No Play legislation all children must be up to date with immunisations prior to enrolling and commencing care. Immunisation statement must be produced prior to enrolment and acknowledgement of this information must be on the child's enrolment form. If the child is not immunised or immunisations are not up to date your child's enrolment may not be accepted. It is a parent's responsibility to provide an updated immunisation statement after all scheduled immunisations.

Risk Minimisation & Communication Plan

Parent should notify the Centre Director immediately if child is diagnosed with a health care need, medical condition, or allergy. Centre Director will provide Medical Conditions Policy and discuss the mandatory requirement to continue or commence care. The Medical Conditions Policy is also available on Parent Hub. A parent of a child must provide a current 'Action Plan' signed by a medical professional. Prior to commencing care a Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan must be completed in consultation with Centre Director.

Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan must be updated annually or as required. Parents are responsible to upload updated action plan on our online Portal (My Family Lounge). If the plans are not completed as required, it will delay commencement of care. It is a parent's responsibility that medication is always at the centre when the child is present, and that the medication is within the expiry date. Parents must notify the centre about any change to the child's medical condition through the communication plan.

Dietary Restrictions

Additional considerations on the enrolment form for religious, cultural, or dietary requirements will be discussed prior to enrolment. Any update or change in the dietary requirement will be the responsibility of the parent and must be communicated in writing or via Kindy Hub.

Access to the Centre Policies

Parents can access The Fern ELC's detailed Centre Policies and Procedures, Family Handbook, Menus, Kinder Information Booklet and Fact Sheets on Parent Hub via My Family Lounge or

Kindy Hub. Parents are welcome to contact Centre Director if they need further assistance, clarification, or feedback regarding any Policies and Procedures.

Orientation

Commencing childcare for the first time can be an anxious period for parents as well as children. To assist you and your child through the settling in period, we recommend the following process.

Parents will be able to bring their child to the centre before care commences to meet the educators, and to familiarise themselves with the centre and its environment so that their child's transition into care is a smooth process.

- After completing your enrolment forms, you will receive a confirmation email and an "Orientation Form" to complete. We would like to know about your child's interests and routines before the first orientation visit. Bring your child to the centre and stay with them for a short period. This could be as short as 15 min to 2 hours. Parents are required to stay on the premises.
- We recommend a minimum of 2 orientation visits to our centre before your child attends for the first day, however we do realise that each child's needs are different and will work with families to develop a plan that will assist children and families to settle into the centre and understand that this may take extra visits.

Take this time to show your child you trust the educators by talking about your child's needs and ask any questions you may have.

Parents are required to fill an 'Orientation feedback Form' that helps the centre to improve our processes and ensure we continue to provide high quality care.

Child's first day

On their first day at the Fern ELC we encourage parents to make it a shorter day, ideally a half day. If possible, increase your child's stay at the centre gradually, to include routine times, like lunch then sleep then afternoon tea, etc. Always say goodbye to your child and tell them honestly when you will return. At this time:

- You will be requested to ensure all required details are finalised.
- You will be shown how to sign in/ out on QK Kiosk.
- You will be granted access to Kindy Hub for an ongoing communication and reporting.
- Centre Director will be in touch with you to update how your child is settling in.

Toys from Home

The Fern ELC understands that there may be occasions your child will want to bring something special from home to share or show other children or educators. We ask that you encourage your child to leave toys and precious items at home as unfortunately they can be lost or broken.

We thank you for agreeing with our decision to keep all toys at home. Please note comforters for rest or sleep time are welcome i.e. small teddy, dummy, cuddle rugs. The centre accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may occur. Losses can be minimised if all items are clearly labelled.

Drop off and Pick up

The Fern ELC aims to provide a safe and secure environment for the children in our care. For the protection and safety of every child the front door is coded. You will receive this code on your first day of attendance at the centre, for security reasons, we ask that this code only be given to parents and adults authorised to collect a child from the centre.

We encourage a parent to call the centre in case they are coming late (after 11am) this will help to maintain child educator ratio. Children coming to the centre after 11am without any prior contact with the centre will be marked absent for that day. All children must be signed in and out each day using the **QK Kiosk iPad**. At the Fern ELC we use QK Kiosk to capture children's attendances at the centre. All parents and authorised nominees must have their own pin number that is used on each drop off and pick up. Educators in your child's room will assist you to set up your pin on your first visit to the centre.

