

EARLY LEARNING

Family Handbook



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Acknowledgement of Country

The ancestors and descendants of the Dja Dja Wurrung, of the Kulin Nation, are the traditional owners of this Country.

The YMCA acknowledges that they have been custodians for many centuries and continue to perform age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We all acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.



The Y acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

WELCOME

At the Y, we believe in the power of inspired young people. This inspiration begins with experiences at our Early Learning Centres. We nurture your child's development by empowering them to embrace discovery and adventure in everything they do.

If you require further clarification on any information contained in this handbook please contact your Centre Manager.

Children who do well in their early years perform better throughout their schooling years. Preparing them for a future where they confidently step forward into every stage of their young lives, with confident and inquisitive minds. Our program will help your child get off to a great start and develop an enthusiasm for learning.

YMCA VICTORIA

As a community-focused not-for-profit organisation, any profit we make is put back into improving the programs we deliver to families.

We work with local communities, families and children to provide inclusive, accessible and flexible children's programs. It is our aim to provide a place of belonging that families feel connected to, and supported by, when they join our early learning community.

OUR PHILOSOPHY



Developing the whole child



Strive for the highest quality education and care, assisting children to maximise their learning outcomes



Provide high quality, evidence-informed practice



Empower children to identify their own learning interests and needs and support them as they develop and grow



Create an inclusive community for all children and families



OUR EDUCATORS

About Us

We exist to enhance the life of your child. We ensure they feel confident, happy and connected with our educators and the centre environment. As parents and guardians, your role has the most significant impact on their development so we look forward to working together to help them reach their full potential.

We employ educators in line with legislative requirements, considering the qualifications, skills, knowledge and personal attributes of each candidate in order to build a positive culture and professional learning community. We are an equal opportunity employer and value the diverse, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our educators.

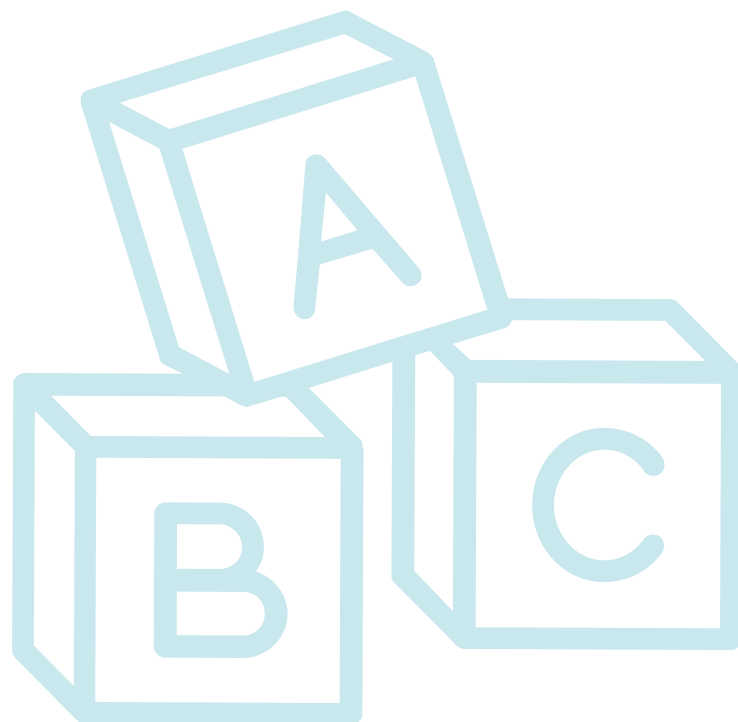
Our educators use a variety of methods and techniques to promote children's learning. They understand that each child has the capacity to be a confident and capable learner when supported to explore and discover the world around them.

We understand the importance of healthy living, providing children with opportunities to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from both educators and their peers.

At the Y, we are committed to our educators and understand the importance of the role they play in the education and care sector. We ensure the professional development experiences offered to our educators support current practices and there is ongoing encouragement to gain further skills and qualifications.

Staff ratios

Our sites comply with National law and maintain educator to child ratios at all times, supervising during play, transitions, toileting, meal times and sleep/rest. Our policy includes having two educators present at all times.



OUR PROGRAMS

Play allows young children to explore, identify, negotiate, take risks and create meaning. The intellectual and cognitive benefits of playing have been well documented. Children who engage in quality play experiences are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development, and are able to regulate their behaviour, leading to enhanced school adjustment and academic learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).

Research suggests that play shapes the structural design of the brain. Play creates a brain that has increased 'flexibility and improved potential for learning in later life' (Lester & Russell, 2008).

Educational benefits include:

- providing a meaningful context for children to learn concepts and skills;
- making learning fun and enjoyable;
- encouraging children to explore and discover together and on their own;
- allowing children to extend what they are learning;
- encouraging children to experiment and take risks;
- providing opportunities for collaborative learning with adults and peers;
- allowing for the practice of acquired and new skills.

