

Service Handbook



MUELLER COLLEGE
early learning
centre

**MUELLER COLLEGE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE
IS A MINISTRY OF MUELLER COMMUNITY CHURCH**

75 MORRIS RD ROTHWELL Q 4022 : PO BOX 487 REDCLIFFE Q 4020
PHONE 07 3897 2756 : EMAIL ELC@MUELLER.QLD.EDU.AU

WELCOME

You have cared for and nurtured your child since birth and seen them develop and grow within your home. The first and most significant avenue of learning, morally, spiritually and educationally is a child's home. Here at Mueller College Early Learning Centre we are excited about the prospect of working with you in the care and education of your child.

We believe your child is a unique and special gift from God. Their developing sense of self and awareness of God will be based on familiar things - love, kindness, patience, dependability and trust - which are modelled by loving parents, educators and members of the community. Our aim at this Service is to care for your child and provide an educational program in an environment where your child feels comfortable, accepted and secure.

Our programs cater for children's individual interests and developing skills and abilities. Educators aim to partner with parents to extend children's intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional and social development.

We extend our warmest welcome to you and your child and look forward to the challenges and exciting times ahead.



Katrina Burdon

*Director of Childcare
Nominated Supervisor*

ETHOS

Mueller College Early Learning Centre is owned and managed by Mueller Community Church, a Religious, Educational and Charitable Institution incorporated on 9th May, 1968, by Letters Patent under the Religious, Educational and Charitable Institutions Act 1861-1967.

Mueller Community Church is a body of Christian people; a local, caring church family with the purpose of showing the life-transforming power of God through various ministries in our community and overseas.

The Early Learning Centre is one of the many ministries of this integrated Christian community. The first phase of the development was Mueller College, a Christian school with over 1500 students ranging from Preparatory to Year 12. Continued developments have seen the provision of a Retirement Village and Residential Care Facility, a Community Centre and an auditorium.

The Early Learning Centre is structured to meet the needs of children from 6 weeks up to school age, and aims to provide learning experiences that are in harmony with the Bible and Government requirements. These learning experiences address the total needs of the child encompassing the spiritual, the academic, the physical, the social and the emotional.

The Centre is mostly resourced with dedicated Christians who are supportive of families in the role of raising their children. Families are encouraged to be involved in the life of the Centre.

The Centre employs educators consistent with Government regulations in terms of qualifications and numbers. All educators understand the needs of children and their development and attend professional development courses. Lead Educators have child-free preparation times each week.

All educators recognise the individuality of each child and family and observe a policy of acceptance regardless of race, creed, gender, ability, class or culture.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Mueller College Early Learning Centre is to support families by providing for their children a friendly, safe, nurturing Christian environment. In the pursuit of excellence in education and care, the Centre seeks to foster the children's love of learning, equipping them with the foundations for life-long learning. Our Centre seeks to provide a stimulating environment where the rights of children are upheld and children have a strong sense of identity and wellbeing

CENTRE PHILISOPHY

Our Approach

- We believe that children are a gift from God; created in His image, yet individual and unique.
- We strive to provide a safe and supportive Christian environment that is warm, nurturing and meets the needs of every child in our care.
- We endeavour to build meaningful and supportive links for children and families between home, the Centre and the wider community.
- We recognise that each child is part of a unique family group with individual care needs.
- We desire to honour and understand the variety of cultures represented in our Centre.
- We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first peoples of Australia and we value their cultures.
- We seek to cultivate mutually respectful partnerships with families and to share in making decisions about children's learning and development.

Our Children & Families

- We engage children in an environment that promotes play-based learning.
- We encourage the 'whole child' to flourish by providing opportunities for growth across all developmental domains.
- We believe that a positive attitude toward learning is developed through a strong sense of wellbeing, connection, engagement and fun!
- We provide educational programs which are responsive to each child's individual strengths, interests and ideas.
- We use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning.
- We foster healthy living through the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity.
- We encourage children to become environmentally respectful by providing opportunities to learn in and from the natural world.

Our Staff

- We seek to create a supportive and caring environment for our educators where mutual respect is promoted and Christian values are upheld.
- We encourage and value personal and professional growth for our staff by providing different development opportunities throughout the year.

SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Mueller College Early Learning Centre is governed by a Management Committee that oversees the operation of the Centre. This committee consists of:

Executive Director:	Fin Hatch
Chief Financial Officer:	David Litke
Finance Manager:	Derick Malherbe
Director of Childcare:	Katrina Burdon

The Management Committee encourages families to be involved in the education and care of their children by sharing information, supporting and participating in the program, and regularly communicating with educators.