It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to notify the Centre Director, if an authorised nominee other than themselves will be collecting their child on the day, please note photo identification for this person will be required. A provision on our enrolment form gives parents the opportunity to list contacts (authorised nominees) who they have given authorisation to collect their child from the centre. No other person can drop off or pick up your child. Please note that to collect a child from our centre a person must be of legal age (18 years) and have appropriate car seating (if applicable).

Fee information

The centre aims for quality childcare at an affordable price. Our fee structure aims to allow parents and carers to afford childcare and utilise the benefit of our educational program. Our fees are structured in a way that allows parents the flexibility of full time or daily care.

Fees must be paid two weeks in advance prior to child commencing care. Fees must be paid weekly or fortnightly by direct debit (Debit Success), ensuring accounts always stay minimum of one week in advance or two weeks in advance for fortnightly paying parents. The centre maintains a No Cash Policy. Childcare Fee structure and relevant policies can be updated or revised at any time providing 14 days' notice in writing regarding any changes to collection procedures or amounts. For any further fee information please refer to our centre Fee policy.

Fee Statements

A fee statement will be issued every **Monday**, or first business day of the week, via email to families. A paper statement will be printed as requested. Any queries regarding accounts should be discussed with Centre Director.

Childcare Subsidy

At this stage we will encourage you to contact the Family Assistance Office (Centrelink) to have your eligibility for Child Care Subsidy assessed. The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment made by the Australian Government to help eligible families with the cost of quality childcare and early education. This is paid directly to the centre to reduce your weekly fees. Full fees are payable while CCS is being applied for. To find out eligibility, families must contact the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

Direct Debit

The centre provides an easy, reliable, and hassle-free method of direct debit payment by Debit Success. Debit Success is directly

connected with our Child Care Management System. Parents can choose the preferred start date, day, frequency of the payment and maximum amount to be debited from the accounts. Debit success will charge families a dishonour fee in case of insufficient funds. The centre reserves the right to increase Debit Success scheduled payments in accordance with weekly fee payment changes such as fee increases, changes to bookings or CCS. We prefer to take payment on every Wednesday.

Overdue Fee

Any family who is one or more weeks late with their fees will receive a **friendly fee reminder** giving you 7 days to pay the outstanding balance. Failure to pay your outstanding fees will put your child's place at the centre in jeopardy as care may be suspended or cancelled.

If fees are more than **2 weeks in arrears cancellation of care may occur** and the parent/guardian will be required to pay all debt recovery expenses including agent fees, court costs and legal fees incurred by the centre. In the case of default, the parent or guardian acknowledges that information contained in enrolment form will be forwarded for legal recovery action. The Parent or Guardian acknowledges that care may be refused in the case of non-payment of fees.

Late Pick Up Fee

It is expected that parents will adhere to the operational hours and in accordance will collect their child before the centre is closed. If for any reason you believe you will not collect your child before the centre closes, you will need to organise an alternative person to collect (This person must be authorised through My Family Lounge). In the event of unavoidable delays two educator must always remain on duty with the child, and a late fee is charged to cover the cost associated with overtime payments for these staff. The late fee is \$1 per minute per child charged automatically to your account.

Absence Fee

Families will be charged a normal fee rate for all Public Holidays and sick days. The Family Assistance Office (FAO) will pay Child Care Subsidy even if your child is absent from the centre for public holidays, annual or sick leave if your absent days do not exceed 42 absences.

Under the Child Care Management System (CCS) each child is eligible to receive CCS for an initial 42 days of absence, per financial year, which can be used for any reason and without proof of circumstances (includes public holidays). Once the initial 42 absence days have been exhausted, additional absences may be claimed in certain circumstances. Please ensure you check your absent days displayed on your statement to ensure you do not exceed your 42 allowable absences.

Where a child has not attended care in two weeks, with no notice to the centre, the Centre Director will attempt notification to ensure your child/ren are returning to the service. If confirmation of return cannot be made the child's place will be considered vacant, cessation of care will be applied, and the spot will be offered to another child.

Holidays Fee

The Fern ELC Early Learning Centre offers families up to 2 weeks at a 50% discount off their Gap fee whilst on holidays per financial year. This does not include public holidays. Families need to give two weeks' notice in writing prior to taking holidays and all families fees need to be paid up to date prior to the 50% discount being approved.

Financial Assistance

In the event of the parent or guardian experiencing financial difficulties it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to contact the Family assistance office and check their eligibility and apply for 'Additional Child Care Subsidy.' Centre can assist families with Additional Child Care Subsidy for children at risk, supporting documentation must be supplied by parents to apply

for additional CCS, until the application is approved parents are responsible to ensure childcare fee payments are maintained as per our fee Policy.