Interactive supervision

We know that actively playing alongside children is the best way to supervise, respond and promote positive interactions and learning. Every experience is a potential learning opportunity and children will be encouraged to explore, be curious and make decisions about what they do.

Our Early Learning Centres provide safe and supportive spaces for your child to develop independence, confidence, communication and social skills.

While your child's learning occurs naturally, we want to ensure this is enhanced by incorporating their individual interests into our programming. We do this by encouraging children to challenge themselves and explore new experiences during their time with us. This boosts their resilience while igniting a love of discovery and adventure.

Some key elements to our program include:

- **Child initiated learning**
By supporting your child's ideas and interests, we provide them with opportunities to guide their own learning. It not only helps them feel valued and promotes their individuality, it also enhances their communication skills and enthusiasm for learning.
- **Learning through play**
Through play, your child will organise and make sense of their world while being engaged with people, their environment and a variety of tools that support different learning outcomes. Your child will develop greater cognitive and social skills which improves their self-confidence to explore new experiences alongside their peers and educators.



- **Risk-based play**

We offer opportunities for your child to explore and test their capabilities in a safe environment. We empower them to be more daring, develop new skills and have a give-it-a go attitude. Risk-based play supports your child's resourcefulness, resilience and confidence to continually try new experiences.

- **Nature play and environmental appreciation**

Being able to get outside and explore nature is a big part of childhood. Exposure to nature is essential to your child's health and wellbeing by encouraging their creativity and discovering the wonder of flora and fauna in their world.

We also make an effort in our daily routines to help children understand how their actions impact the environment. It's important for children to understand how they can be responsible citizens of the earth with simple everyday choices.

- **Indoor / outdoor play**

All the rooms in our centres open out to an outdoor play space. We aim to keep these doors open most times of the day, which gives your child the chance to explore freely, build on their interests and make connections with their environment.

- **Messy play**

Messy play gives children the opportunity to delve into materials such as sand, water, chalk, paint, playdough and paste in an exploratory and unrestricted way. Sensory experiences enable your child to understand how things feel, smell and taste while supporting their physical development, curiosity, imagination, experimentation and concentration.

Remember, when your child is engaged in messy play they may come home a little messy but are sure to have a smile on their face!

Food and nutrition

If your child has particular dietary needs, please inform the educators of their requirements. It is important that the educators are informed in writing and up to date on any allergy or food requirements for your child. Many children attending our programs have specific food restrictions due to medical conditions, cultural or religious beliefs.

Healthy, nutritious food is essential in supporting a child's ability to be attentive, have sufficient energy for active play and experience balanced moods. Our centres provide meals and snacks, prepared fresh daily by our qualified in-centre cook. We use fresh seasonal produce, with many herbs coming from our own gardens.

Our menus are updated seasonally with an emphasis on seasonal freshness and are created in line with the Healthy Together Achievement Program and YMCA's Healthy Food and Beverage Policy. We can cater for almost all dietary requirements including allergies, cultural and religious preferences.

We infuse food education into our programs by providing opportunities for positive interactions such as cooking, growing herb gardens and collecting eggs from our chickens where applicable. This establishes a positive relationship with food and helps children to learn healthy habits from an early age.

We aim to be nut safe, so no food from outside the centre is permitted.

Excursions, incursions and special events

To enrich and complement the Educational program, from time-to-time excursions and special events may be arranged. These provide an opportunity for children to further explore their world and the diversity of learning opportunities that are available. Parent participation and involvement is always encouraged and welcomed. Risk assessments are conducted to determine the appropriate safety measures required for the event; this includes child staff ratios, mode of transport, potential hazards and medications. These assessments are made available for consideration prior to the event.

Celebrations

Children are given the opportunity to become connected with, and to contribute to their world, by exploring the diversity of culture, heritage, community and tradition. In order for this to occur please let the Centre Manager know if there are any celebrations or festivals that your family participates in. Educators will endeavour to include these in the educational program.

Integrated Kindergarten

All of our centres offer Integrated Kindergarten which is designed to support working/ studying families who need longer hours of care. We are offering 15 hour Funded Integrated three and four-year-old Kindergarten Programs. Families attending the Integrated Kindergarten pay the daily child care fee which is eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and attend for the full day. They will also be eligible for an additional \$50 per week credit on their account during school terms due to the Victorian Government 'Free Kinder' Initiative as explained further below.

Both Sessional and Integrated Kindergarten offer the same quality kindergarten program planned and delivered by a Bachelor Qualified Early Childhood Teacher. Our experienced and qualified team of educators work together to ensure the entire program is educational, engaging, inclusive and based on the individual needs and interests of the children. If you are unsure about which program will work best for your family, please contact us.

Sessional Kindergarten

Some of our Early Learning Centres offer a three and four-year-old Sessional Kindergarten Program in addition to Integrated Kindergarten Program within our Long Day Care service. Sessional Kindergarten is a different program, please contact the team on (03) 8371 0500 or email cp.support@ymca.org.au to ask for more details on which centres provide this program.

