



MIDVALE HUB

Midvale Early Childhood & Parenting Centre

Employee Handbook

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Welcome to our service.

We hope you will find your employment at the Midvale Early Childhood and Parenting Centre both satisfying and rewarding. This handbook, together with the Policy Manual and other professional guiding documents, will support you to understand your role and responsibilities in relation to the provision of an exceeding level of education and care at our service.

Your role and responsibilities are outlined within your position description and contract of employment. Your employment conditions including hours of work, lunch break, rates of pay, superannuation and leave entitlements are outlined within your relevant Award, as well as within your contract of employment. You will be given copies of these documents upon employment and copies are also available at the service for your reference.



Service History

The Midvale Early Childhood and Parenting Centre is part of the Shire of Mundaring and is located in the City of Swan. The Service was established in 1986 when a need for access to childcare and community based kindergarten was identified in the local community. From humble beginnings the service has evolved to become a part of the Midvale Hub, servicing the diverse needs of local families and the community.

The Midvale Hub

Our mission is to reduce barriers that prevent the community from flourishing by empowering adults and children to access programs and services that encourage them to proactively learn, knowledge build and strive towards achieving a brighter future.

The Midvale Hub has gained a community wide reputation for being an approachable, friendly and helpful organisation. Over the last 30 years we have been successful on having:

- a high level of community trust and respect
- a strong knowledge of local context
- a track record for becoming increasingly more effective through research, continuous learning, engagement and relationship building
- a long standing relationship with key stakeholders
- an ability to engage new stakeholders to achieve even better integrated services/programs for parents and children
- a strong relationship with the local Aboriginal and CALD communities

The Midvale Hub delivers a suite of early education and care services, parenting programs that are designed with local families to meet grassroots needs. The Hub also fosters partnerships with other organisations to deliver integrated programs/services to provide solutions that cater for a broad range of community health, education and family support needs. The facilitation and delivery of high quality education, parenting and wellbeing programs/services in a positive way has resulted in achieving significant improvements in development and learning outcomes for the local community.

The Midvale Hub has three purpose built facilities that provide children and families with a safe place to learn, play and grow. Many of these programs and services operate from these locations:

- Midvale Early Childhood and Parenting Centre
- Swan Child and Parent Centres – (Middle Swan and Clayton View)

In addition our programs/services also operate at our local primary schools. By having access to these environments, this enables us to have a greater exposure to the community to deliver effective programs/services that address the needs of the community.

Organisational Structure:

Regulatory Authority:
Department of Communities

Education and Care Regulatory Unit
Boorloo Campus, Level 7, 130 Stirling Street
Perth WA 6000
Tel: 6277 3889
Email: ecru@communities.wa.gov.au

Funding Body:
Department of Education

Approved Provider:

Shire of Mundaring

Chief Executive Officer: Jason Whiteaker
Director Strategic & Community Services: Megan Griffiths

**Midvale Early Childhood and Parenting Centre
(Approval Number: SE-00012911)**

Manager Family and Children Services: Lisa Joy
Coordinator Early Childhood and Parenting: Gabrielle Crosse
MECPC Nominated Supervisor: Sarah-lee Harlow
MECPC Coordinator: Sarah-lee Harlow
Assistant Coordinator: Kerry Martin
Educational Leaders: Sarah-lee Harlow / Laura Greenway
Administration Officer: Susan Broad

Midvale Early Childhood & Parenting Centre Philosophy

Vision Statement

We commit to a shared vision of providing a welcoming environment in which every child thrives. This welcoming environment is reflective and respectful of cultural diversity and the unique story within each of us.

Philosophy

Our Philosophy has four key pillars that reflect our shared values and beliefs as an early childhood and parenting service showcasing our collaborative leadership and team intent. Each pillar is strong in its own right however all are interdependent on each other and provide a framework we can lean into and learn from. We acknowledge the need to continue to take time to critically reflect on the unique and changing needs of children, families and communities. Our intention is to ensure that consistent healthy connected relationships of learning and knowing are nurtured and cultivated in this environment which sits on Whadjuk land. We create a culturally safe environment through embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our daily practices.