Cancellation of Care

Should you wish to end your child's place at the centre four weeks written notice is required. If this does not occur, cessation of care will occur, and four weeks full fees will be billed to your account. In case of cancellation parent will only be eligible for CCS if the child attends the care during the four weeks of the notice period. Centrelink will not pay the childcare subsidy if child does not attend the centre on their last booked day. If child did not attend centre at all during notice period, parents are **required to pay full fee from the last attended date.** Upon cancellation of care, if your account is in credit, a refund request form will be completed on your child's last day of attendance. Please note that refunds will only be processed in the last week of each month into your nominated financial institution.



Health and Wellness

Health and Hygiene

The Fern ELC aims to promote and protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of all of children, educators and families using procedures and policies to maintain high standards of hygiene and provide nutritious food to children. We also aim to reduce the risk of infectious diseases and illnesses spreading and follow appropriate Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) standards. A holistic and consistent approach to health, hygiene and nutritious food across the centre will help to effectively meet this aim. Please refer to The Fern Centre Policy Handbook for hand washing, nappy changing and food safety procedures.

Dental Health

Children attending The Fern ELC will be encouraged to eat fresh fruit, including apple and to drink water to promote healthy teeth and gums. Water is always available. It is not necessary to send water to childcare, however your child is encouraged to bring a water bottle (clearly labelled with your child's name) to the centre. We offer an opportunity to have an annual visit from a dental professional service (subject to availability) that provides an opportunity for your child to have a dental check-up and clean.

Head Lice

The Fern ELC aims to maintain strict guidelines regarding the treatment of head lice. Educators may check hair when deemed necessary e.g. in the outbreak of several cases, a child is scratching

**Educators
play vital role
in supporting
children's
health and
wellbeing**



their head continuously. If educators discover any live head lice the parents will be notified immediately to collect their child and commence treatment at home. Children will be excluded from the centre until effective treatment has commenced.

Medical Illness & Accident

We will provide a nurturing environment for all children in our care. In the case where a child becomes ill, educator will contact the parents by telephone to discuss the situation. Parent may be requested to collect the child if deemed necessary for child's health, safety, and wellbeing. Children with obvious signs of illness should not return to the centre until they are well. A child who is unwell will be excluded from the centre for 24 hours or until a doctor's certificate is produced (Centre Director's discretion).

In case of incidents or illnesses the educator will complete factual detailed records of the incident, accident, or illness. This will include what occurred, how, when and the actions taken. Parents will be notified by telephone of significant injuries, (e.g. large bumps, head injury, bites etc) as soon as possible following the incident. All other minor incidents will be discussed with parents on their arrival at the centre. An injury and illness report will be completed by the educator on Kindy Hub and will be sent for your acknowledgement.

In the case of an emergency illness or accident, an ambulance will be called, and the parents will be notified immediately. All medical expenses are at the cost of the family. Please ensure you have provided ambulance membership details in the enrolment form. The Department of Education and Training will be contacted as soon as possible (within 24 hours), in accordance with Regulation 176 and appropriate paperwork will be completed by the educators.

The Fern ELC adheres to the policies set down by the Department of Health and Department of Education and Training regarding notification of an infectious disease present at the centre and the time frame children are excluded from the centre due to an infectious disease.

Medication Procedure

All prescribed medication entering the centre must be authorised by a registered medical practitioner. The child's name that is receiving the medication, current dates and dosage details must be listed on the bottle with the expiry dates shown. If any of these details are missing on the prescribed medication educators will not administer the medication (Education and Care Services National Regulations 95 - Procedure for Administration of Medication)

All medication needs to be entered onto the medication form by Parent. (Refer regulation 92 - Medication Record). A Parent must complete all the necessary information on the medication form, and it must be signed and dated before an educator can administer. Without any of these details' educators are unable to administer your child's medication. Please note that the terms 'when required' or 'if required' are not acceptable when completing the time to be administered section of the medication form.

Medication forms are in your child's room and all medicines must be handed to an educator. Medicines that require refrigeration will be placed in the medication box situated in the kitchen or room fridge. Please do not leave medication in your child's bag.

Parents must collect medication before they take their child from the centre and acknowledge medication has been given. Please note that we do not administer any medication including Panadol or Nurofen unless it has been prescribed by a doctor and has a pharmacist label with the child's name on the bottle.