Sessional Kindergarten operates during school terms and children arrive and leave at the same time each day. Children are required to supply their own lunch, and meet the minimum number of contact hours per week with their Kindergarten teacher. Any local differences will be communicated to families directly.

Our Sessional Kindergarten follows the National Quality Framework (NQF) and Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) with a strong focus on preparing children for lifelong learning.

Note: Sessional Kindergartens are required to have two child free days per year. These fall on the first and last days of the kinder year. For more information on Integrated or Sessional Kindergarten head to page 18 and 19.

Belonging, Being and Becoming

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) describes the principles, practices and outcomes that support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The EYLF is a key component of the Australian Government's National Quality Framework.

The EYLF underpins universal access to early childhood education and assists educators in providing young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and development for future success in learning. It forms the foundation for ensuring children in all early childhood education and care settings experience quality teaching and learning. It has a specific emphasis on play-based learning, recognising the importance of communication, language, early literacy/numeracy, social and emotional development.

The Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning.

It communicates these expectations through the following five learning outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.

National Quality Framework

In our everyday practice, we aim to exceed the National Quality Framework (NQF) which governs all early childhood and school aged education and care services in Australia. Overseen by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), it ensures all services operate to a high-quality standard.





Children enrolled at the Y benefit from:


- Having their ideas, interests and capabilities enthusiastically developed and nurtured.
- Learning from educators who receive regular training and professional development opportunities.
- Parents receiving regular feedback and insights that can be incorporated into home life.
- Having their daily routines and transitions blended into their time with us.
- Experiencing the benefits and reassurance of regularly audited programs.


You can learn more about the NQF by visiting the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority website (www.acecqa.gov.au) or by speaking to any of our experienced educators.


HOW TO ENROL


Please note that enrolments must be completed using a desktop computer as the form is not optimised for mobile.


- 1. Enquire**  Getting started is easy – simply talk to our team by submitting an enquiry or giving us a call on (03) 8371 0500.
- 2. Visit us**  Attend a tour of your preferred ELC. Meet the team and see if the centre is right for you and your child. After the tour, we'll get in touch to explain how to enrol.
- 3. We'll confirm availability**  Once you've submitted an enquiry form to your chosen ELC, we'll be in touch to confirm whether we have availability for your child.
- 4. Gather your documents**  To complete your enrolment, you'll need to provide certain information. We suggest collecting the following documents before you get started.


 **Payment information:** You'll need to add your billing information to set up a direct debit. You can do this by selecting 'Update billing information' on the top right hand corner of the enrolment form. Please note your child will not be able to start care until these details have been provided.

 **Contact information:** You'll need to provide primary and secondary contact details for your account. The primary contact is the parent or guardian registered for Centrelink benefits.

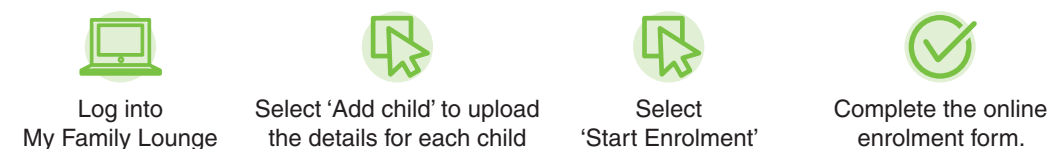
 **Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN):** You'll need to provide your child's CRN as well as the CRN for the person claiming Child Care Subsidy (we'll need this to submit your Child Care Subsidy application).

 **Immunisation history statement:** You'll need to upload an up-to-date copy of your child's immunisation certificate. You can download this from your myGov account.

 **Child's birth certificate:** You'll need to upload a copy of your child's birth certificate.

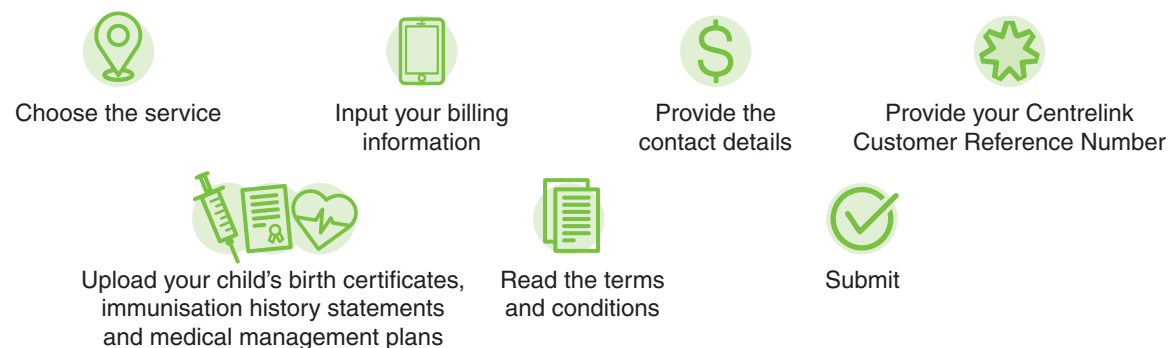
 **Medical management plans:** If your child has a chronic illness or medical condition (such as anaphylaxis, allergies or asthma) you will need to upload a copy of their medical management plan.

