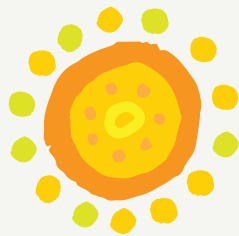


Perfect Start Mary Street

PARENT HANDBOOK

REVIEW DATE : 3 / 02 / 2024



PERFECT START
CHILD CARE CENTRES

Welcome to Perfect Start Mary Street

We trust that your time spent at Perfect Start Mary Street will be a happy and a fulfilling experience for your family. The purpose of this handbook is to give you an insight into the philosophy, goals and routines within the centre. It will also explain our policies to aid in the smooth transition into the centre.

The Centre Staff are always available to ask any questions or respond to any concerns you may have during the orientation process and beyond. Please feel free to approach the staff at any time. We encourage parent feedback and welcome any suggestions. Our Centre is committed in providing quality care to children aged 6 weeks to 6 years. Perfect start Mary street is a Long Day Care Centre operating 52 weeks per year, closed only for gazetted Public Holidays. The hours of operation are – 6:00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday.

Policy and procedure review and feedback

Our centre conducts policy and procedure reviews monthly. These are story parked and emailed for families to have feedback, place comments or suggestions for the policies in which we run our centre by.

Our Philosophy

Educators of Perfect Start believe that Early Childhood is a significant period of the child's life during which the greatest brain development and growth occurs at a time when early experiences influence attitudes and dispositions of learning. Childhood is the foundation for all later learning and development. We are guided by strong policies and practices in which we review with all stakeholders to provide a broad perspective and overarching view within the service.

Most importantly, early childhood is a time for play, fun, discovery, adventure, imagination and therefore we believe that Learning is most beneficial through play (Froebel) and benefits from a collaborative approach to teaching that follows the children's interests (Reggio Emilia). We believe that play based learning enables the children to develop a sense of being belonging becoming through relationships and social interactions (Vygotsky) which will in turn help them to achieve key learning outcomes. The curriculum will encourage the achievement of the learning outcomes, relationships and encourage a respect for others, nature and the environment.



Role of the environment (CPI)

We see our environments as a third teacher. We set them up to be engaging interactive, fun and supportive of children's development. The room set ups encourage children to make choices, support children to feel secure, create a comfortable 'lived-in' feeling, all while ensuring access for children with additional needs and for children under three in ways that reflect inclusive practice and facilitate their agency and learning.

Our children engaging with nature is important as we believe that nature supports children to develop stewardship in order to become environmentally responsible and to respect the environment. Using natural resources such as-flowers, shells, stones, fabric, baskets, art prints and other materials in the curriculum helps children to learn to appreciate natural beauty.

Children have the ability to look back on their work, contribute to their documentation and revisit learning to assist children to see where they started and how far they have come.

Creating a warm, welcoming home-like environment that promotes secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships. An environment that is vibrant and flexible that is rich in choices and provides dynamic opportunities for learning as individuals and as part of a group. Creating a child care environment that is safe clean and promotes exploration, discovery, challenge and understanding of our natural and physical worlds.





Trust

The structure represents the strength of the solid foundation that is built on trust at kindy. This trust can be formed between the family and educator, or the child and educator, and underpins all the relationships developed during the songline journey.

Role of the environment (CP2)

Curriculum development involves collaboration and construction with children, families and communities as relationships help support the development of confidence, independence, trust, security, and acceptance and ability to become a responsible group member (Montessori).

Through partnerships we can ensure that we effectively extend on each child's strengths, interests and previous experiences, therefore providing them with the best possible opportunities for learning. This is guided through the early years learning framework, Queensland government kindergarten program and National Quality Standards. We provide ongoing records of children's development and assessment through learning stories, reflective journals, project documentation, samples of children's work and reflections on children's goals.





Play

Play-based learning is an essential and central part of *kindy*. Using the star again to represent a child, this element shows that the child is exploring and playing. Play is positioned next to the educator in the songline, showing that the educator facilitates play, which leads to the next element: learning.

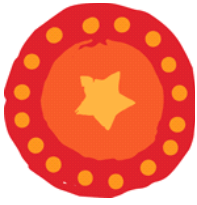
Children are connected (CP3)

Children must feel a sense of connection to their world around them. This assists children in building strong relationships, and builds on child happiness which is for front to everything we do. To build a sense of belonging we must create a sense of fun, excitement, and predictability.