Image of the Child

We see every child as strong, capable, creative and curious with an innate desire to explore the world around them. We value each child's inner wisdom, unique strengths and the knowing that they bring into our shared environment. We see the desire to learn in each child, we observe closely to learn more about their cues, desires, likes and dislikes. We view each child as competent and capable and hold high expectations for their learning, sensitively supporting each child's holistic wellbeing. We believe children thrive and do best in an environment rich in culture and diversity. We believe a culture underpinned by having secure, respectful relationships and connection enriches each child's developing consciousness and positive self-belief. We believe each child has a right to be heard and we encourage each child to share their voice and knowing in multiple ways.

Families and Community

We believe that families are the child's first teacher and play a significant role in the child's developing growing personality and self-identity. Every child's journey is a collaboration with families developing partnerships and respecting the rich diversity and history of generational traditions and learning of families, service and community. Each one provides a beautiful link to a connected living story between the child's home and our service. We thrive on connection and work in close collaboration with each family and continuously explore ways of creating rich learning environments that consistently maintain a connection to culture and community. Family and community connection are evident throughout our environment where families and communities are invited to share history, traditions and culture in meaningful ways. We consistently work as a team to ensure we create an environment that offers a true sense of belonging for every child and their family. We do this with respectful open communication, through welcoming learning environments and through listening deeply to ensure every family and child feels heard and seen.

Environment

Our environment is a fluid and engaging environment where children are agents of their own learning making choices in their play. We believe every child has a boundless capacity for creativity, imagination and innovation which is enhanced with a flow of outdoor and indoor play. We believe the natural world is one of the most powerful resources for learning and engage children in sustainable practices. We believe children thrive in our environments which stimulate and engage their natural curiosity. Having access to nature and the natural world provides a unique environment for learning and development. The environment provides spaces and places for individual and group exploration and investigation of both manufactured experiences and the natural world. We recognise and respect the developing social skills of each child to connect with others in their own unique way with gentle guidance and support. We believe in the value of open ended loose part play experiences to enable every child to explore through their senses and stimulate their natural creativity, imagination and strengths. We provide an environment rich in diversity where experiences are designed so that every child feels a sense of importance in our environment, our community and in our world.

Educational Programme

Our educational programme is influenced and guided by the National Quality Standards-Principles and Practices, Early Years Learning Framework, theoretical understanding, critical reflection and our collective knowledge and experiences incorporating the values of each child, family and community. We believe that through the provision of flexibility, freedom of choice, stimulating and engaging sensory experiences are fundamental to our educational programme. Nature based play and controlled risky play is a core element of our educational programme as we believe they are both vital to each child's growing resilience in their physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development. We believe children need a level of challenge in their play to stimulate their thinking and problem solving skills. We provide opportunities for practiced skills to be used as well as new skills to be developed. We implement diverse approaches to teach the art of mindfulness to all children. With empathy and gentle guidance we practice co regulation alongside children as needed. This allows them to learn the art of self-regulation in a safe and supported environment taking the time they need. . We recognise that there are multiple ways of being, of doing, of learning and exploring and provide an educational programme rich in its diversity and experiences to meet the developmental needs of each child.

Hours of Operation

The MECPC service is open from 6.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The services closes over Christmas and New Year for a 2 week period. Employees are permitted to request annual leave or can take leave without pay over this period.

Anti-Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly because they belong to a particular group of people or have a particular characteristic. Many people have fixed ideas about groups of people who are different from themselves. If we aren't careful, this can lead us to discriminate against people who belong to those groups.

If you feel you have been treated unfairly at our service and internal grievance procedures have not satisfied you, you have the right to complain to:

Equal Opportunity Commission (Government of Western Australia)

eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au or 08 9216 3900

The Australian Human Rights Commission 1300 369 711 or

infoservice@humanrights.gov.au

The Fair Work Ombudsman www.fairwork.gov.au

At MECPC we believe that all employees are vital members of the team. We believe that:

- An education and care service operates most effectively when there is open communication and information is shared
- Effective communication and problem solving between the adults in the service also models successful working relationships for children
- Teamwork and collaboration, where others' viewpoints are respected and contributions are acknowledged, are fundamental to the development of trusting relationships
- Diversity within the team in terms of skills, experiences and backgrounds enhances the team and ultimately leads to more effective and responsive programs for children
- Employees, educators, students and volunteers develop and maintain relationships with each other that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness
- Employees and educators respect and value the diverse contributions and perspectives of their colleagues and this is evident in their interactions with each other.

(Source: The NQS, QA 4).

