

University Preschool and Child Care Centre Inc.

A community-based non-profit centre associated with
The Australian National University



CENTRE HANDBOOK



<http://www.upccc.com.au/>

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OUR VISION IS TO

Provide an enjoyable, inclusive, safe, stimulating and caring learning environment for our community that embraces our Australian culture and heritage and nurtures each individual's sense of belonging, being and becoming

In support of this we believe that ...

- Childhood is a unique and important stage of life;
- Play is integral to children's learning;
- Family, cultural heritage and the community play an important role in children's development;
- Working collaboratively and supportively with families & the community enriches children's lives and their learning;
- Both indoor & outdoor environments provide learning opportunities for stimulating the imagination, promoting creativity, enhancing aesthetic development and developing an appreciation of nature.

ABOUT THE CENTRE

Background

We are a Community Based, standalone not-for-profit Centre, managed by a voluntary management committee comprised of parents whose children attend the centre. We were the first child care centre to be established on the ANU campus. In 1967 ANU staff members requested the ANU General Staff Association to investigate a proposal to establish a child care centre on campus. At the time, there was a lack of child care places in the ACT, particularly for babies. The Centre opened in March 1969, as a result of the University agreeing to make space available on campus. The ongoing growth and development of the Centre has been due largely to the community contribution of many people over the years. Financial assistance, by way of loans for alterations, was made available by several staff associations on campus, as well as voluntary contributions by parents and interested persons. Over the years, the Centre has also been successful in obtaining Commonwealth Upgrading Grants to improve areas of the Centre, such as the playgrounds. The ANU also continues to support the centre attending to general maintenance of the facilities and by providing an annual grant to cover the employment of a Handyman who is shared by the other on campus child care centres.

Environment



We are located on the campus of The Australian National University by the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. We occupy two buildings - blocks E & F of Old Lennox House which are of historical interest for Canberra and are Heritage listed. These buildings provide us with spacious rooms and playgrounds for the children. The layout of the buildings allows for six age groupings of children. We aim to create a comfortable atmosphere that offers acceptance and support, and an environment that nurtures the development and care of each child.

The children are grouped together in sections – Nursery, Toddler & Preschool that reflect the age and development of the children. Each section has 2 rooms a younger and older room and each room has two educators – one person with an early childhood degree qualification or a Diploma in Children's Services and the other with or studying towards a Certificate 3 in Children's Services.

We currently have 84 children enrolled with us per day:-

20 children in our Nursery Section – 9 in the younger group & 11 in our older group

22 children in our Toddler Section – 11 in the younger group & 11 in the older group

42 children in our Preschool Section – 20 in the younger group & 22 in the older group

Children progress through the Centre as they develop, and as places become available. When determining moves consideration is given to gentle change and progression and the friendships a child has established with other children and Educators which are important for developing a strong sense of identity, self-confidence and security. A child's behaviour may also be used as an indicator that they are ready for the more challenging experiences that an older group can provide. Before any move discussions will take place between parents, the educators involved and the Director in order to determine the suitability of a move.

Incorporation

The University Preschool and Child Care Centre Incorporated is an association incorporated under the ACT Associations Incorporation Ordinance 1953. Parents whose children are currently enrolled in the Centre are members of the Association with voting rights. An audit of the Association's financial records occurs annually. The financial records and the results of the audit are presented to the Annual General Meeting each March. Copies of these documents are then lodged with the ACT Office of the Registrar-General, along with details about the members of the management Committee.

Provider Approval

UPCCC has been granted approval to operate as a Provider of a Child Care service under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 and is subject to the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, which specify certain conditions that must be met such as: staff/child ratios; staffing qualifications; health and safety measures; buildings and facilities; insurance; programs and activities for the children; and the Management of the Centre. Compliance checks of the Centre are conducted annually by an appointed Child Care Adviser.

Any family that is concerned about any of the practices, policies or procedures of the Centre may contact Children's Services on 6207 1114

National Quality Framework (NQF)

The National Quality Framework took effect on 1 January 2012 replacing existing state and territory licensing and national quality assurance processes. The NQF aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvements in education and care services through the National Quality Standards which comprise seven quality areas, Educational program and practice; Children's health and safety; Physical environment; Staffing arrangements; Relationships with children; Collaborative partnership with families and communities; Leadership and service management. Reviews are conducted at the Centre annually and randomly by an appointed Child Care Adviser.

Our Centre is currently rated as Exceeding the National Quality Standards

STAFF

All staff at University Preschool and Child Care Centre hold relevant qualifications and have extensive experience working with children.

Our Management Committee recognises the importance of ongoing professional development to ensuring that our staff are knowledgeable about current thinking and best practice in early childhood care and education.

Throughout the year Staff regularly attend professional and the Centre closes for one day a year so that all staff can participate in a day of professional development tailored to the needs of the staff and centre.

All permanent staff hold current first aid certificates

During the hours of operation, the Centre maintains educator/child ratios of:

- ◆ 1 educator to every 4 children under the age of two years
- ◆ 1 educator to every 5 children aged over two years to three years;
- ◆ 1 educator to every 11 children aged three years and over.