We will continue to provide opportunities for children, families and educators to share their ideas, knowledge, skills, culture, language and experiences with the centre through regular communication, involvement in the child care centre and program development.

By promoting each child's sense of agency. Physical spaces should allow children to be active contributors and have an influence in their world. This involves children contributing to make the environment safe, for example, using equipment and resources in an appropriate way. (John Bowlby)





Child

The child, represented by a bright, shining star, sits at the centre of the kindy story. They are an individual with their own thoughts and dreams, ready to begin the kindy journey.

100 languages infinite cultures (CP4)

Respect for diversity by acknowledging the cultural backgrounds, languages, values and contributions of all families in the child care centre and the surrounding our Birkdale community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We have a connection to the land and people of Quandamooka. We believe in a bi-cultural learning environment, knitted closely with the Aboriginal culture. We celebrate and value the diversity of the cultures we encounter within our centre community. We endeavour to gain knowledge and understanding of cultures throughout our centre to ensure we can best support each individual family culture.

As a centre we recognise and believe in the value of multicultural families within our centre. All ethnic backgrounds are respected and integrated into centre life, allowing each child a sense of belonging and an understanding of their own individual identity.

Opportunities for children, families and educators to develop cultural competence by promoting positive attitudes, learning and developing communication skills and interactions across diverse cultural groups. Opportunities for children to express their knowledge and understanding through each of their 100 languages e.g. art, music, story, drama, construction and many more daily within our Mary street Perfect start child care centre. (Reggio Amelia) (Aboriginal 8 ways of learning)





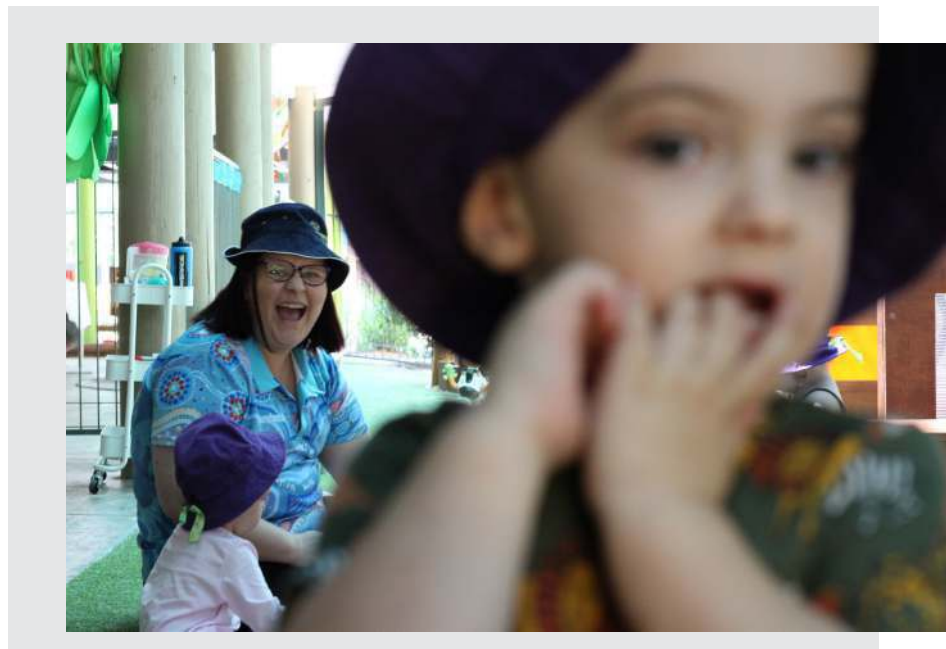
Culture

Represented through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art symbols, culture does not enter the song line at a defined point, but is an integral part of the song line itself.

Teachers as partners (CP5)

Our Educators will provide interactions with children that are positive, constructive and always encouraging. Educators will at all times role model the behaviors that we share with the children. Educators will acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of all children and meet the needs of each individual child. Educators will demonstrate understanding and acceptance when dealing with challenging behaviors. Perfect Start Child Care will support the families and educators by providing them with the resources necessary to guide and scaffold positive behaviors in a pedagogical way.

We provide Opportunities for educators to gain further knowledge, skills and competence in the early childhood field and child care through regular staff training and professional development. (Vygotsky)





Educator

The educator sits in the centre with the children sat around. The yellow arrows radiating outward represent the positive effect the educator has on the child's development.