Families are invited to assist with feedback, comments and suggestions concerning all aspects of the Centre and will be invited to participate in reviews of the Centre's programs, policies and quality improvement process.

The Management Committee meets monthly to discuss the day to day workings of the Centre, plan improvement strategies, and work through issues that have been raised by children, families, staff, and/or community members.

For enquiries, concerns or comments regarding all daily operational matters, families are asked to contact:

Katrina Burdon
(Director of Child Care)
3897 2756

APPROVAL

Mueller College Early Learning Centre operates under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. The Centre must comply with this Act and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. This compliance includes requirements about activities, experiences and programs, the numbers of educators and children, and staff qualifications.

Information Services include:

Qld Government Education and Training: <https://www.qld.gov.au/education/earlychildhood>

Early Childhood Education and Care: <http://www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au>

Starting Blocks: <https://www.startingblocks.gov.au>

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Centre's educational program is based on the principals and practices of the EYLF 2.0; Belonging, Being and Becoming. This encompasses children's individual interests, strengths and areas for development. Working in partnership with families, educators use the Framework to guide their planning for children's learning and choose appropriate teaching strategies.

CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Children's learning is dynamic, complex and holistic. Physical, social, emotional, personal, spiritual, creative, cognitive and linguistic aspects of learning are all intricately interwoven and interrelated.

Play is a key context for learning that:

- * allows for the expression of personality and uniqueness
- * enhances dispositions such as curiosity, creativity and persistence
- * enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning
- * assists children to develop relationships and concepts
- * stimulates a sense of wellbeing

Children are given opportunity to initiate and lead learning and become active participants and decision makers in what they can do and learn. Educators can then respect and work with each child's unique qualities and abilities.

Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support their learning.

Children's early learning influences their future opportunities. Wellbeing and a strong sense of connection, optimism and engagement enable children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Children's learning is ongoing and each child will progress towards the outcomes in different and equally meaningful ways. Learning is not always predictable and linear. Educators plan with each child and the EYLF 2.0 outcomes in mind.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Our kindergarten curriculum incorporates the national “Early Years Learning Framework” and the “Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline” and is overseen by Qualified Early Childhood Teachers.

The kindergarten program is 7½ hours each day, with children attending at least two days a week. This is in line with Government Guidelines. We offer an approved Kindergarten program that attracts the relevant Government funding available.

The program includes: a rich and varied learning environment; play based learning activities; programming based on developing each child’s individual strengths, interests and needs; a holistic approach to facilitating the development of all areas for each child—physical, personal awareness, social, cognitive, emotional, creative and spiritual well-being; and many opportunities for intentional teaching including early mathematics, pre-reading skills and pre-writing skills.

CLOTHING

Please send your children in comfortable clothing which is appropriate for the climatic conditions and easy participation in the program. Educators will monitor children’s clothing needs throughout the day and encourage the putting on or removal of extra clothing (e.g. jumpers) as appropriate. Clothing that provides protection from the sun, and easy toileting, such as a t-shirt and shorts is recommended.

During the course of the day, your child’s clothing may get wet or dirty. For this reason we discourage “good clothes” being worn.

Parents are asked to provide at least one COMPLETE SET of spare clothing in their child’s bag each day.

Safe, comfortable footwear that fits well is essential. It is our preference that children remove shoes before going on the play equipment.

Fully closed in shoes are required for participation in our Nature Kindy program.

Please ensure all items of clothing are clearly named, including socks, underwear and spare clothes.

Soiled clothing items will be placed in a sealed plastic bag, named, and placed in a container in each room. Parents are notified of the need to collect soiled items via a collection tag being attached to the child’s bag.

DEVOTIONS

Aligning with our Christian values, educators may include an age appropriate devotion time each day that may include memory verses, songs, poems, activities and prayers.

We give thanks before meals by singing grace as a group.

EDUCATORS AND STAFF

All of our Educators and staff have a caring nature, love of children and a desire to provide the best in quality care. Our Educator qualifications are consistent with (or higher than) Government Regulations and educators are required to regularly participate in professional development opportunities.

Children are cared for by two to six educators in each room. Educators are relieved for lunch breaks, tea breaks and for programming time so that the educator to child ratio can be maintained at all times.

We have a reliable pool of regular relief staff that are familiar to the centre, children and families which provides consistency and security for those in care.

ENROLMENTS AND BOOKINGS

Hours:

The Service is open from 6.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday.

Kindergarten Programs operate between the hours of 8.30am and 4.00pm each day.