- 5. Complete the enrolment form**  To complete the enrolment form:



You'll need to complete a separate enrolment form for each child that you want to enrol at each of our centres.

When completing the enrolment form, remember to:



6. Create a My Family Lounge account My Family Lounge is our online booking and enrolment system. You can access the My Family Lounge website on your desktop computer or on a mobile device. There's also a My Family Lounge app, which you can download via the App Store or Google Play.

You'll need to register for a new account in My Family Lounge to book a place for your child when enrolment is completed. Once you've set up an account, you'll receive an email with a link to complete your registration.

My Family Lounge can not be used to complete enrolment.

7. Submit a booking request Once you have completed your child's enrolment, you'll need to add a booking request in My Family Lounge.

There are two different types of bookings: permanent or casual.

Permanent bookings guarantee your child has a place on your chosen days whereas casual bookings are subject to availability.

8. Accept your offer You'll receive your child's offer of place via email. Please accept the offer within three days, otherwise it will expire and your requested days will become available to the next family on the waiting list. If this happens, you are welcome to submit another booking request following the same process.

For more details on how to enrol please [visit our website](#).

BOOKINGS

Permanent bookings

Booking a permanent day will guarantee your place on that day, giving you peace of mind and provide a sense of stability and belonging for your child.

Follow these steps to secure your permanent booking using your My Family Lounge account:

1. Go to **CREATE A BOOKING REQUEST**.
2. Select ideal **START DATE** and **PREFERRED DAYS** you would like to book.
3. Pending availability, we will send an **OFFER OF PLACE** within four weeks of your nominated start date.
4. Your child will be enrolled upon **ACCEPTANCE** of offer.
5. We will then be in touch to discuss **ORIENTATION** options.

You cannot sell or swap permanently booked days, but you may request a change by emailing the centre or speaking with your Centre Manager about availabilities.

Permanent booking cancellations and changes

The only way you can cancel or change a permanent booking is by contacting your Centre Manager.

Any cancellations or changes to permanent bookings require two week's notice in writing in advance of your final bookings. This applies to all cancellations in your regular booking schedule and not individual days or absences which will be charged as normal as part of our absence policy.

Child Care Subsidies cannot be paid by Centrelink after the last day your child attends our program. As a result, any CCS would need to be removed on the final day/s of your child's care, on which your child did not attend.

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) cannot be paid by Centrelink for any absences before your child physically attends care or any absences after the last day your child physically attends care. You will need to pay full fees for these days.

Casual bookings

We understand families need flexibility with childcare so we also offer casual bookings, with or without permanent days.

You can make a casual booking, using your My Family Lounge account by selecting **ADD CASUAL BOOKING** and following the quick steps. Once confirmed, your booking will appear in purple on your calendar.

- Casual booking fees apply, however the entire amount is eligible for government subsidies.
- Casual requests are subject to availability.



- If there is no availability in your regular room, unfortunately we are unable to allow bookings within another room at the centre. If you book your child into a room they don't usually attend, we retain the right to cancel your booking or you may be asked to collect your child. This is to maintain the best program and ensure we are adhering to our license.
- Permanent bookings take precedent over casual bookings. If another family requests a permanent booking for the day of your casual booking, we will give you first right of refusal in changing yours to a permanent booking. If you do not wish to change your booking to permanent, we will provide two weeks notice that your booking is no longer available.
- To ensure we maintain educator to child ratios, in some cases we may not be able to accept bookings made with less than 24 hours notice.
- Any additional casual days booked between receiving the statement and direct debit will be included in the total debit amount.
- One weeks' notice is required for any casual booking.

Casual booking cancellations and changes

If you need to change or cancel your casual booking, please use My Family Lounge (our online booking and enrolment system). Unfortunately, changes cannot be made by phone or email.

To cancel a casual booking:

Sign into My Family Lounge and follow the prompts.

1. Scroll down to 'Casual bookings';
2. select 'Add Casual booking' to open the calendar;
3. select the day you wish to cancel;
4. select 'Cancel booking'.

To change a casual booking to a different date:

Sign into My Family Lounge and follow the prompts.

1. Scroll down to 'Casual bookings';
2. select 'Add Casual booking' to open the calendar;
3. select the day you wish to change;
4. select cancel;
5. go to the calendar and select the new day you'd like to book;
6. select 'Book selected day' and then 'Save & exit'.

Please note that we require at least seven days' notice for changes and cancellations to casual bookings. There will be no option to cancel if there are less than seven days until your booking.