The Role of our families (CP6)

We are a continuation of home. In Partnerships with families we guide child's development including working with families to develop and evaluate goals for their child across their year.

We encourage family to provide feedback and reflection through story park, communication diaries and through our monthly parent committee meetings, for families to feel valued and their voices heard throughout the centre in assisting in making a difference in providing the best quality care for children.





Family

The child, again represented by the star, is at the heart of the family. Family is gathered around in love and support for the child, prepared to embark on the kindy journey together.

Healthy minds, healthy bodies (CP7)

Our Centre provides healthy homemade meals using whole grain foods with consideration to any known lifestyle food choices, allergies and or intolerances. We believe that through providing quality food we give children the best start in a sustainable approach to healthy eating for the future.

We do a variety of interactive programs promoting Healthy Harold, Happy Feet, Ginger Sports and dance along, Be You, and Braveheart's as extra curricular activities that promote gross motor large boy movements. We continue to provide curricular activities that encourage and healthy bodies and healthy minds. Wellness for children is fundamentally important in providing children the opportunity to become life long learners.





Growth

The arrows radiating out in all directions, represent that the child will be always growing in all directions. This element captures a sense of boundless opportunity for our children as they grow and learn at kindy.



Learning

The learning motif has arrows pointing inwards and outwards representing the child forming an understanding of themselves (internal arrows), and adding to their understanding of the world around them (external arrows).

Educators

Educator photos with their qualifications are displayed in the foyer and in each room. Educators are required to meet the standards of the centres policies and procedures. staff members are involved in further training to continue to provide professional care for your children across the year including updating first aid and cpr. All educators Must hold a positive working with children card (blue card) this is required to be updated every three years. They all appreciate positive feedback from you and are always willing to discuss any matters concerning you and your child.

Childcare Float Educators/Casuals

Our float staff share the additional hours required to relieve staff to go to lunch, tea breaks and have program planning. Their hours are flexible and they also cover absences such as sick leave and annual leave. Other float staff members not listed may work from time to time when needed. They are valued members of our team environment and contribute to room programs and documentation for children and the service.



Settling Your Child Into Care

The introduction into long day care can be difficult for children and parents. Children's welfare and happiness are the priority for staff when welcoming new children to the centre and when assisting the family to settle into the centre environment. It is recognised that family's needs will vary greatly in the orientation process and individual needs will be met as best as possible. The following outlines some helpful hints for parents on settling their child into care:

- Ease your child into care with short stays to begin with to help familiarise themselves with the environment, staff and other children.
- Try to talk at home about child care. Mention the names of the staff and other children. Talk about the things the child will be able to do at child care that are fun and enjoyable.
- Provide a favourite toy, blanket or comforter to support your child when they are separating from you or settling to sleep. This can help your child feel more secure.
- When leaving your child it is best to make sure you say goodbye and then leave. Hesitating and not going after you have said your goodbyes, if a child is upset only confuses them. Reassure your child that everything is all right and you will return, this can help them to settle.
- At first some children protest strongly while others may take a day or two to realise that you are leaving them and begin to protest after several days. Children soon learn that you do return and in the mean time they are well cared for.
- Families are encouraged to contact the centre during the day if they wish to do so.

Daily Routines

Each room at Perfect Start Mary street have flexible routines which covers approximate times for activities such as meal, sleep and playtime. Routines will vary from time to time according to the needs of the group and individual children. For further information about your child's routines please see the team in your child's room.



Program Planning

The Team Leader in each room in association with the other Educators, is responsible for planning an early childhood program based on the Early Years Learning Framework, which reflects child centred anti-bias and multi-cultural experiences; is developmentally appropriate and which emerges from the children's observed interests and family feedback. At times this will involve taking photos of your child.

A wide variety of developmental and interest areas are provided for within the indoor and outdoor play environments. These include cognitive, physical (gross and fine motor), social and emotional development, language and literature, art and craft, music and movement, maths, science and construction.



What To Bring

Clothing – Please provide a complete change of clothes for your child on each day of attendance. More than one change may be required (including shoes and socks) for children currently toilet training. Children's clothes that become soiled will be returned home in a plastic bag. These clothes will be available in the soiled items facility in each room.

Remember to name your child's clothing and that it is important that your child is comfortable and their clothing is weather appropriate. Also remember your children are very busy during their day and tend to get very messy and dirty, please consider this when dressing your child.