Toilet Training & Nappy Changing

The centre provides generic brand nappies and baby wipes as part of the daily fee. It is a parent's responsibility to provide their own nappies or baby wipes if their child requires a specific brand. At times you child may require nappy cream to be applied at nappy change time, consent provided in enrolment form.

Toilet training can begin when the child is showing signs of readiness. Parents should be reassured that their child will not be pressured or forced into toileting, however those happy to spend some "sitting time" on the toilet will be encouraged to do so. Parents will be kept informed so that they may continue this process at home. It is recommended extra clothing is available in your child's bag when toilet training begins. We encourage parent's toilet training their child to use underpants and avoid Pull Ups or Nappy Pants. Please feel free to discuss with the Centre Director or room educators. The daily information about child nappy change will be available through Kindy Hub.

Rest & Sleep

In accordance with the National Quality Framework our educators will ensure each child's individual sleep or rest needs are met. We provide an opportunity for all children to rest quietly on either a bed provided or engaged in quiet activities. Our centre Sleep, Rest, Relaxation and Clothing policy is based on recommendations from Red Nose (formerly SIDS & Kids). If a family's beliefs and practices conflict with Red Nose, the centre will not consider an alternative practice request unless the Centre Director is provided with written request and the contact details of a registered medical practitioner. Please refer to the Sleep, Rest, Relaxation and Clothing policy for further information and guidelines for safe resting.

If you have a specific request in regard to your child's sleep routine, please ensure you complete an Individual Request Form with these details which will be shared with educators and maintained in the child's file. All children at the centre will be provided with their own bed linen. All bed linen will be washed weekly according to our washing roster, or as required. The daily information about child rest and sleep will be available through Kindy Hub.

Sun Smart

We aim to provide the utmost protection regarding sun exposure. Our policy has been reviewed in correspondence with the Victorian Cancer Council and has been awarded Sun Smart membership. Educators are to act as role models for the children by also practising the sun smart policy and incorporating sun smart learning into the centre's program. Centre will update your child's daily charts on Kindy Hub every time sunscreen has been applied.

The centre requires the children to wear hats (wide brimmed, legionnaires or bucket hats) and protective clothing (not singlet tops, sleeveless dresses or shirts exposing bare shoulders) during all outside play. Throughout September to April and on very sunny days during winter, hats covering the face, neck and sides of head must be worn. To encourage the continued wearing of hats we encourage children to bring and wear their hat all year round. Sunscreen is provided by the centre, however if your child requires a specific brand of sunscreen it will need to be provided by the parent, clearly labelled. The daily information about sunscreen application will be available through Kindy Hub.

Clothing

The centre aims to provide the children with a variety of experiences to grow and learn. Our aim is to develop a program that is stimulating and exciting. Parents are encouraged to have childcare clothes that are ok to get paint or dirt on them through indoor and outdoor play. Dummies, comfort toys, etc must be labelled as they can be misplaced, the centre is not accountable for any missing items.

The centre has a lost property box and educators will do their best to assist parent to locate any missing item. Lost property is kept for four weeks then donated to local charity. Spare clothes are to be in your child's bag in case, they become wet or dirty. Flexible nonslip footwear is encouraged. Sandals and runners or boots are recommended.

Food & Nutrition

We provide breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late snack to the children attending our centre. We understand the importance of healthy eating and our menus are guided by Nutrition Australia with consideration to various cultures, dietary and allergy requirements. Parents are encouraged to participate in menu reviews by providing recipe ideas and keeping educators updated about their child's food preference. The enrolment form has a place for cultural preferences and allergies. Centre menus are displayed in the foyer, and available online through Kindy Hub.

We believe children are active participants in their own learning and should be encouraged to make meaningful decisions about their needs. We recognise that not all children are hungry and ready to eat at the same time. Our mealtimes provide an opportunity for social and meaningful interactions where children can participate in their own time without being hurried to complete their learning.

Food from Home

The Fern ELC has a dedicated cook at the centre and discourages parents supplying food from home. If you have any concerns,

issues or special requirements kindly discuss with the Centre Director. The Centre Director will make necessary arrangements with the cook to accommodate special requests. We request parent to be respectful of other children's dietary needs and restrictions and please ensure no food is brought to the centre by your child.