Early morning and late afternoon programs run in the Purple and Green rooms before 8am and after 4.30pm.

The Centre operates for 50 weeks a year and is closed for two weeks over Christmas.

The Centre is closed on Public Holidays.

Absences:

Please notify us as soon as possible if your child will be absent. This includes sick days, holidays and other planned absences.

Priority of Access:

This child care service is required to assess each family's need for care in accordance with the following Priority of Access Guidelines set out by the Commonwealth Government:

Priority 1—a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

Priority 2—a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999

Priority 3—any other child.

In accordance with these guidelines, children of parents in the lower priority groups may have their days/times reduced or be asked to withdraw their places should there be a need for higher priority groups. If this becomes necessary, 14 days notice will be given.

Fees:

Fees are payable weekly/fortnightly in advance. Please contact the service for more information on fees.

Payment types:

Eftpos

Direct Debit

Credit Card

In line with recent government regulations, this Centre no longer accepts cash payments.

Please be aware that fees may vary from time to time. Refer to the Fee Schedule in the Early Learning Centre foyer.

It is your responsibility to keep fee payments up to date at all times. Failure to do so may result in termination of your child's place at the Centre.

Security Deposit:

Equivalent to four weeks fees is required for each enrolled child and due upon commencement. Upon cessation of enrolment, the security deposit can be applied to your final fees.

If your weekly fees increase due to extra care being accessed, a CCS percentage or hours change, etc, an adjustment to the security deposit will also be required.

Absences:

Sick days, holidays and occasional absences must be paid for.

Child Care Subsidy:

If you are eligible for Child Care Subsidy you will need to apply for this through your MyGov account. If you claim CCS, there is a limit of 42 days absence per financial year, including holidays, sick days, and occasional absences.

Holidays/Scheduled Absences Discount:

A minimum of two weeks written notice is required to apply any discounts for impending holidays and other scheduled absences. Fees must be up to date to qualify for any discount.

Public Holidays:

We do not charge fees for public holidays.

Christmas Closure:

There are no fees for this period.

Late Collection; Fee Policy:

The Service closes at 6:00pm. Collection after this time will incur an extra fee at a rate of \$10 for the first five minutes or part thereof, and \$2 per minute thereafter.

Reducing days of attendance:

A minimum of 2 week's written notice is required for reducing the number of days of attendance or fees are payable in lieu.

Permanent Departure:

Two week's written notice is required or two week's fees are payable in lieu.

N.B. To be able to claim Child Care Subsidy, your child must attend on their last day. Failure to attend on this day will mean that full fees are payable for all days after the last actual day of attendance.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Sign in and out is available on iPads at Reception or alternatively, using the QR code displayed. If at any time the iCheck-In system is not operational, there is a folder in Reception for manually signing in/out. Correctly signing children in and out is a legal requirement to fulfil Government Child Care Regulations. Children may only be signed out by the ENROLLING PARENT, or AUTHORISED PERSON (see below)

Each child must be signed in upon arrival, BEFORE being taken to their room.
Each child must be signed out on departure, AFTER being collected from their room.
Each authorised person has their own UNIQUE sign in details to maintain accurate records.
Do not share your code.

During arrival and departure, any children must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or authorized person at all times.

Authorised Persons:

Children will only be permitted to leave the Service with the enrolling parent, or an adult authorised by the enrolling parent.

If a child is not being picked up by their regular parent/authorised person, the Service should be notified which authorised person will be collecting the child.

All authorised persons must:

Be over 18.

Be added to our records. (To be added to our records, the enrolling parent must notify the service in writing.)

Be able to produce photo identification.

If you need to make a change to your Authorised Persons list, please collect a "Changes to Authorisation of Collection" form and submit completed form to reception. If custody arrangements should change, legal documents regarding custody must be sighted by the Director and a copy kept on file in the Service.

If a parent needs to be excluded from pick up, legal documentation supporting this must also be sighted by the Director and a copy kept on file in the Service. We cannot legally refuse parental access to a child without supporting legal documentation.

In the case of a child not being collected by 6.30pm, and no contact having been able to be made with parents/guardians or authorised contact persons, Juvenile Aid, Police or Crisis Care will be called on to collect the child and the child will be held in their care until contact with the family has been made. The Director or person in charge will be notified before these measures are taken.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Service recognises that parents are the primary caregivers and educators of their children. And that children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support their learning. Families are always welcome to share skills, interests, cultural background and practices in the educational program.

An Information Night will be held early in the year to help inform families about the program and routines in their child's room.