Seasonal Changes – All children are required to wear a broad brim hat outdoors. Caps do not provide enough sun protection and are not recommended (Please refer to your Services Sun Protection Policy). Foot wear including thongs and crocs are not suitable for climbing, and are therefore not advisable to be worn. During the winter months, warm coats and beanies may be appropriate as the children still spend time outside. Gumboots can also be worn for outside play during the cooler months.

Drink Bottles – Children need to bring their own named drink bottle to be used at the centre. This is particularly important during the warmer months to ensure children are kept well hydrated whilst outdoors.

Bottles and Dummies – For hygiene purposes, all bottles and dummies must be clearly named and dated for pre made milk. Also remember to provide a named container to store your child's dummy while it is not being used. Children's Bottles, must be bought to kindy with pre measured water, pre measured formula in a formula dispenser (this must have name of formula labelled on the container) Breast milk must be labelled clearly, with date expressed and use by date and stored in your child's container in the bottom shelf of the nursery fridge. **BOTTLES MUST HAVE A SECURE LID PLACED ON THEM AT ALL TIMES**

Medication and Creams – must be handed to an educator at all times- no creams or medications to be left in child's bag or on benches- please see medication responsibilities

Mozzie spray - Mozzies in Birkdale through the summer seasons can get bad- we encourage families to apply spray before coming to kindy and you can provide a aerogard spray with a chemist label for your child and we can reapply in the middle or afternoon.



Food And Meals

The centre adopts a “Healthy Food Policy” as part of our Nutrition Policy. This means that all food provided by Perfect start Mary street will be wholesome and nourishing and in alignment to Feed Australia. If your child has a special diet or develops an allergy after you have enrolled please remember to tell staff. Allergy and intolerance action plans will need to be completed for your child and all staff made aware of these requirements.

The menu is displayed in your child’s daily room board and on the kitchen door. Any changes or alternatives to the menu are placed on the kitchen door for families to view daily. If you have any questions or queries don’t hesitate to ask the cook or another member of staff. Breakfast, Morning Tea, Lunch and Afternoon Tea and a small supper snack are provided as part of your daily fees.

If you are wanting to provide your own food for your child this is ok. You must bring the food in a lunch box clearly labelled. All items bought to kindy must have an ingredients list for allergy purposes. All foods bought must be nutritious and healthy food options. NO chips, lollies, or other high sugar foods can be bought to kindy please.

Fee Payments

At Perfect Start Mary street, all fees are payable weekly and all families are required to work towards being two weeks in advance. Failure to keep your fees at a nil balance for your week ending could result in losing your child’s position of care. The preferred methods of payment is DebitPro, or Bpay (please be aware that for bpay payments there is a gap of up to 4 days from payment to when we receive this payment). Final weekly banking is completed by 10am on Friday mornings and all payments need to be finalised before this time to ensure the accuracy of your weekly account statement.

Fees are as followed:

unders 3's	\$121.00 per day
over 3's	\$116.00 per day

Fees are payable to **ALL** days booked, including any absences due to illness, holidays or public holidays. (25% off fees are available for 2 weeks holidays throughout the year providing fees are paid up to date and a minimum of two week's notice is required in writing to the director).

Late Collection Fees – A fee of \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 per minute will apply after 6:00pm. If you are going to be late for any reason please contact the staff at the centre.

Two week's notice is required when your child leaves the centre. All accounts must be finalised by this time to avoid any legal action. Further information in relation to Fees can be found in our Fee Policy.

Two weeks notice CCS

Please be aware that you must sign your child out on their last booked day for your two weeks notice of Centrelink will remove for CCS percentage and place you on full fees up until your last sign in and out days.

Please see fee policy and fee schedule for more information located in your enrolment pack.

Holiday discount

Holiday discount is available to families on a two week prorate basis. 25 percent discount is payable if your account is up to date, and two week's notice is provided to the centre prior to claim the discount.

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Benefit are available for those who are eligible. To qualify for this benefit, families must lodge an application form with the Family Assistance Office. The centre will not be held responsible for any information that has been given to the FAO by the customer in regards to CCB details.

IT IS THE PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THEIR CHILD CARE Subsidy REMAINS CURRENT. IF YOUR NOTICE EXPIRES, FULL FEES MUST BE PAID UNTIL A NEW ASSESSMENT IS ISSUED TO THE SERVICE.