Waitlist

Enrolled families seeking additional/alternative days or new families requiring care will be added to the waitlist once a room reaches capacity. The list is managed in accordance with Priority of Access specifications (which can be found in the [policies and procedures](#) section) and in date order of enquiry. Please inform the centre of any changes to personal information or care requirements during the waiting period.

Holiday discounts

We offer families who permanently book Long Day Care and Integrated Kindergarten a reduced fee of 50% for up to two weeks per calendar year. Families can take this in either one or two week blocks by providing two weeks written notice.

For example, a family with a permanent Monday to Friday booking would be eligible to receive a 50% discount on the cost of care for that week. Likewise, a family with a permanent booking on a Monday would receive a 50% discount for that day only.

Hours

Our Early Learning Centres are open Monday to Friday and only close on public holidays unless notified otherwise (e.g. curriculum days). Please note we still charge for public holidays.

We are closed on public holidays. You will still be charged for any booked days that fall on a public holiday. This is because our educators are employed on a permanent and full time basis in order to ensure consistency of care across our centre. This means our educators are still paid for this day as they would have otherwise been working.

If your child was due to attend on a day that falls on a public holiday, it will be counted as an absence and you may still be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS), as long as the absence remains within your families total allowable absences as outlined by Services Australia. Please note that if a public holiday falls on the first or last day of your care, it is counted as an absence by Centrelink and will therefore be charged as full fee (no CCS will apply for those days).

ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTS

Our administration team looks after the day-to-day management of your account. This includes:

- Fees and charges applied to your account.
- Submitting your attendance information to Centrelink through the online Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Child Care Subsidy eligibility

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) helps eligible families access approved and registered child care providers by partially subsidising the cost of daily fees. Find out more on the [Services Australia website](#).

Your child must:

- Meet immunisation requirements.

You or your partner must:

- Care for your child at least two nights per fortnight or have 14% share of care.
- Be responsible for child care fees.
- Meet residency requirements.
- Enrol with an approved child care provider.

For any assistance regarding these, contact the team on (03) 8371 0500 or email - cp.support@ymca.org.au

Visit our website to find out more about the [Child Care Subsidy](#).

Assistance with payments

The government can assist with the cost of child care. To find out if you are eligible for assistance and the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), visit the [Services Australia website](#).

Please note that Centrelink automatically withholds five percent of payments throughout the year, to be paid at end of financial year with your tax reconciliation.

Statements and fees

Statement and fees to the below.

- You will be emailed a statement fortnightly on a Monday.
- The statement will reflect a 6-week period of care, however, your fortnightly fees will be reflective of the fortnight that commences one week from that day.
- The fees that will be debited are for permanently booked days of care and any additional casual days (booked at the time the statement is released).

We send statements reflecting a 6-week period for:

- Updates or amendments to bookings
- Recent transactions and ad-hoc payments
- Updates or amendments to subsidy amounts

We have provided the following example to provide clarity on the charge period and debit process:

- A statement will be sent out on Monday 1 January. It will detail the fees payable for care provided between Monday 8 January and Sunday 21 January. If you do not notify us of any perceived errors before 5:00pm on Tuesday 2 January, you will be direct debited for the amount of the fees on Thursday 4 January.

For more details and to view our debit calendar please [visit our website](#).

The calculation of your fees also incorporates your estimated individual Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approval by Centrelink and/or other government entitlements to your account.

The amount payable by you is located at the top-right hand side of the statement and is debited on the Thursday of the same week.

For Early Learning, your regular daily fee will be charged on public holidays if it falls on a day you are normally booked in on a permanent basis.

Please refer to page 15 for more details on public holidays and fees.

If a public holiday falls on the first or last day of your care, it is counted as an absence by Centrelink and will therefore be charged as a full fee (no CCS will apply for those days).

Dishonour or non-payment fees and late pick-up fees may also apply. These additional charges are not covered by government funding or subsidies.

Please note, it is the account holder/guardians responsibility to ensure that Centrelink and YMCA have correct information to accurately manage your account. To check your details are correct (including working hours, family structure, and number of children in care) and to make changes, sign in to your MyGov account at www.my.gov.au and My Family Lounge account at www.childrensprogramms.ymca.org.au/sign-in.

[Visit our website](#) to find out more about our debit policy and payments process.

Approved absences

Centrelink allocates 42 approved absence days of CCS per child per year. If you have exceeded your 42 days of approved absences per child per year, full fees will be charged to your account for any days that your child is marked as absent regardless of reason.

Absences over the 42 days will only receive CCS if you provide evidence to the centre of:

- An illness (with a medical certificate)
- An outbreak of infectious disease when the child is not immunised
- Any other absences due to sickness of the child, a parent or sibling, supported by medical certificates
- A temporary closure of a school or pupil free day (not including public holidays).
- A period of local emergency
- Exceptional circumstances that must be approved by Centrelink

End of year accounts

All accounts must be finalised at least two weeks prior to the end of the calendar year to be eligible for re-enrolment. Please check your statements and contact the administration team to discuss payment if you have any outstanding amounts prior to returning to care the following year.