Email and Storypark are used for regular communication between families and the centre. Individual child pockets outside each room are used for printed notices. Information can also be communicated both in person and over the phone.

Each room has a communication sheet for short notes pertaining to your child that are relevant to their day.

Events throughout the year will be advertised as they arise.

Parents may visit the Service at any time and will not be denied access to their child unless there is a current custody order in place, a copy of which is held on file.

Policies and Procedure Guidelines for the Service and the Centre's quality improvement plan are available for viewing in the foyer and families are encouraged to contribute to the ongoing development and review of these documents.

INCLUSION

This Service recognises and values the individuality of each child and family and observes a policy of acceptance regardless of race, creed, gender, ability, class or culture.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Our Nature Program is an integral part of the educational program. The aim of the Nature Program is to educate children in the outdoor environment, with the key focus on supporting their holistic development. The sessions enhance and broaden the curriculum and have a strong emphasis on raising self-esteem and independence. All sessions follow strict safety procedures that are set in place to ensure each child has a safe unique learning experience. During the sessions, the children go for walks, read stories, participate in group activities and explore the natural environment.

HEALTH

Immunisation:

To be eligible for Child Care Subsidy, children attending Mueller College Early Learning Centre are required to be up to date with immunisations in accordance with the Government requirements. Parents at this Centre will be asked to show documentation of their child's immunisation status at enrolment. Original immunisation documents are required to be sighted by Child Care Office staff and copies are kept on file. Please notify us at Reception each time your child's immunisation has been updated.

Please note: Any unimmunised children will be excluded from care during outbreaks of specific immunisation preventable diseases such as measles and whooping cough, even if they are well. Children whose immunisation records are not up-to-date will also be treated as unimmunised in the event of an outbreak.

An immunisation schedule can be viewed here:

[Immunisation Schedule](#)



Illness:

If your child is unwell, please keep them home. Their illness may put others at risk.

If a child becomes unwell during the day, parents will be contacted to arrange for collection of the child. If a child is administered Panadol at the Service, a parent/guardian or authorised nominee will be required to immediately arrange for their collection.

If a child is given paracetamol or ibuprofen in the morning for a temperature or illness, they should not attend care that day.

Children should remain at home for at least 24 hours after the last bout of diarrhoea or vomiting or until well.

If your child is ill and requires antibiotics, he/she must remain at home for 24 hours after the commencement of treatment to allow the medication to take effect.

If your child is unable to attend due to illness, please contact the Service to inform educators of the illness so that they can watch for symptoms in other children, alert other parents, and protect themselves.

The Service has the right to send home any child considered not well enough to attend and to request a letter from the child's doctor before being readmitted should it be considered necessary.

Symptoms of illness can include, but are not limited to: unusual spots or rashes, infected skin patches, crusting of skin, or discharge, unusual behaviour, severe, persistent coughing, feverish appearance, whoop or barking sound with cough, breathing difficulties, frequent

scratching of scalp or skin, mucus discharge from the nose, headache, stiff neck, red, irritated or discharging eyes, yellowish skin or whites of eyes, diarrhoea, unusually dark or changed urine, vomiting, smelly urine, loss of appetite, complaints of pain on voiding, sore throat or trouble swallowing, grey or very pale faeces, severe nappy rash.

Recommended exclusion times can be viewed here:

[Exclusion period](#)



Medication:

If a child is ill enough to require medication, it is recommended that he/she remains at home. If however a child is on long term medication or is well enough to attend Child Care, prescribed medication will only be administered by Service staff if:

- (1) The parent/guardian completes a Medication Request Form including instructions for the administration of the medication and any special requirements. Medication Request Forms are available at Reception or from your child's Educator for this purpose.
- (2) The medication is supplied in the original container and clearly labelled by a pharmacist with: the name of the drug, the medical practitioner's name, the child's name, the expiry date, the dosage, and the time of administration clearly visible.

Over-the-counter medications will not be administered by educators without written authorisation from the child's parent/guardian in the form of a completed Medication Request Form. The medication must be in the original container, clearly labelled, and must include the dosage and expiry date. Out-of-date medication will not be administered.

Medication must be given directly to an educator and not left in the child's bag or locker.

If children are receiving medication at home but not at the Service, the Service should be advised of the nature of the medication and its purpose and of any possible side effects it may have for the child.

At no time will medication provided for one child be administered to another.

The administration of ALL medication will be at the discretion of the Director.

Medical Conditions Requiring Emergency Response:

Parents of children attending the Service who may require an emergency response for health issues (e.g. anaphylactic reactions, allergies, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or croup) are required to provide detailed medical information at the time of enrolment.