Each day parents are required to sign their child in and complete the sign-in form, which requires details of the drop off time. The child must also be signed out, giving the actual time collected, and staff must also be informed of the child's departure. These records are used for attendance checks and in case of an emergency. It is a legal requirement that they are completed correctly.

This must be completed through the Kiosk machines in the kiosk is not working you must be required to sign in and out through the paper copy located in the foyer in front of the kiosk.

Collection Of Children

No child will be released into the care of any person not known to staff members. If staff do not know the person by appearance, the person collecting the child will be asked to produce photo identification to prove that they are authorised to collect the child on the enrolment form. Parents are required to update their parent portal to make sure that all authorised people to collect are on the data base.

Parent Participation

We encourage all families to join in and contribute to all aspects of the Centre. Parents are welcome to spend time at the centre and share any skills or interest they may have with the children.

Absences

Parents are requested to notify the centre as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend care. Notice is also required in the incidence of infectious or contagious diseases in the family.

Families receiving Child Care Subsidy are entitled to 42 Allowable Absences in a financial year. Once you have used all 42 absences, Child Care Benefit will no longer apply on the days your child is absent from the centre and you will be responsible for paying the full fee rate. Your absent days will be tallied on your weekly account.

Please see Fee schedule located in your enrolment pack for further information



Immunisation

Our centre accepts both immunised and non-immunised children. Although, in accordance with our “Exclusion Policy” any child that has not been fully immunised may be excluded from care, in the event of a breakout of a vaccine preventable disease. It is the responsibility of parents to forward to the centre updated immunisation details as they are scheduled.



Illness Policy

To minimise the spread of infection in our centre, children suffering from certain infections are excluded from attending. If your child becomes ill whilst in care the guardians will be contacted and asked to collect the child as soon as possible.

Parents are encouraged to seek medical advice and contact the centre to inform them of the outcome. Children with a suspected infectious condition must produce a medical certificate before the child returns to care. It is the centres responsibility to inform parents and staff of potential risks or outbreaks of infectious disease. all times.



Children will be excluded if they have:

- higher temperature in excess of 38 degrees
- sticky eyes/discharge from the eyes/blood shot eyes
- diarrhoea or vomiting
- contracted an infectious disease of skin infection
- an unidentified rash
- thick, yellow/green discharge from the nose
- clear discharge from a constantly running nose
- or if in the opinion of the staff they are unfit to cope with a stay at the centre

Parents will be expected to inform staff of their child's condition at all times.

Medication and Creams

If your child requires medication / cream whilst in care, a medication form must be filled in by a parent. NO medication will be administered to a child unless prescribed by a medical practitioner stating the child's name, the dose required and the period for which the dose has to be administered.

All medication brought into the centre must be handed to staff who will then place it into a lockable container in the kitchen out of the reach of children. Under no circumstances is any type of medication to be left in a child's bag.

Medication forms are required to be filled out upon handing medication to educators these will be filled out across the day and then made available with the medication for families to view when collecting that afternoon.

Medications need to have a chemist label that clearly states child's name, date of birth dosage and use by date.

If Panadol is required at kindy- parents will be called and the parent/ caregiver must collect the child within a half hour period of administration

Please review and read the illness injury and trauma policy located in your enrolment pack for further information



Accident/Injury

Our centre is committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and allows for maximum supervision, thus eliminating any accidents to children and staff.

In the case of an accident involving your child during care, staff will immediately administer First Aid. Any minor accidents or injury that occurs to a child during care will be documented on a Medical Wellbeing Report. Staff will inform parents of any accident/injury by phone or at collection time and parents will be required to sign the form to acknowledge that they have been informed of an accident or injury to their child. In the event of a child's injury involving a bump to the head, the parent will be contacted by phone to allow the parent to assess the situation in consultation with staff.

In the case of a serious accident, staff will attempt to contact the parents immediately. If emergency treatment is required an ambulance will be called without delay. It is therefore important that the contact number you provide on the enrolment form is correct and updated when necessary.

Please review and read the illness injury and trauma policy located in your enrolment pack for further information

Sun Protection

It is important that we all protect ourselves from the harsh sun. Young children with sensitive skin are at particular risk of sunburn and skin damage. We encourage all families to adopt a sun smart practice whenever possible.