All educators hold a minimum of Certificate 3 in Children's Services or are studying towards this and one in every two educators holds or is studying towards one of the following qualifications:

- ◆ a Diploma in Children's Services; or
- ◆ an Advanced Diploma in Children's Services; or
- ◆ a Bachelor of Education Early Childhood (4 year degree); or
- ◆ a Bachelor of Teaching Birth to 5 years (3 year degree).

A minimum of four educators, two of, whom must be qualified, are in attendance at the Centre at the beginning and end of each day.

Staff Meetings and Staff Development

These are held at least every six weeks and provision is made for staff development. It is important that staff are allocated time for information sharing and keeping up to date with current child rearing practices and theories.

Each year the centre closed for 2 days so that the staff can participate in Staff Development and curriculum development. These are usually the first day for the year and the last Friday of the end of term three school holidays.

Director

The Centre Director is employed full-time. The Director is responsible for all business relating to the day-to-day running of the service. If you have matters you would like to discuss, please contact the Director. The Director ensures that regular newsletters and notices go out to parents to keep communication and information flowing.

ADMINISTRATION



The Director administrates the Centre with the assistance of the Assistant Director/Educational Leader and the Administration Assistant on a day-to-day basis. The Management Committee monitors the annual budget and fees are set with a view to maintaining quality and affordable child care for families. The Management Committee continually evaluates policies, programs and practices and parents are kept up-to-date by way of Newsletters, Minutes of Meetings and Reports, which are distributed via email to all families and included in the monthly Centre Newsletter. The Director in consultation with educators and parents manages the waiting list and movements of children from one group to another. To maintain the Centre's financial viability as a non-profit organisation, the filling of vacant places holds priority. Several factors must be considered before children already in the Centre can be moved to another group. The Director has discretion in this matter.

The Centre Management has a duty of care to all members of the Association. This duty of care is addressed through:

- ◆ The Centre Handbook (this publication)
- ◆ Centre Policies
- ◆ Insurance Policies
- ◆ Centre Administration Records
- ◆ Display of Certificates and Licences.

Child Care Benefit (CCB) & Child Care Rebate (CCR)

Eligible Parents with children enrolled in the Centre are able to apply for fee assistance in the form of Child Care Benefit (CCB) or Child Care Rebate (CCR). To be eligible for assistance you must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident working or studying, or be in receipt of a scholarship or education grant paid through the Commonwealth Government. Further information about this is available through the Centre Administration.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee comprises representatives of both parents and staff. The Centre encourages parent involvement in decisions on policy and curriculum issues. The Committee aims to create a comfortable and supporting environment for parents and strives for open communication and partnerships between parents and staff.

The Committee recognises that there is a strong need to:

- ◆ Maintain a high standard of qualified and experienced staff;
- ◆ Monitor staff employment conditions and meet award requirements as a minimum;
- ◆ Monitor staff performance and evaluate curriculum;
- ◆ Ensure that staff development through both in-house training and outsource training is available;
- ◆ Involve staff in decision making process for the Centre; and

- ◆ Create a supportive, enthusiastic and positive atmosphere for the staff, which encourages personal initiative and co-operation.

The Centre, as a voluntary association, has a written constitution that establishes the Association, provides for membership, and creates a Board to manage the affairs of the Association. The Board is called the Management Committee and comprises:

- ◆ President;
- ◆ Vice-President;
- ◆ Treasurer;
- ◆ Secretary;
- ◆ Public Officer;
- ◆ Director;
- ◆ Assistant Director;
- ◆ 4 staff representatives; and
- ◆ Other parent members.

The Committee is responsible for the affairs of the Centre and works closely with the Director. The Committee meets monthly and has several sub-committees to carry on continuing work. The sub-committees often co-opt parents and staff as members. The Committee sets fees and approves major expenditure. The Committee also selects the Director, Assistant Director and Section Leaders. It is ultimately responsible for solving any serious problems in staff relations, staff-parent relations, and parent-Centre relations.

Annual General Meeting

This is held every March and all parents are invited to attend. Office bearers of the Management Committee present reports. The Director also presents a report. Parents are invited to nominate for a vacant position on the Management Committee.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Our Educational Intent - Each room displays their educational intentions and outcomes, and the strategies to meet those intentions in the entrance of their learning space for all to see. This is a working document which forms the basis for future teaching, learning and reflection across the Centre. The Educational Program provides a framework to expand on early education concepts such as resilience, scientific principles, the arts, literacy and mathematical perceptions through the setting of clear intentions. These intentions vary from room to room and reflect each educator's pedagogical perspective and form the foundation of our educational program.

Our Learning Journeys – are documents that are used to document the learning that takes place in our educational settings. Alongside our educational program, we display and evaluate these journeys as an ongoing means of programming and learning about each child's needs and understandings. Learning journeys focus on a varied range of subjects and relevance, and they can be completed as often as relevant. For example, one learning journey could last three months, and another one could last a week. Learning journeys can be based on projects such as dinosaurs or the solar system, or on specific age appropriate concepts such as developing relationships and building confidence. Learning journeys are designed to acknowledge the learning community in a holistic nature and ensure that our educational program is relevant, stimulating and constructive.

