



Parent Handbook

We would like to welcome you to Imaginations Early Education and we look forward to offering quality care and education.



Welcome to the family!

Imaginations Early Education is family owned and operated. We thank you for entrusting us with the care and education of your littlest family members. We look forward to partnering with you and working together to provide an enjoyable early education and care experience.

Please take the time to read through this handbook as it will give you and insight into the philosophy, goals and routines of our Centre. It will also outline our policies and aid in the smooth transition of your child into the Centre.

Our Centre Director and educators are available to discuss any questions or respond to any concerns you may have during the orientation process and beyond.

Please feel free to approach any of the team at anytime.

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide quality education and care for all children in our local community. To offer a space where children get to be, belong and become, a place where children get to immerse themselves in enjoyable childhood experiences and recognise the value in themselves.

In order to achieve this, we are committed to making sure our educators engage in regular professional development and reflective practice to ensure our educators are passionate, informed and highly qualified.

Our Philosophy

We like to pay our respects to the Biripi peoples both past and present and we would like to acknowledge the local language spoken which is Gathang.

Individual identity is valued, diversity is respected, equity implications are considered, and cultural competence is promoted.

We value the benefits of 'play' and its influence on forming positive relationships between educator and children as well as peer to peer. The learning benefits of play can help challenge and build a child's understanding and encourage critical thinking.

Our educators facilitate intentional teaching experiences but also embrace those fun and spontaneous moments too - they can take you anywhere and children are capable and confident when educators are responsive to children's interest, skills and abilities.

We work with the Australian Early Years Learning Framework and in partnerships with families. We respect children's voices and their rights to shape their learning outcomes as well as implement quality routines, planning and programming.

Imaginations educators are respected for their holistic knowledge of the child as it makes a significant contribution to the development of quality play-based programs, routines and assessment for learning.

Respectful, positive and secure relationships between peers, educators, families and our community are encouraged and valued. Our children thrive when they are witness to this and experience this in their day to day interactions.

Continuity of care is important for children to develop genuine, nurturing relationships and a true sense of belonging.

Educators are encouraged and engage in regular professional development and reflective experiences to ensure our educators are passionate, informed and highly qualified. Regular assessment and critical reflection form the foundations for future program and policy development.

Staff

Imaginations Early Education is family owned by Kelly and Greg. Kelly is the approved provider of the Centre and holds a university qualification with a Bachelor of Teaching (Birth to 5 years) with 16 years' experience working in the early education sector.

Our staff have tertiary qualifications in Child Care and First Aid. We do have staff who are employed as trainees who are still developing their child-care knowledge and obtaining their qualifications.

Relief staff may be employed at various times to enable staff to attend training and professional development. Relief staff may also be employed when permanent staff are on leave. We encourage visits from students attending school, TAFE and University and we do facilitate prac placements for childcare students.

Hours of operation

Taree 7:30am – 6:00pm

Monday to Friday throughout the year except for public holidays and a one week break over the Christmas/New Year period.

To allow staff to close the Centre at 6.00pm please ensure that you arrive **by 5.55pm** at the latest.

The Centre closes for NSW public holidays and 1 weeks at Christmas/New Year.

Attendance

Children are offered enrolment for a minimum of two days a week. This allows educators and children to form attachments and help children feel more comfortable and settle into Imaginations.

If you have exceptional circumstances, please discuss these with us.

Please let us know if you require an extra day to attend additional work, meetings, appointments etc... and we will endeavor to arrange casual care for your child.

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment made by the Australian Government to help families with the cost of quality child care and early education. This is paid directly to the service to reduce your weekly fees. It is the responsibility of the parent to register for Child Care Subsidy.

This can be done by contacting Centrelink either in person, by phone on 136 150 or by accessing their My Gov account at my.gov.au. You can read more about the Child Care Subsidy and activity test and can complete an online estimator at www.education.gov.au/ChildCarePackage

Immunisation

It is the Parents responsibility to supply a current Immunisation History Statement to the Centre at the time of enrolment and to ensure the Centre has an updated record at all times to be eligible for childcare subsidy. A copy of your child's Birth certificate as well as the Centre enrolment form filled out complete and signed will need to be given to the Centre so you child can commence care as soon as possible.