Social Justice Principles

Social justice is based on four interrelated principles of equity, rights, access and participation, to ensure that:

- There is **equity** in the distribution of resources
- **Rights** are recognised and promoted
- People have fairer **access** to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life and

- People have better opportunities for genuine **participation** and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.

(Source: The Social Justice Framework 2008 – 2012, Division of Local Government, NSW)

Policies and Procedures

The National Quality Standard states the importance of clear policies and procedures to:

- Ensure there are common expectations about how things are done at the service
- Promote consistent practice.

The Leadership team writes and reviews the policies and procedures that inform the way the service is operated. These policies are informed by legislated requirements, best practice guidelines as well as contemporary research. All stakeholders, including employees and families are provided with opportunities to contribute to the review consultation process.

It is expected that all employees of the service adhere to the policies and procedures at all times.

Workplace Health and Safety

It is important that you understand your workplace healthy and safety rights and responsibilities. You have the right to a safe working environment that ensures you are not exposed to any risk to your health or safety. Your responsibilities are to take reasonable care of yourself and others in the environment and comply with reasonable instructions from the management team and follow documented policies and procedures.

The approved provider will provide you with relevant WH&S training periodically. Should you require specific training or information please speak with the WHS Representative or the Coordinator. WorkSafe newsletters and other relevant information will be displayed in the staffroom for your reference.

For additional information regarding workplace health and safety you can contact WorkSafe on 1300 307 877.

The service has a primary duty of care to ensure workers and others are not exposed to a risk to their health and safety. A primary duty of care is owed by an employer when it:

- Directs or influences work carried out by a worker
- Engages or causes to engage a worker to carry out work
- Has management or control of a workplace.

The employer must meet its obligations, so far as is reasonably practicable, to provide a safe and healthy workplace for workers of other persons by ensuring:

- Safe systems of work
- A safe work environment
- Safe use of plant, structures and substances
- Facilities for the welfare of workers are adequate

- Notification and recording of workplace incidents
- Adequate information, training, instruction and supervision is given
- Compliance with the requirements under the work health and safety regulation
Effective systems are in place for monitoring the health of workers and workplace conditions.

Employees and workers

A worker must, while at work:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of others
- Comply with any reasonable instruction by the employer

Hazard Reporting

It is important that you report any hazards in the environment as soon as possible to a *Responsible Person* for them to address. This will ensure that our service continues to be a safe place.

Injury and Accident Reporting

The service has policies and procedures for the reporting of near misses, injuries and accidents. Please ensure you follow these as your health and safety is of high importance.

First Aid Training

It is a requirement of your employment that you at all times maintain up-to-date First Aid qualifications including the CPR component, unless otherwise determined by management based on your role and responsibilities.

Emergency Procedures

It is important that you understand and comply with any emergency procedures that the service has. The primary emergency procedure is that of the fire evacuation. At your orientation visit you will be guided through the procedure in relation to this.

Sign In and Out Book

You are required to *sign in and out* each day in our *Working Directly With Children Record*. This record also includes a record of your breaks and time taken away from the children to complete non-contact duties. You will be shown the procedure for this during your orientation visit.

Payroll

Your timesheet will be completed by the Coordinator each fortnight. You will review this and sign it off prior to it being submitted to Payroll. You will be paid via bank transfer fortnightly on a Thursday in accordance with your Award. You will be issued with an electronic pay-slip, which will be emailed to your personal email address.

Grievance Procedures

Grievance procedures, which include making a complaint against another employee as well as disciplinary and dismissal procedures are detailed in the Employee Grievance Procedures Policy.

Personal Leave

Under the Award you are entitled to 10 days paid personal/carer's leave per year. A *fitness for work /medical clearance* may be required to return to work following any personal leave.

Superannuation

In accordance with the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* the approved provider will contribute 11.5% superannuation to the Superannuation Fund of your choice. Should you wish to make any extra superannuation employee contributions please contact Payroll who will provide the relevant document for you to complete.

Annual Leave

Annual leave is paid in accordance with the relevant Award, being 4 weeks (20 days) per year or pro rata. All employees are required to submit an *Application for Leave* form to the Coordinator with as much notice as possible when seeking to take leave. Annual leave will be approved based upon the operational needs of the service to ensure required staffing levels are maintained. Employees are required to consult with the Coordinator to determine mutually acceptable dates. Leave may be accumulated for a maximum of 12 months before being taken. Every effort will be made to support employees who need to fulfill family responsibilities.