All children enrolled with such medical conditions will have one or more of the following plans, along with any required medication, prepared in consultation with the child's parent and medical practitioner, prior to commencement:

- Individual Action Plan (Health Record Card)
- Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan
- Anaphylaxis Action Plan
- Asthma Action Plan

This requirement ensures that all educators have adequate information to carry out their duty of care if an emergency arises with your child. Parents MUST notify the Director of any changes to the information provided.

Injury:

When sudden, significant injury occurs while a child is in attendance, the child's parent/s will be contacted. When this is not possible, the authorised nominees will be contacted. Should this also not be possible, the Director or person authorised by the parents has the discretion to seek appropriate medical attention at the parents' expense.

Sun and Insect Protection:

As the UV levels in Brisbane are 3 and above all year round, sun protection is needed at all times when children are playing outside.

Measures to encourage sun safety at the Centre include:

- Large shady verandas and various shade covers over outdoor areas and play equipment.
- Educators avoid outside time with the children in the middle of the day.
- Educators are required to set an example for children and also wear hats outside.
- Sunscreen is applied to children before outside play (unless indicated otherwise on the enrolment and agreement form).
- Parents are encouraged to send their children in clothing that protects back, neck and shoulders from the sun.
- Broad brimmed or legionnaire style hats are recommended as the best protection for children's faces, necks and ears, and are encouraged to be worn outside all year round. A suitable hat is provided as part of the enrolment package.
- Parents are requested to apply sunscreen to their child prior to arriving or when arriving at the Centre.

Mosquitoes can be a problem at times and educators will apply repellent as needed, unless indicated otherwise on the enrolment and agreement form.

FOOD AND DRINK

Meals:

Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea are provided at the Service. Children eat together in their rooms at meal times in a safe, clean and relaxed environment. It is our aim to make meal times a positive learning experience where children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Weekly menus can be viewed in the foyer.

If your child requires breakfast at the Centre, please supply the food and drink items needed. These items must adhere to our nut and whole egg free practise. To comply with our food licence, any food supplied must be in the original packaging inside a sealed container.

Water is provided with all meals and is freely available to children throughout the day via bubblers and cups. We request that parents do not send drink bottles to the Centre as they can become unhygienic and injuries can occur if children are accidentally bumped as they drink.

Food for Infants:

Food needs for infants will be individually planned for, based on discussions with parents. Please provide important information to educators about your child's food habits, patterns and concerns at home. Educators will listen carefully to parents and attempt to follow the feeding patterns they have developed with their infants.

Breast Feeding:

Educators will support and co-operate with mothers as much as possible to allow them to persevere with breast feeding their babies.

Bottles:

Frozen breast milk can be sent in express bags for bottles. Bags must be clearly labelled with the child's full name and the date and time of expressing. Frozen breast milk can be stored for up to three months.

Formula can be provided in clearly labelled, pre-measured containers along with clearly labelled, pre-measured bottles of cooled boiled water. If you wish to bring formula already prepared, please ensure the bottles are made up fresh each morning, and clearly dated.

Please ensure the bottles have secure lids for hygiene purposes. All bottles and containers must be clearly named with the child's name.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Centre fosters positive relations between all parents and educators. Every parent has the right to a positive and sympathetic response to their concerns. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues or concerns in a fair, prompt and positive manner.

In all matters concerning the welfare and development of the child, the parent should first consult with the child's Educator. If the matter cannot be settled please refer the matter to the Director. In all matters concerning the operation of the Centre, parents should take their concerns straight to the Director. The Director will ensure that accurate information is available to you concerning the matter.

If, after discussion with the Director, matters are still not resolved, concerns should be referred to the Management Committee.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

The Mueller College Early Learning Centre endeavours to engage with the local and wider community in a mutually beneficial and supportive relationship, in an effort to support children's lifelong learning and recreational enrichment. Various groups from the community will be periodically invited to contribute to the program. This may include interactive programs, educational programs, sporting, music and second language programs. Access to inclusion and support assistance from other relevant professionals is facilitated as required.

The Centre is also committed to making available information about community groups and activities for both children and families. Information will be available through notices, newsletters, emails and via our Facebook page.

Please discuss with the Director if you require any further information about specific community services available in the area.

The following services may be of assistance for parents and children:

Parentline	1300 30 1300 (8am-10pm)
Kids Help Line	1800 55 1800 (24 hrs)
Early Childhood Education	137 468 (13 QGOV) & Care
Women's Infolink	1800 177 577
Queensland Health	1343 2584 (13 HEALTH)