Whenever your child has another immunisation, the updated immunisation statement should be given to the Director so that the Centre records can be updated.

Fees

To secure your child's place at Imaginations, a two-week deposit must be paid and will be used to cover the first two weeks of attendance. Fees for all booked days must be paid at the end of the week or fortnight.

Fees will include days when your child is absent due to illness. If your child's pre-booked day falls on a public holiday, the normal fees still apply and must be paid in order to retain your booking. Over the Christmas/New Year closure no fees are charged.

Fees may be paid by:

1. Direct Deposit set up for regular payment on commencement of child attending

Account Name: Yamba ELC Pty Ltd Account Number: 586042 BSB: 032-173

Reference: Please use your child's name.

2. EFTPOS Machine in our foyer

Please print a copy of the payment and write your name before putting in our fees box located next to the office door.

Change of contact details

A Parent/Guardian must notify the Centre Manager immediately should there be any change in circumstances from details outlined in the enrolment form including living arrangements of the child or Parent/Guardian.

Any change in contact details such as address, telephone or mobile number of those listed in enrolment form must be provided in writing as soon as possible.

Withdrawal from the Centre

You must advise Imaginations at least two weeks prior to your child leaving the Centre or you will be charged for the days of non-attendance during this period.

Failure to provide the Director with this two weeks' notice will result in an additional charge of two full weeks fees to your final account. All accounts must be finalised by your child's last day at the Centre, as any outstanding accounts will be forwarded to debt collection agencies.

Prolonged Absence

If absence from the Centre for longer than 2 weeks and the Centre has not been notified nor can the Centre make contact with the family, we reserve the right to cancel the enrolment. In the event of the Centre being owed outstanding fees it will use the family's bond and any outstanding debt will be sent to the Centre's debt collecting agency.

Medication

If your child requires medicine to be administered during the day, please complete the "Permission to Administer Medication Form". The medication must be accompanied by a prescription label or doctors' letter, which states who the medication is for and the dosage.

Please also inform the staff but know a verbal request alone is not enough. Hand medicines to staff. Do not leave medicines or creams in your child's bag. A child cannot attend the Centre for the first 24 hours after commencing antibiotics.

Asthma

All children with Asthma are required to have an Asthma Action Plan completed by a doctor at time of enrolment. This is to be updated annually and/or whenever changes to the child's treatment occur. A risk minimisation plan and communication form MUST be completed upon enrolment. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that medication is always kept at the Centre and that medication is within its expiry date at all times.

Anaphylaxis and ALLERGIES

All children with Anaphylaxis or Allergic reactions are required to have Anaphylaxis/Allergy Action Plans completed by a doctor at the time of enrolment and must have a current photo of the child attached. We aim to provide a safe environment for all children and therefore it is important that you discuss your child's needs with our center Director to establish a risk minimisation plan and communication form on enrolment. All Anaphylaxis/Allergy Plans must be updated annually and/or whenever changes to the child's condition or treatment occurs. It is the parent/guardians responsibility to ensure that the child's EPIPEN is labelled and kept at the Centre at all times. EPIPENS need to be updated annually, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure medication is always within its expiry date.

Accidents and Incidents

Our educators organise both the indoor and outdoor environments to provide safety and allow for maximum supervision in order to prevent any accidents to children and staff. In the case of an accident involving your child whilst at the center, staff will immediately administer First Aid. If the injury requires further medical treatment, you will be contacted, and a plan of action organised.

If a parent or emergency contact cannot be reached the Director/person in charge will act on behalf of the parent and proceed with whatever medical treatment is required. An Educator known to the child will accompany the child to the Doctor/Hospital and stay

with them until the parent arrives. Documentation of the accident will be made on an Incident Report Form.

Confidentiality

We value your privacy and have a number of initiatives in place to ensure the protection of your data. For more information on our Confidentiality of Centre Records policy, please view our policy folder in the foyer or ask the Centre Director for more information.