Leave Without Pay

Applications for leave without pay will be determined by the Coordinator and Manager after consideration of:

- The applicant's personal needs/family responsibilities
- The needs of the service in relation to the availability of relief staff and the effect of the employee's absence on the provision of quality child care
- The length of leave requested
- The applicant's length of service at the service
- The applicant's previous requests for leave without pay

Shift Rosters

Shift rosters will be completed by the Coordinator each week once all bookings have been received for the following week. Wherever possible employee requests for shifts will be accommodated, however the roster is based primarily on the operational needs of the service. Individual circumstances and the needs of the service will be balanced wherever possible taking into account:

- Individual needs and circumstances of the employee and their family responsibilities
- Maintenance of the required staff to child ratios.

Lunch Breaks

The service operates on a half hour lunch break model. ALL contact educators are not permitted to leave the premises and must remain accessible in case of being required to assist in their relevant room. This lunch break model results in contact staff being on premises for 8 hours as opposed to 8.5 when given an hour lunch break. If at any time you require an extended break please speak with the Coordinator so that lunch cover can be rostered.

Unable to Report to Work

Employees are required to inform the Coordinator via telephone call or text message on their mobile by 6.30am, if they are unable to report to work that day so that relief staff can be arranged.

Clothing and Presentation

Uniforms will be provided to all employees (minimum 3 shirts) prior starting a shift, a photographic identification lanyard will also be provided. Employees and educators need to wear black pants (not leggings and not above the knee). Shoes need to be flat bottomed, comfortable with no exposed heels or toes.

Jewelry is to be safe and hygienic, facial jewelry is deemed unsafe, therefore employees will be asked to remove any facial jewelry or cover it up.

All employees must wear a wide brimmed suitable hat and sunscreen whilst in the outdoor area. Annual skin checks are available to all employees.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on the premises, in work vehicles or within sight of the children. If an employee chooses to smoke on their break they must not smoke in the Midvale Hub staff uniform and must be away from the childcare premises.

Alcohol & drugs

The consumption of alcohol or use of other drugs whilst working is not permitted during work hours. A person reporting for duty under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs will be suspended pending an internal review and may be subject to dismissal.

Staff Meetings and Communication

The Coordinator and Educational Leader will communicate with all employees through monthly written *staff communications*, memos and notices. Staff meetings are held quarterly and all employees are encouraged to attend. Individual room meetings and Educational Leader meetings will occur monthly.

Code of Conduct

Your conduct within the service is very important. Please ensure you are familiar with the service's Employee Code of Conduct and all relevant employment policies. Ethical conduct guides the behaviour and decisions within the service and is founded in respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and employees and the extended community. We aim to uphold the highest standards in ethical conduct in accordance with the ECA Code of Ethics (2010) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We view the National Quality Standards as minimum standards of which we constantly strive to exceed.

Recruiting appropriate Employees

We aim to have consistent and committed educators and employees who support quality standards and the continuity of care for children. We value effective, transparent and equitable recruitment processes that ensure the service attracts and retains educators and employees who can best meet the needs of children and their families.

Employee Appraisals

Performance Development Reviews (PDR's) are conducted by the Coordinator annually in accordance with the approved providers' guidelines. A review of the annual performance review is completed after six months to review progress and reassesses any needs if required.

This review process helps you think about your work performance and achievements during the year. It gives you and your reviewer an opportunity to think about and discuss your skills, knowledge and attitudes. It also allows you to pinpoint your strengths and helps to identify areas where you may benefit from training or development.

Performance reviews are designed to:

- Assist a manager to achieve the desired outcomes for the organisation
Extend employee's expertise and skills in specific areas
- Empower employees to take a more active role in their own work, their own education, and their own professional development
- Identify learning opportunities in a rapidly changing field and develop professional learning plans for employees
- Provide an orientation to the profession for those employees who are untrained
- Provide direction and focus to employees' work including reviewing job descriptions
- Boost morale and self-respect, through recognition of achievements.

Employee Continuous Learning and Training

The NQS highlights that updating and maintaining educators' knowledge is a joint responsibility of educators, coordinators, the nominated supervisor and the approved provider, and includes a range of professional development strategies that challenge and extend current thinking.

The service acknowledges the importance of continued employee development and training. Funds are set a-side in the budget for this purpose. You will be encouraged to participate in training opportunities, which may include attendance in conferences, workshops and networking forums and online training. Should you desire to attend a professional development opportunity please discuss this with the Coordinator.