Birthday & Celebrations

At The Fern ELC we believe that a child's birthday is a celebration to be enjoyed. As such on your child's special day our centre cook can make something special for the child's birthday to celebrate with their friends. Parents, siblings, and grandparents are welcome to join us. Please ensure you discuss plans with the Centre Director one week prior to your child's birthday. If you do not wish your child to attend birthday celebration, please inform the centre Director at enrolment time.



Child Development

Interaction with Children

We value and nurture the uniqueness of each child and believe that establishing warm, caring, and responsive relationships in early life, helps children to self-regulate their emotions and build trusting connections around them. Positive and respectful interactions between children and educators form the basis of meaningful relationships and assist children to develop social competence, establish friendships, express themselves, foster resilience and feel a sense of belonging. Our open interactions encourage the rights and dignity of each child and support acquisition of skills for their lifelong learning. We acknowledge each child is an individual and provide tailored support according to children's capabilities and challenges. We offer extra support to children with additional needs or with challenging behaviours. Our Behaviour Guidance Policy support children to manage their own behaviour and respond effectively to resolve conflict. Our educators take an active role in nurturing, supporting, and promoting trusting relationships to develop each child's self-esteem and problem-solving skills, contributing to positive learning and life outcomes.

**If a child cannot
learn in the way
we teach, we
must teach in
a way the child
can learn**



Multicultural & Inclusive

Diversity enriches life and culture. The centre aims to provide and promote a centre where children can realise their full potential regardless of gender, race, and cultural background. We believe in honouring diversity, striving to engage in respectful interactions with children, educators, and families. This will be reflected in our relationships with children and their families and in our resources and practices.

Guiding Children Behaviour

Our practices are based on respect, knowledge of children's backgrounds and abilities. Educators provide positive guidance to assist children to develop skills to resolve conflicts and differences of opinion in a proactive way. Educators model positive attitudes and appropriate use of language that helps children to learn socially acceptable ways of behaving and interacting with others.

The centre aims to create an environment that guides children's behaviours through interaction and communication. We implement a positive, inclusive, and proactive approach to guide children behaviours, and ponder on reasons for children's challenging behaviour. Educators acknowledge the uniqueness and learning abilities of each child. Educators guide challenging behaviour in a variety of ways that support children to 'self-manage' their emotions and understand socially acceptable behaviour. We aim

to build positive respectful relationships between educator and children to influence behaviours in constructive ways and have significant impact on child development and learning outcomes. We encourage children to reflect on their actions and the impact those actions have on themselves, others, and the environment around them. We ensure both the behaviour guidance practices and the educational program meet the developmental and individual needs of each child.

To assist children to manage behaviour, it is crucial for families and educators to work together to come to an understanding that is in the best interests of the child. When educators and families have mutually respectful relationships and communicate openly, they are able to work together to plan a supportive and appropriate strategy for each child.

We avoid any traditional 'behaviour management' or 'discipline' approaches that generally imply an adult 'managing' children's behaviour or using punishment, or inappropriate discipline to control them.



Educational Program

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Fern ELC provides a program that is based on the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The EYLF is an approved learning framework, that considers the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each individual child.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is a guide consisting of Principles, Practices and 5 main Learning Outcomes along with each of the sub outcomes, based on identity, community, wellbeing, learning and communicating. The learning outcomes are used to reflect on children's learning and focus on what a child can achieve rather than what they cannot. The EYLF enables educators to extend, and enrich children's learning, provide opportunities for children to develop a foundation for learning and to become confident and successful learners.

You will see around the centre – on programs, daily reflections, and children's artwork a learning outcome number that relates to that experience. If you would like to find out more about the learning outcomes and how they relate to your child, please do not hesitate to speak with one of the educators in your child's room.



Play is a child's way of learning. Through play children are demonstrating what they have learnt and what they are trying to understand. At The Fern ELC children will be encouraged to use play to discover the world around them, communicate and socialise with peers and adults (educators), promote independence, creativity, and imagination. Play is also paramount in promoting self-esteem and self-awareness.



Curriculum

The Fern ELC curriculum is designed to promote each child's lifelong learning and school readiness. We believe in involving families in decision making, to attend to the needs of each individual child.

Our curriculum strongly values the importance of 'Child Led Play'. We focus on inquiry-based learning that stretches each child's abilities to investigate, think critically, make plans, and follow through their own ideas. Children not only learn academic content, but importantly, they begin to better understand themselves and the world around them as confident learners. The holistic approach of the centre curriculum follows the child's emerging interest, intentional teaching, and scaffolding to help increase each child's knowledge by providing a wide range of real-world experiences that set them up for lifelong learning. Our play-based curriculum promotes literacy, numeracy, science, music, art, and sensory play, throughout the program. Reflective practices are part of our curriculum as a continuous improvement process that helps educators analyse their teaching approach to identify what drives children's learning and development.