Managing payment difficulties

We understand that from time-to-time families may experience financial difficulties.

We rely on families to keep us informed to ensure we are able to support you during these times. Please speak with your Centre Manager to understand if you meet the criteria to be eligible for the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS). For Temporary Financial Hardship, Transition to Work and Grandparent payments, you must apply directly to Centrelink.

If that a debit from your account has been dishonoured, or in the instance of non-payment of your account prior to the due date, we will follow the Debtor Management Procedure, which can be found on our website or provided upon request.

Suspension of account

If your account is suspended and you wish to return to the centre, full payment is required before your child can be accepted back into care. This is subject to a place being available.

Integrated Kindergarten fees

The Victorian Government's Free Kinder Initiative includes a subsidy to reduce the cost of kinder for all Victorian three and four-year-old children attending an Integrated Kindergarten Program at participating services.

As a family attending an Integrated Kindergarten Program in a long day care service, you will receive a \$2,000 per year subsidy to be credited against your child's fees. Families who choose Integrated Kindergarten will pay the daily fee of each Early Learning Centre which is eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS), meaning you pay the Gap Fee according to the level of rebate you are entitled to. The 'free kinder' subsidy will be applied to your account in weekly credit amounts during school terms. This credit will be applied after any Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is paid and will appear as a credit adjustment on your fee statement. For example, if your child is eligible for the full \$2,000 subsidy, you will receive \$50 credit per week during school terms.

Children attending Integrated Kindergarten may attend for the full day and opening hours of each centre.

Sessional Kindergarten fees

As Sessional Kindergarten is a free and fully funded program due to the introduction of the Victorian Government's 'Free Kinder' subsidy there will be no charge to families attending our Sessional Kindergarten Programs. If you have a health care card you must provide this at the start of your child's kindergarten year. You will also need to provide us with updated information if your card expires during the year.

Currently this program is available at four YMCA Early Learning Centres, for more details please contact the team on (03) 8371 0500 or email cp.support@ymca.org.au.

Unforeseen closures

In the event of an unforeseen closure (for example environmental or health hazard) where standard notification periods cannot be observed, families will be offered 24 hours, from the time notification is given, to cancel care. If care is not cancelled children will be marked as either present or absent. If the service is closed no fees will be charged.

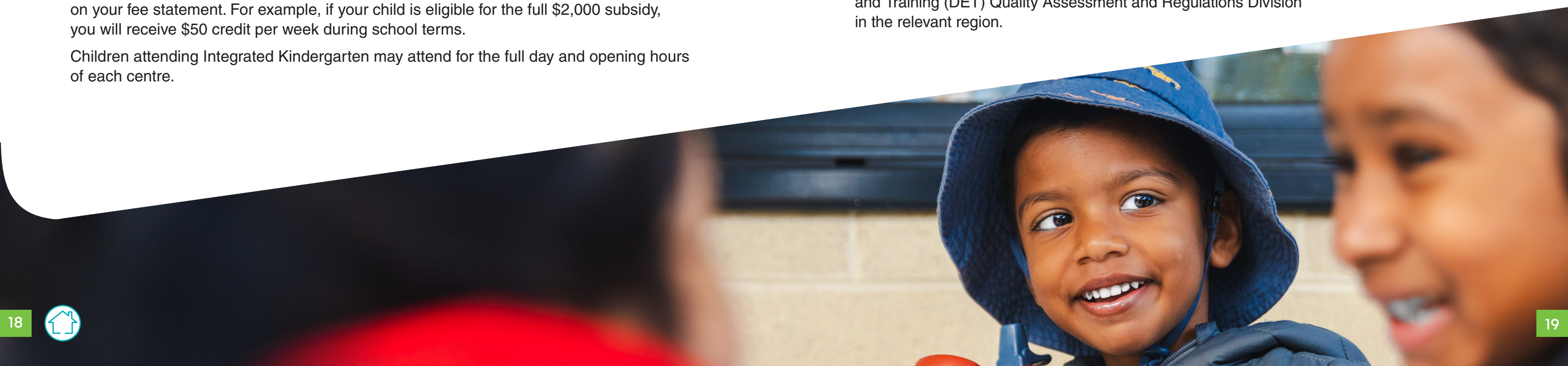
Complaints

If you have any concerns you would like to discuss with the team, when you make a complaint you can expect:

- To be treated with fairness, respect and dignity.
- To have your complaint treated with sensitivity and confidentially.
- To have a response to your complaint within a reasonable time frame.
- To provide any form of feedback: Discuss your feedback/matter with the relevant Educator at the program.
- Discuss your feedback/matter with Centre Manager.
- Discuss the feedback/matter with the Area Manager of Children's Programs.

For any assistance regarding these, contact the team on (03) 8371 0500 or email - cp.support@ymca.org.au

Complaints alleging that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child is being compromised or that the law has been breached will be reported to the Department of Education and Training (DET) Quality Assessment and Regulations Division in the relevant region.



DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

When you arrive at the centre for drop-off and pick-up, we encourage you to talk to us about how your child is going at home, as well as hear from us about how their day was. This communication helps ensure we are working together to support your child's development so that they can reach their full potential while in our care.

Sign-in/sign-out

To ensure safety is maintained at all times, our centre follows a strict delivery and collection policy and procedure. All children must be signed in and out of the centre by an authorised person.

When dropping off or picking up your child, please ensure the doors are completely closed behind you and never let other children exit the centre unless they are accompanied by a parent/guardian.

The names and contact numbers of all people authorised to collect your child must be included in the child's Enrolment Record and any changes to these details must be given to your centre in writing or via your My Family Lounge account. The person collecting your child must provide photographic identification such as a current driver's licence.

Late pick-up

Late collection can be stressful for children and educators. Please ensure children are collected on time. If you are unable to collect your child by the end of the session/closing time, please arrange for someone else to do so and notify the centre as soon as possible (refer to the section above 'Sign in/sign out', should you nominate another person to collect your child).

Two educators will always be with your child until collected. If your child is not collected by the end of the session/closing time, a late fee may be charged. The late fee is \$2.00 per minute, payable from the end of the session/closing time until your child is collected. This fee will be added to your account at a full fee rate.

In the event that a child is not collected before closing time, we will attempt to contact parents/guardians on phone numbers provided, if we are unable to make contact then the nominated emergency person/people will be contacted. If no contact has been established 30 to 45 minutes after closing time, the local Police will be called to our centre as outlined in our Delivery and Collection of Children Procedure.

ORIENTATION

Starting child care is a very exciting time, but it can also be emotional for you and your child. Every child deals with changes in routine differently, so in order to best prepare them for the transition, we offer flexible orientation periods. The orientation process is free of charge.

Orientation gives your child an opportunity to become familiar with our centre, our educators (including their room leader), other children and our programs. The process usually involves a series of short visits in the time leading up to them starting care. We will work with you to ensure that orientation supports your child's needs and wellbeing.

Parents and/or Guardians are required to stay on-site with the child during these visits and we encourage you to have conversations with our educators about your child's individual routines, current interests and learning and development goals.

Beyond orientation, educators are always willing to discuss your child's individual health, ongoing development, strengths and interests. Families can do this either informally during arrival or pick-up, or as part of a formal appointment.

What we provide

- Nappies
- All meals (Including breakfast, morning tea, lunch and snacks throughout the day)
- Linen for sleeping
- Sunscreen
- Milk (including milk alternative options such as soy)
- Toys and educational resources

Note: Children with skin sensitivities are welcome to bring their own sunscreen with their name clearly labelled.

Providing interesting, ever-changing environments and resources for children to learn is an ideal way to develop their curiosity and sense of adventure. They are constantly encouraged to talk about and share the things they have discovered. Whenever possible we use toys and resources made of natural materials.

What to bring

Clothing

We recommend the following clothing be worn or provided:

- Appropriate clothing that will allow the child to feel comfortable, relaxed and uninhibited while engaged in play.
- Easy access clothing that allows children to increase their independence and competence in personal hygiene, care and safety.
- Layers of clothing so children can adjust to changes in temperature and their activity levels.
- Footwear that enables the child to participate in physical activity. Thongs and crocs are not appropriate.
- A sun hat (wide-brimmed hat with protection for neck and ears) needs to be supplied from September to April.
- A warm hat, coat or jacket be provided in cold weather as outdoor play is a regular part of the program.
- A complete change of clothes (for children in long day care and kindergarten programs). **Please ensure all items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's full name.**

Formula and empty bottles

- If required, please bring formula powder in an air-tight container. Pre-prepared bottles of formula cannot be accepted by the centre for health and safety reasons.

A comfort item

- Children are welcome to bring a comfort item with them (such as a soft toy or blanket).

Personal items

Children's interests help provide the foundation for the educational program.

We acknowledge that sometimes children like to bring their favourite toys or special things of interest from home. Children will be encouraged to respect and share these items with the other children. Educators will take every reasonable precaution to ensure that these items are not lost or broken, however this cannot be guaranteed.

For any lost personal items or clothing please speak to the Centre Manager about lost property. We endeavour to return any lost items as soon as possible, if items are not collected after three months we will donate to a local charity.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All our policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Each full version of our policies are available on request at each Centre. If you have questions or feedback about any of these, please speak with our team.

Please visit our website to read all of our [policies and procedures](#). Example policies and procedures are included below.

Immunisation requirements

'No Jab, No Play' is the name of legislation that requires all children to be fully vaccinated unless they have a medical exemption to be enrolled in childcare or kindergarten in Victoria.

Evidence of up-to-date immunisation must be provided prior to your child commencing at our service. An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register can be used as evidence of up-to-date vaccination. An Immunisation Status Certificate from a medical doctor or a local council immunisation service may also be used.