Exclusion of sick children

The exclusion of sick children is intended for the protection of children and adults in the Centre. The proximity of children increases the risk of cross infection. We ask that you respect the health and wellbeing of other families and staff in the Centre when considering sending your child for the day.

Sick children need to be in the care of their parents so that they can make important health decisions. If parents cannot be contacted and a child is sufficiently ill or distressed while at the Centre, an ambulance will be called to take the child to hospital.

If your child has been 'off colour', or ill the previous night, please keep your child at home.

If you feel that the child may be well enough to attend Centre, please inform staff on arrival. **Staff are not permitted to diagnose any rash or blisters.** Please provide a medical certificate providing clearance before entering your child's room. The Director or Person in Charge has the final say on whether the child is healthy enough to remain at the Centre.

If your child falls ill during the day a staff member will phone the parent who must come immediately to collect the child. If you cannot be contacted the emergency contact you have given will be asked to collect your child. **If your child has contracted an infectious disease** you must notify the Centre immediately. There are specific quarantine times for infectious diseases, during which time your child will not be allowed to attend the Centre. Notices will be displayed, for all parents, if the Centre has an outbreak of an infectious illness.

Children are not permitted to attend the Center within 24 hours of commencing antibiotics, after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.

Children will also be excluded if they have head lice. This exclusion will continue until treatment has been used and all live lice and eggs are completely removed. Fees are payable during any periods of exclusion.

Absences

Parents are requested to phone the Centre if their child is unable to attend their scheduled day for any reason. Notice is also required in the incidence of infectious or contagious diseases in the family.

Families receiving the Child Care Subsidy are allocated 42 absent days for each child per financial year. These absences can be taken for any reason and include Public Holidays.

Once the child has reached 42 absent days, CCS is not paid for any further absences, unless the absences are taken for an additional reason. There is no limit on the number of additional absence days a child's family may claim provided they are taken for the above reasons and have documentation/evidence.

If your child is absent the full fees still apply and must be paid in order to retain your booking. All absences will be recorded and acknowledged by families.

Inclusion at Imaginations

Inclusion means different things to different people. The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) states that early childhood inclusion “takes into account all children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes.”

The National Quality Standards (NQS) also promote inclusion by referencing “each child” across all quality areas and provides guidelines on how early education and care services can meet expectations for an inclusive practice.

All children deserve a rich environment where they can learn with other children and from their surroundings. Adding or changing a program to include a child with additional needs does not exclude other children, as all children benefit from an inclusive practice. Inclusion is also about access. It embodies the right of every child regardless of their circumstances to participate as active members of families, communities and societies.

Settling into care

We encourage you to have an Orientation Session with your child between 9.30am-11.30am on a day to be arranged with the Centre director or person in charge before care commences.

Ensuring your child feels safe and secure is one of our top priorities. Starting at a new early learning Centre can be full of emotions for both families and children. To support you in this transition, an orientation session prior to your child beginning care which will encourage them to form attachments and bonds with their educators.

Building strong a relationship with your family is particularly important to us and makes a real difference to the early learning outcomes for your child. It is best for us to know your child’s interests, likes, dislikes and any needs they may have. This will become integral as our Educators incorporate your child’s interests into our educational programs, so please take the time to visit and share information about your child with their educators regularly.

Your child’s group

Your child will have one of the following groups as their home-base. Our policy is that children remain in their group until they are developmentally ready to move on to the next group and a place is available. From time to time your child may participate in activities in different rooms. During these times the appropriate staff: child ratios will be maintained.

Our early childhood center's have specially designed rooms for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. There are regular opportunities provided for interaction between age groups in the early and late part of the day.

Environments and routines

Our routines provide for individual play and learning as well as small and large group play and learning activities. Children's language and literacy skills are further developed during these times as children are involved in storytelling, drama and games. Music also plays a large part during these sessions as children can experiment with dancing, singing and exercising their bodies.

Spaces are made available for children to engage in rest and quiet experiences. Educators provide a range of active and restful experiences and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation.

Each of our centre's rooms are individual and unique and is tailored to suit the age and development stage of your child, the diversity of the educators, children, families and the wider community and are filled full of laughter, fun and educational resources.