Program

The Program at the centre is designed to reflect the needs of individual and groups of children based on educator observations, parent input and intentional teaching. Educators plan programs of varied learning experiences that are designed to promote children's development. These learning experiences will be planned according to the EYLF* for individual children to achieve the best outcome.

Qualified educators will complete individual planning records and child profiles for each child. This information underlines the basis of individual plans and room programs. Family input is actively encouraged, and feedback sought through verbal and Kindy Hub communication. All educators are involved in planning and evaluating the program regularly, to maintain quality and improve outcomes for each child.

Daily reflections provide information about learning experiences, the child has participated in throughout the day. The daily reflection is available to families through the Kindy Hub. We encourage all families to take the time to read this information and perhaps use it as a way to start a conversation with your child and encourage them to reflect on their day.

Throughout a child's enrolment at the centre families can view their learning stories, observations, photos, and developmental summaries through Kindy Hub.

Summative Assessment

A summative assessment provides a summary of your child's learning progress and development. The information used to write the assessment is based on documentation gathered over time from a range of sources and is completed twice throughout the year. The report provides an accurate description of what your child knows, understands, and can do in relation to the EYLF learning outcomes.

Kindergarten Program

Our Kindergarten program is government funded and we follow the National Quality Frameworks. The Kindergarten program is delivered by a registered Early Childhood Teacher and qualified educators. In Victoria, preschool or kindergarten is the year before school entry according to the eligibility guidelines set out by the Department of Education and Training (DET). Children are eligible to attend kindergarten if they turn four years of age on or before 30 April in the year of attendance. If your child's birthday falls before 30 April in the calendar year you may request to hold your child's Kindergarten start date until the following year.

Kindergarten per week in the year before they attend school. The Kindergarten program allows flexibility for children to attend up to 5 days per week. To be eligible as a funded Kindergarten child, a minimum of 2 days (600 hours during the year) of attendance during the times our qualified early childhood teacher (ECT) is in attendance is required.

Our Kindergarten program is all evidence based and provides a structured and stimulating learning environment. The program is focused on play-based learning that develops each child's social and emotional wellbeing and prepares them for a positive transition to school.

[Click here to download
Kindergarten Program Booklet](#)

Room Transitions

Transitions are times when children move to a new room and adapt to different spaces or places and with different people, experiences, expectations, and routines. As each room has different challenges and expectations, children will only be transitioned when they are ready in all aspects of their development. At the centre we facilitate most room transitions at the beginning of each year however if a vacancy occurs during the year we will inform the families. The opportunity to transition to new rooms at the centre is based on many factors other than just age.

Transition from one room to another is harder for some children than others, however through our orientation visits we endeavour to facilitate a smooth transition based on the needs of each child. We ensure that the continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities with families and educators.

The number of transition visits that take place are flexible, we will keep families updated with how the visits are going in the new room and will coordinate with families prior to permanently moving the child to the next room.

Family Grouping Times

Family grouping is the mixing of different age groups that occurs when there are lower numbers in the centre, this is usually in the early morning and late afternoon or evening periods and during quieter times of the year. Family grouping provides an

opportunity for different aged siblings to play in the same room, for older children to develop competence to lead, nurture and support younger children.

Sustainability

Educators will ensure the environment is safe, clean, and well maintained. Daily practices, resources and interactions will promote each child's awareness and interest in the environment and sustainable practices. Educators, children, and families will be encouraged to become advocates for a sustainable future. We are developing active environmental ambassadors who are appreciative and exhibit an awareness of our environment and the wider community for future generations.

Excursions & Incursions

From time to time excursions may be arranged for the children. Notification of planned excursions will be provided, and parent's written permission must be obtained before any child departs for an excursion organised by the centre. We have various incursions that are organised and paid by the centre, these may include animal visits, performances, farm animals, Pet Awareness Program, CFA and Police and Fire Brigade, etc. You will receive notification from the centre of any upcoming incursions and excursion via Kindy Hub.

In addition to excursions and incursions we have many special days such as footy day, teddy bear picnic, grandparent's day, etc. Please refer to our Calendar of Events for specific days and dates.