Induction Program

The process of induction or orientation is the final step in your recruitment process and the first step in your professional development program. Through your induction you will be attuned to the policies and operating principles of the service and be given an understanding of the approved providers commitment to training and employee development.

This process is also an opportunity for you to feel welcome, learn the lines of communication and the importance placed on clear and open communication. The Coordinator (or a member of the leadership team) will explain your conditions of employment and the organisation's expectations, and answer any questions you

may have. You will also learn of any practical aspects of the service and the program.

Confidentiality

The NQS QA 7 highlights the importance of maintaining confidentiality and currency of information provided by families, educators, directors and employees or other stakeholders at all times. This practice is an indicator of the level of professionalism that exists within the service and builds families' confidence in the service's records management practices.

At our service you will be required to sign our *Confidentiality Agreement* as an indication of your awareness of the significance of this area.

Working with Children Check

In keeping with the laws under which the service operates, you are required to hold a current Working with Children Check. The Working with Children Check is a pre-employment screening requirement for all child-related employment.

Guiding Children's Behaviour

Guiding children's behaviour is an important aspect of educating and caring for children. Positive strategies need to be developed to assist children to learn appropriate ways of behaving. The term 'behaviour guidance' is used to reflect current thinking about the most positive and effective ways to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them to manage their own behaviour. Corporal punishment and unreasonable discipline are not permitted in education and care services, not only because the child may be physically harmed, but also because it nearly always has detrimental effects on the child's self-esteem and feelings of security and belonging. Educators guide children's behaviour through their interactions and communication at all times. The service's approach to behaviour guidance in daily practice impacts on learning outcomes for children. Research indicates that quality learning environments and sensitive, nurturing adults are essential for achieving positive learning outcomes for children.

When educators adopt a positive and active approach to behaviour guidance, they reduce challenging behaviours and encourage children to achieve success, develop positive self-esteem and increase competence. A positive, inclusive and active approach includes considering the reasons for children's challenging behaviour, not just dealing with the behaviour itself. The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) describes inclusive practice in the description of supportive learning environments as '... vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. They cater for different learning capacities and learning styles and invite children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions'¹.

Behaviour guidance consists of a variety of ways that adults help children learn to guide or self-manage their behaviour to learn acceptable behaviour. It encourages children to reflect on their actions and the impact those actions have on themselves, others and the environment around them. This contrasts with the more traditional 'behaviour management' or 'discipline' approaches that generally imply an adult

'managing' children's behaviour or using punishment, or inappropriate discipline to control them. Behaviour guidance based on positive mutually respectful relationships between adults and children is most likely to influence behaviour in constructive ways. The absence of a warm and trusting relationship with an adult will often result in the child resisting direction from that adult. Both the behaviour guidance practices and the educational program need to meet the developmental and individual needs of each child.

Behaviour guidance:

- demonstrates respect for children
- is based on knowledge of children's development and learning
- is based on an understanding and knowledge of each child, including background, culture, community and family
- is proactive and positive
- recognises the child's strengths
- does not use any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances
- does not involve making judgements about children and families.

Supervision

Children must be adequately supervised at all times to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing. Adequate supervision means that an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation. It requires active involvement with children, it is not adequate for educators to stand back and watch. Adequate supervision means knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.

Children of different ages and abilities need different levels of supervision. It is the responsibility of the educator to ensure each child is adequately supervised based on their age and known abilities and capacity.

Educator to child ratios alone do not constitute adequate supervision.

Child Assessments, Curriculums & Term Plans

Term Plans

EYLF & MTOP Learning Outcomes
WA Kindergarten Curriculum
AEDC Data
Developmental Domains
National Quality Standard Component Elements



Individual Cycles of Planning

Observations / Assessments
Analysis of learning
Planning (extensions)
Evaluation / Critical Reflection
Planning



Group Planning

Observations / Assessments
Analysis of learning
Planning (extensions)
Evaluation / Critical Reflection
Planning



Fortnightly Curriculum

Reference Principles, Practices & LO's (EYLF or MTOP)
Reference to Quality Area / Standard of National Quality Standard
Reference to Theorist / Approach (Pedagogical Influences)
Intentional Teaching – (from term plan)
Individual Planning (from COP's)
Group Planning
Spontaneous