All aspects of children's learning and development is catered for including physical, social, emotional, creative, cognitive and communication. Children's learning is dynamic and complex and the Centre's environment is designed for this.

As your child grows and develops so will their needs, interests and abilities. To cater for this, your child will gradually transition to the next room, where their skills and development can be extended. Our transitioning procedure includes communication with families and involves a careful assessment of your child's records to ensure they are ready for the next step. This process also includes short visits to the new room to build familiarity and ensure a smooth transition.

Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework is a National Early Learning Framework for children from birth to five years. As the early years are a vital time for children to learn and develop, the framework has been developed to ensure your child receives a quality educational program.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming.

- Belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationship they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- Being is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be' – time to play, try new things and have fun.
- Becoming is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

Through the Framework's five learning goals educators will assist your child to develop:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

- Children are effective communicators

Our Centre also offers an extensive School Readiness program based on the Framework. The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as play is the best vehicle for young children's learning providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. We aim to guide your child in becoming an effective learner through creating an environment that is challenging and stimulating. The overall aim of our programs is to help your child in developing all areas necessary for success now and in later years.

Celebrating Diversity

We welcome you and your family to share aspects of your culture heritage with us.

This information will assist us to enrich the lives of all our children and families supported within our educational programs.

Communication with parents

We have an open-door policy and encourage you to talk to us at any time either formally or informally. We welcome any information about your child which will assist us to develop suitable programs and improve our policies.

One of the main ways we communicate is through an online network called Storypark. When your child commences care with us, we send you an e-mail inviting you to join the Storypark app, here you will find documentation, stories, videos, photos etc..about your child's time at Imaginations.

Families are able to use this to comment and communicate with educators about their child. Families also have the opportunity to invite other family members such as grandparents or even parents who may work away and would like to keep up to date with their child's interests, skills and development

Programming

Educators will use the framework in partnership with families to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities and recognise that children learn through play.

What is an enjoyable play time is also a sophisticated learning experience for a young child. For each age group we develop programs for the children based on observations, parent input, our knowledge of early childhood development and the national Early Years Learning Framework.

Development records for your child are available for you to look at with an educator or through our online network 'Storypark'.

In every activity, children are developing strong foundations for academic and social learning such as literacy, numeracy, science and technology, self-esteem, social skills and independence.



We are happy to discuss the underpinning knowledge and skills being developed when a child is playing and participating in various activities.

Educators will use the framework in partnership with families to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities and recognise that children learn through play.

Behaviour Management

Children are encouraged to develop social skills that will allow them to resolve conflicts and meet their needs without the use of aggressive or destructive behaviors. Children are encouraged to respect themselves and others. When teaching teams guide a child's behavior, they aim to provide the child with clear guidelines as to why a behavior is unacceptable, and then suggest alternative behaviors that could lead to a more positive outcome.

Meals

We understand the important role we play in supporting the nutritional needs of children while in care. In the instance where meals are provided, children who attend a full day of long day care will be offered at least 50 per cent of their recommended daily dietary intake while in care.

We also have a commitment to assist families who provide their children's meals to develop healthy food attitudes and habits. Guidelines around healthy eating can be found in the foyer or by asking a friendly team member.

What to bring

Enough formula/breastmilk for the day in clearly labeled bottles. If you would like to visit the Centre to continue breastfeeding, you are more than welcome to and we will work with you to offer a quiet and suitable environment to do so however frequently you need to.

Please also provide a labeled water bottle each day. You should also provide cream for staff to use in the event your child has or develops nappy rash.

A hat and a change of clothes including tops, pants, underwear, socks and a jacket.

We have plenty of interesting resources and toys so please do not bring items to the Centre which could be potentially dangerous to young children, create conflict or get lost or damaged. "Security" toys, such as teddy bears and dolls, are fine if they help your child feel happier and more secure.

Sun protection

We promote sun safety and aim to reduce exposure to UV rays through sun protection behaviors, organisation of activities, the outdoor environment and education of children, staff and parents. Staff will ensure hats are worn during outdoor play at all times throughout the year. We encourage a "no hat, play in the shade" policy.