Extra Curriculum classes

We offer a variety of weekly classes to promote and nurture children's physical and mental development. Our weekly Physical Education Program and Music & Movement program focuses on developing motor skills and advocate fitness through fun and engaging activities. The best way to encourage children to participate in physical and age-appropriate activities is through play. Through cooperative play, children develop confidence, build their self-esteem, and learn how to achieve goals through teamwork. These programs are free of charge and encourage inclusion of all children.

Centre Events

The centre organises many events that invite families to participate in our program whilst also providing the opportunity for our Fern community to get to know each other better. These events include Mother's Day and Father's Day Afternoon Teas, Grandparents and Special Persons Day, Centre Meet and Greet and Information Nights, End of Year Function and Graduation Night.



The Fern Standards

Quality Improvement Plan

The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations requires services to have an up-to-date Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). It must include a centre philosophy, a self-assessment component and a plan for improvement. The purpose of the QIP is to assist services to self-reflect on the quality of education and care provided at their centre and plan for future improvements. The QIP is also used by the VIC Regulatory Authority to inform the assessment and rating of a centre against the National Quality Standard.

The Fern ELC provides the highest possible quality centres and is continually updating our Quality Improvement Plan, as a living document, through best practice information, reviewing policies and procedures, and parent input. The Quality Improvement Plan is available for viewing at any time and we appreciate your feedback and input. Please see your centre director if you have any queries.

“Without standards, there can be no improvement.”

Taiichi Ohno



Anti-Bias, Bullying & Harassment

We are committed to providing a safe and equitable workplace for all families and educators. Bullying, and harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. As part of our commitment, we intend to prevent workplace bullying by adhering to the Early Childhood Code of Ethics and Fair Work requirements, ensuring a safe workplace for all families and Educators at the centre.

We regard all children and families equally and will provide equal opportunities for children to develop to their fullest potential. Our aim is to facilitate learning experiences accessible to all children utilising our service and encourage them to treat each other with respect, empathy, and friendship. Educators assist children to work together and participate all activities and experiences in a non-bias and non-discriminatory manner.

The centre reserves the right to terminate care or take legal action in the case of a family using social media to defame the centre, company, or an individual educator.

Staffing Ratios

Educator to child ratios for Victorian centre-based education and care services, in accordance with National Regulations are as follows

0 – 3 years	1 educator 4 children
3 – 5 years	1 educator 11 children

Ratios are calculated across the centre (not by individual rooms). This gives providers the flexibility to respond to the needs of children. In a mixed age group of children, maintaining the ratio for each age range of children does not mean the educator to child ratio for the youngest age range must be applied to all children in an older age range. An educator who is caring for one age range of children can also be counted against another age range of children, as long as the ratio for each age range is maintained and adequate supervision is maintained at all times. (ACECQA website www.acecqa.gov.au)

Parent Involvement

Communications between family members and educators are crucial for a child to reach their full development. The center aims to provide an environment where there is a strong emphasis on family and center communication to allow consistency and continuity between the home and the center environment. By encouraging family members to be involved in the service, we aim to provide an environment that best meets the needs of the child.

Family involvement is sought in many ways that will not intrude your family life, these may include, providing program feedback or ideas, policy and philosophy reviews, social events. Parents are encouraged to participate in daily activities at the centre, such as reading a story, playing a musical instrument or conducting a cooking experience with the children. Please see your child's educator or Centre Director to discuss further.

Parental Rights

Our centre has a non-discriminatory policy of access for the children and families. This means that all families are welcome regardless of race, culture, religion, gender, ability, or other criteria, provided they agree to comply with the centre guidelines and policies and pay the required fees.

Confidentiality & Privacy

The Fern ELC protects the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of individuals by ensuring that all records and information about individual children, families, educators and management is treated with discretion and kept in a secure place and only accessed by or disclosed to authorised people. Storage of all records will be in accordance with legislative policy. All information at the centre is kept confidential and is based on the current information Privacy Law Act 2000.

Child Safe Standards

The child safe standards encompass existing child safety requirements for individuals and organisations such as the Working With Children Check, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and requirements to report information to police and to the Department of Family and Community Services.

The Fern Early Learning Centre is committed to Child Safety. The Child Safe Standards are in practice at the centre to ensure that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented, and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to, by undertaking mandatory reporting underpinned by the new PROTECT Child Safe Standards.

Custody & Access

When both parents are listed on the birth certificate, they are automatically given joint custody regardless of their marital situation. Without certified custody orders educators cannot restrict access to the child, by either parent regardless of a parent's request. In the case of disputes over custody the Centre Director must be informed of any court orders and a copy provided with your enrolment details. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the court order at the centre is always up to date and that any changes made are provided to the Centre Director in writing from the appropriate authority.