Other immunisation records, such as 'homeopathic immunisation' or a statutory declaration are not acceptable.

Immunisation History Statements are available on request at any time by contacting Medicare:

- Telephone 1800 653 809
- Email on acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au
- Online at www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-online-accounts
- In person at your local Medicare service centre.

If immunisations are not kept updated or recorded as per the "No Jab No Play" policy you will not receive any Child Care Subsidy (CCS) that you may be entitled to.

To find out about the "No Jab No Play" and "No Jab No Pay" legislation in relation to CCS entitlements and immunisation requirements, visit the Department of Health [website](#).

Medication, allergies and medical management plans

If a child with a chronic illness or medical condition, such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or anaphylaxis is enrolled, details of the medical condition must be recorded on the child's Enrolment Record. An individual risk minimisation plan will be developed in consultation with the family and a medical management plan prepared by your child's physician must be formalised prior to the child commencing at the service.

Should educators require any specialised training to assist them in the daily care of the child, this must be arranged prior to the child commencing at the service. Any medication or equipment identified on the medical management plan must be provided to the early



childhood service. If this is not provided or has expired then the child will not be able to attend the service until this is made available, so as to ensure the health and wellbeing of the child.

It is imperative that medical management plans are kept up to date. Medical management plans should be reviewed by the parent/guardian in collaboration with the child's physician annually and if changes are made to the plan then this must be confirmed in consultation with the child's physician and communicated to the service as soon as practicable.

Specific information regarding medical conditions, asthma, anaphylaxis and diabetes can also be viewed on our website or requested at the centre.

These policies actively support your child and family through vigilant collaboration to maintain safe experiences at the Y. All children that have been diagnosed with any medical condition or allergy must provide the service with a current Medical/Allergy Management Plan completed by a doctor. Details of any subsequent triggers, reaction identification information and first aid details are also required to be documented in the Medical Management Plan. A Risk Minimisation Plan will then be prepared in consultation with your Centre Manager/Coordinator prior to your child attending the service.

All staff are informed of individual children's requirements, and the Medical Management Plan and Risk Minimisation Plan are available for all staff to view. Guardians are required to ensure Medical Management Plans are current (updated annually) and if required, further meetings will be arranged to ensure consistent communication of relevant information.

Medication

If your child requires medication, please complete all details on the Authorisation to Administer Medication Form and give the medicine to a staff member upon arrival. A copy of the Administration of Medication Procedure can be requested at the centre.

Please ensure this is handed to a staff member on arrival (and not left in the child's bag).

Medication will be administered if:

- It has been prescribed for the child by a registered medical practitioner.
- It is in the original bottle or packaging with the original label that bears the name of the child to whom the medication is to be administered.
- It is in date (not passed expiry/best before date).
- A parent/guardian (as listed on the child's enrolment form) has provided written permission for staff to administer the medication.
- It has been entered in the medication register or detailed in the child's medical management plan.
- The first dose has been administered by the parent/guardian at least 24 hours prior to attendance at the service in case of an adverse reaction.
- Two Early Childhood Educators are present to administer and supervise the correct dosage of medication.

Reminder: Medication is not to be left in children's bags. If a child has a temperature and requires Panadol or Nurofen, they will be deemed to be too unwell to attend the program.

Illness

In the interests of the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and educators, children who display signs of illness must be kept at home. It is our responsibility to protect all children, families and staff from the spread of infectious diseases at the service. As a parent you know your child best, so if there is any change in their general health or wellbeing please keep them at home and seek medical attention. Please let the service know if your child is not attending because they have been diagnosed with an infectious illness.

If your child becomes unwell at the service, they will be immediately monitored, have their symptoms recorded and you will be informed by telephone. If this occurs, you may be asked to collect your child earlier than usual. If a temperature of 38 degrees is registered, you will be contacted via telephone and if it continues to rise and/or your child has appearances of being unwell you will be asked to collect your child.

Educators may administer paracetamol (with guardian's authorisation) to assist with keeping your child's temperature at bay whilst you make your way to collect your child. For the wellbeing of all children, a 24-hour exclusion from care will be required following a high temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea, unless a doctor's certificate states otherwise. Please refer to [Exclusion Periods for Primary Schools and Children's Services](#) for more information. Please note, no refunds are offered for illness. Please refer to [Approved Absences](#) for more information about Centrelink approved fee assistance for days of illness.

Educators are required to notify all parents when a child attending the service has contracted an infectious disease. This will be communicated via a notice displayed prominently in the entrance to the service. Fact sheets relating to the illness/infectious disease will be made available on request.

The Department of Health have published an [Exclusion table](#) which can be used to determine exclusion periods (if required).

We follow the advice of the relevant government body should specific measures be required following a notification of an infectious disease.

CONTACT US

For more information on Early Learning at the Y please reach out to our Customer Service Team on (03) 8371 0500 or email - cp.support@ymca.org.au, or [visit our website](#).

We look forward to hearing from you!