We provide SPF 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen lotion and parents are required to apply the lotion on arrival. Staff will re-apply sunscreen when required throughout the day. Parents are encouraged to provide protective clothing for outdoor play.

Children under 12 months of age and those children/staff unable to wear sunscreen for medical reasons will only use the shaded areas of the playground.

Clothing

A complete set of clothing including underwear and socks is required for each day of attendance. While toileting accidents may be rare for your child, spills with water, paint, food and drinks may require a change of clothes.

Overalls, belts, braces and buckles are often difficult for children to manage independently at toilet times. Soiled clothes will be rinsed if necessary and will be placed in a plastic bag ready for collection.

Comfortable, closed shoes or sandals are suitable for indoor and outdoor play, climbing and walking. Thongs, clogs and slip-on shoes do not provide sufficient protection for active children.

Please make sure your child's name is on ALL clothing and other belongings.

Signing a child into and out of the Centre

Each child must be signed in and out of the Center every day they attend (using tablet's available). This is a legal requirement that must be followed. The records are used in case of emergencies and for the calculation of Government support payments. If a child is away, ill or on holidays the corresponding days must be acknowledged by the tablet on the next day of attendance by parents/guardians.

To ensure the safety of all children, no child will be released into the care of any persons not registered as authorised by the parent/guardian in their enrolment form as well as anyone under the age of 18 years.

If team members do not know the person collecting your child by appearance, the person must be able to produce some form of photo identification to prove that they are authorised to collect the child as per the enrolment form authorised information.

In the event that a child has not been collected 15 minutes after closing time then the parents/guardians will be contacted on the emergency telephone numbers provided.

If the child has still not been collected 30 minutes after closing time then staff will call the local police and department of justice and communities.

Late pick-up fee

If a child remains at the Centre after 6pm, a late fee of \$20 is applicable for every 15 minutes or part thereof and must be paid by the next day.

Arriving at the centre

1. Sign in your child on the iPad in the foyer using your mobile number and pin.
2. Make sure to greet a staff member and/or hand over your child to a staff member and let them know if there are any special circumstances or instructions for the day.
3. Put your child's bag (with spare clothing, hat and water bottle) in their locker space provided.
4. Complete a 'Permission to Administer Medication' form if any medication is to be administered during the day. Bring this to the attention of your child's educator.
5. 30+ sunscreen is available for you to apply to your child before you leave. Staff will assume your child has sunscreen on unless you tell them otherwise.
6. Always say goodbye to your child no matter how difficult. While it may be tempting to leave quietly this can cause children to feel more anxious.

Picking up your child

1. Arrive to collect your child within your allocated session times and for other families please arrive by 5:55pm. If you are unavoidably delayed, please phone the Centre as soon as possible (late fees will be charged after 6pm).
2. Notify a staff member when you collect your child and allow some time in case the educators need to discuss any information with you.
3. Collect your child's bag and belongings and any medication.

Complaints and compliments

If you have any concerns or compliments regarding the Centre, please approach your child's group leader in the first instance. If you feel that a concern is unable to be resolved or you feel uncomfortable, please feel free to approach the Nominated Supervisor or the Director at any time.

Emergency procedures

An emergency evacuation plan is displayed in your child's room. The Centre will have fire drills on a regular basis to ensure that children can be evacuated from the Centre quickly and easily. If you are on the premises during a fire drill you are required to follow staff's instructions and participate.

Policies, regulations and quality assurance

A complete set of policies will be kept in the office as well as a copy of our services quality improvement plan.

Our policies are reviewed on a regular basis and your input to this process will be requested throughout the year. Importantly if you feel any policy requires modification, we welcome your suggestions.

We are licensed by the NSW Department of Education and Communities and operate under the National Education and Care Services Law and Regulations. A copy of these regulations is available from the office or by downloading the full document from www.acecqa.gov.au.

The quality of our service is monitored by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). Our centre's aim is to exceed the National Quality Standard across all areas of our service and each Centre has a quality improvement plan in place to show what is happening in our Centre to achieve this. This will look at areas such as educational programs and practice, children's health and safety, physical environment, staffing arrangements, relationships with children and collaborative partnerships with families and communities.