Complaints

All parent feedback is taken as an opportunity to improve the centre. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns and issues with the child's educator or Centre Director. Concerns will be documented, followed up and responded to in a prompt and confidential manner. Management will follow through to determine that all concerns and complaints have been successfully resolved in a fair, transparent, and equitable manner. To maintain high quality care, the centre will provide regular short surveys to identify the areas of families concerns and aspects for improvement.

In the instance a complaint is made to the centre regarding a child's health, safety or wellbeing being compromised or legislation being contravened the Centre Director or management will notify the DET within 7 days and complete required information.

If you feel that you have not received a satisfactory outcome you may contact the Area Manager on 0417 542 013. If you are still not happy with the outcome you are able to contact the Department of Education and Training.

Communicating with Families

Effective communication is the key to a successful partnership between educators and families. The centre uses the online portal Kindy Hub as a platform of communication with families. Room educators will provide families with a daily reflection of what has taken place during the day and families are made aware of their child's routines every day. Information about upcoming events, reminders, are made through this application. Kindy Hub allows families to communicate with room educators and the Centre Director throughout the day. Parents are welcome to call the centre at any time to discuss your child and to see how their day is going.

Parent information nights are organised during the year for social and informative evenings. The centre organises a formal annual parent and educator meeting. However, parents will be encouraged to book a meeting with your child's educator if you have a question, issue, or concern at any time. We request parents to keep the discussion very brief (Max 5 Min) at the pickup and drop off times as educators have a duty of care toward the other children.

As a company we value family feedback regarding all aspects of our centre, throughout the year we email parents short surveys. We would appreciate if you could spare a couple of minutes to complete the survey and provide us with your valuable feedback. This information may be used in the review of centre policies, procedures, and Quality Improvement Plan.

Parents can access a wide variety of information i.e. policy handbooks, fact sheets (including languages other than English) from a range of sources covering topics relevant to children and families on our Parent Hub via QK Enrol and Kindy Hub. If you are looking for information about a specific topic, do not hesitate to speak with your child's educator or Centre Director who will be able to assist you.

Students

The Fern ELC aims to extend its open-door policy to students. Volunteers and students will need to have a current working with children check before being considered. Educators work side by side with students and understand that they are the primary carers and will always take all responsibility for the direct supervision of the children. Families will be notified of student placement and information will be displayed on the relevant room doors. Students are not permitted to document or take photos of any child without written parent permission.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Educators talk about safety practices in our daily program so children can be responsive to any emergency situations. We discuss the importance of listening to instruction, the safety of the children and the role of emergency services. Educators conduct monthly emergency drills, to guide and familiarise children, with the process and expectation in case of an actual evacuation having to occur.

Advertisement

i9 Education (parent company) advertises very actively through print or electronic or social media and may use photos including groups or individual children for advertising the early learning brands. At the time of enrolment parents are asked to sign a consent that allows the centre to produce your child or children's photographs for children's learning journals, educator training and any promotional purposes.

The photos will remain the property of the centre during and after the child or children leaves. Parents are not permitted to use any of our media collateral for any commercial purposes.

CCTV Camera

The Fern ELC use CCTV cameras in their centres for safety, security, and training purposes. Parents and educators do not have access to the CCTV footage. The recordings will be strictly confidential and only senior management are able to access, retrieve and review these recordings for legitimate reasons. The recordings of CCTV cameras will remain the property of the centre during and after the child or children leave the centre.

Social Media

The centre has its own individual Facebook page that is a great way of keeping up with what is happening, any upcoming events, reminders and what the children have been doing at the centre. On enrolment parents will be asked to sign authorisation that their child is permitted to appear on our Facebook page. If authorisation is not given the child will not have their photo published on this page, there may be occasions your child is moved away from a group activity for a short period of time if a photo is being taken that is intended to be published on Facebook.

We understand that relationships and friendships can form between families and educators. To maintain professionalism our policy states that educators are not to have centre family members as Facebook friends.

Multimedia

Multimedia facilities can only be used for educational purposes at the centre. The time allocated is not more than 20 minutes a day. Any programs, videos or documentaries that are to be viewed by the children must be pre-approved by the Centre Director or Educational Leader.



Thank you

We are pleased to welcome you and look forward to developing a supportive and friendly relationship to provide the best quality care and education for your child.