To enhance this practice we recommend that Parents put sunscreen on their children prior to them arriving at the centre during the summer months to ensure that the 20 minute time frame recommended by the anti-cancer council is adhered to before any outdoor play. The centre also provides sunscreen. If your child has sensitive skin to sunscreen products you will need to provide your own sunscreen. Staff will reapply sunscreen during the course of the day prior to any outdoor activities. We ask that you provide a wide brimmed hat for your child, clearly named and to be left at the centre.

HATS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIME WHILE OUTDOORS as part of our Sun Protection Policy.

Children without a sun hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun.

Children are encouraged to wear sun safe clothing that does not expose too much skin to the sun. Such items as crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and are not recommended.



Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Emergency Evacuation plans and procedures are displayed throughout the centre. Regular fire drills are conducted by staff to familiarise the children with evacuation procedures. Each child will be accounted for by means of the daily attendance sheet and evacuated to a safe place. It is therefore extremely important that the sign in sheet is completed correctly each day.

Behaviour Guidance

Our centre implements a Behaviour Guidance and Appropriate Language Policy, which extends across the whole centre giving consistency of expectation in all rooms. This policy encourages children to respect themselves and others. Therefore staff will emphasise positive behaviour management and incorporate positive reinforcement techniques to guide the children. The centre's aim is to foster behaviour based on control of self and an understanding and appreciation of other people's needs, rights and feelings. This can only be achieved if the children are aware of the limits within the centre and by being consistently reinforced by each staff member

Parent Grievances

The relationship between staff and families is of great importance. In order to enhance and preserve this relationship any grievances/complaints, concerns or differences of opinion need to be dealt with. This will allow for quick resolution and minimal disruption to the day to day running of the centre. Any grievances/complaints should initially be discussed with the person involved if this is appropriate or possible, or with the Director. If necessary our Operations Manager Michelle can be contacted on 0428 028 116 or alternatively the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care Department of Education, and child safety- 33830750

Parent and Visitor code of conduct

Please remember that we are all here for the same reason the enjoyment and education of our children. If you see a child interacting inappropriately please direct your concern to the nearest educator. You are not to perform behaviour management techniques with other children and we ask that you are always kind, courteous and polite to everyone within our service walls.



Notice Boards/Newsletters

We have a number of notice/information boards in our centre. A variety of information will be displayed in regards to upcoming activities and general parent information. Such information may also be made available in various languages. Updates, articles of interest and information around centre events will published and sent to you via email/ story park and our reconciliation newsletter will be sent bi monthly and in the kitchen from chef bea will also be sent weekly around healthy eating nutrition and menus. So please take the time to read any relevant information.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special times for children and the centre enjoys sharing the occasion. You may like to provide a cake on your child's birthday to share with the other children in the group. However the cake must be bought from a shop with all the ingredients listed, an expiry date and must not contain nuts or cream. To prevent the spread of germs

when the child blows out the candles, parents should either:

- provide a separate cupcake (with a candle if they wish) for the birthday child and a large cake that can be cut and shared (As stated in "Staying Healthy in Childcare", 5th Edition").
- Or families can provide cup cakes for individual serve.
- Through summer ice poles are a great option in the tubes (zooperdooper)

We usually celebrate birthdays at Morning or Afternoon Tea and parents are welcome to come along and share in the fun.

Toys

Children may bring comfort toys to the centre particularly for sleep or rest time. The centre however is not responsible for the loss or damage incurred to any toys. Please do not send expensive or loved items that will be missed, as it is sometimes difficult to keep track of toys and loss may cause distress to the child. Please ensure these toys are clearly named.

Comfort items are always encouraged we provide a wellresourced program so other toys are discouraged and not required



Students

Our centre welcomes students on work experience or placement. Students will work together with staff members to enhance their level of learning. Please feel free to make our students welcome at our centre. Photos and a bio will be available in the foyer for all families to see. Any visiting students, and their teachers will always be supervised.

Policy Manual

The Service Policies are review each month by our staff and the families. Your input and feedback into our Policies is valued. The Policies Manual is available for you at any time and is located in the foyer. If you have any queries please talk to the Director. Policies are sent via email and story park for families to vies and place comments on each month. Our policy manual and policies and procedures will be reviewed on a monthly rotational basis.

Parent comments and suggestions Box

Is located in the foyer next to the kiosk machine. If you have any suggestions comments or feedback you wish to share place it in the box and we will get back to you asap.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this important information in regards to your child's care. Please keep this handbook in a safe place for future references.





PERFECT START CHILD CARE CENTRES

Mary Street