Children's Intentions and summaries – At the beginning of each year Educators and parents work together to develop age appropriate and meaningful intentions for each child. Strategies are developed to support each child in meeting these intentions and their progress is regularly assessed, summarised and then documented in their learning journals throughout the year. Intentions are designed to help all children reach their full potential.

Learning Journals – At the beginning of each year the children are assigned a personal Learning Journal which is then gifted to them at the end of the year. These Journals aim to document each child's unique learning experience and provide parents with a deeper insight into their encountered learning. These Journals share photos, artworks, meaning making, meaningful observations, individual educational summaries and shared learning journeys.

At UPCCC children have a collaborative say in their educational experience. Children are encouraged to participate, reflect and contribute to their personal Journals and learning stories, enhancing the content of the program and future planning and learning.

Innovative Learning Programs - At UPCCC we take pride in the progressive nature of our Centre. Our dedication for developing educational, authentic and open-ended programs whilst maintaining a welcoming and nurturing environment. We are always looking at how we can incorporate innovative programs that will enhance our everyday practice and community focus.

Risky Play Program



UPCCC supports and encourages children to engage in risky play activities. Children need and want to take risks in order to explore their limits and venture into new experiences. Being able to assess a risk enables a child to decide whether to take on a challenge or not, based on their abilities. Risk does not always have a negative outcome, many positives can come from taking risks. A risk is different from a hazard which is generally caused by something unseen or not obvious to the child that will often result in injury. As educators it is our job to ensure our play environment does not have hazards and to educate that children how to tell the difference between the two.

We want the children to feel comfortable making choices. By not offering the children opportunities to take supported risks they are more likely to put themselves in danger. Our focus is to foster and support each child through this learning

Music Engagement Program (MEP)

Susan and her team from the ANU Music Engagement Program visit us weekly and sing with our children and any of the parents who want to join in. The MEP is based on a social philosophy of shared, active music making, known as the Music Outreach Principle. It promotes, but does not demand, high-level skills, and does not require expensive instruments or equipment to be effective. It offers an on-going musical pathway for all, regardless of perceived talent or previous experience. Skill development occurs as a natural by-product of joyful engagement, where performance is a stress-free part of the outreach approach.

Yoga Program

Mel one of our Educational Leaders who has a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) and is a qualified Yoga instructor runs a Yoga program with the children. Through participation in the Yoga program children develop physical benefits such as strength, coordination, balance and flexibility. Yoga also helps children's psychological development by focussing their mind and strengthening their concentration, attention span and memory.



The Yoga classes teach children to be self-aware of their bodies to ensure that the exercises that they do feel good for them. The classes are dynamic and flexible and above all fun.

Clear Minded for Life Program

This is an Australian based international organisation that teaches clear mind techniques to children. Due to its simple nature, the program brings a great sense of calm to children and adults alike. The Clear Minded For Life program is designed to assist children to develop the ability to understand the way their brain functions, as well as assisting them to better understand their world. Emphasis is also placed on empowering them to self-regulate and respond to their own emotions.

Through this program children learn how to breathe with focus and how their breath can assist them to find calm. Deep breaths are used to bring more oxygen into the brain allowing for higher sensory processing to focus, concentrate, interact and learn more easily, at home, school or any situation.

Simple techniques such as 3 deep breaths teach children how to self-correct thoughts that may be leading to anxiety or stress.

Swimming Program

Our swimming program is conducted through KingSwim School in Deakin with children over 3 years of age. The children are taken by bus to KingSwim and participate in a structured learn to swim program that is targeted for their age-group and ability. The KingSwim instructors use a range of floating devices, songs, games and activities to help children gain independence, confidence and abilities in the water. The

instructors are very knowledgeable and experienced and do not expect any child to do anything that they are not entirely comfortable with.



Nature Walks

Being located on the ANU campus and the Acton Peninsular allows us to have access to large open spaces both built and natural. We believe in taking all of our children (including the under 2's) outside our boundaries to explore these spaces. These opportunities allow our children to develop understandings about the world and their place in it.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are various ways you can become involved in the Centre:

- ◆ Stand for election to the Management Committee;
- ◆ Offer your skills and knowledge in a variety of practical ways;
- ◆ Participate as a member of sub-committees;
- ◆ Contribute to the diversity of experiences for the children attending the Centre;
- ◆ Introduce your cultural traditions and celebrations;
- ◆ Attend the Parent Evenings that are held throughout the year;
- ◆ Make suggestions and give feedback to the Management Committee and staff.
- ◆ Participate in Centre Working Bees and social functions

Parent/ Educator Interactions

The relationship between parents and educators is one of partnership in child rearing and care based on mutual respect, courtesy and understanding. Difficulties can arise due to misunderstandings or pressures, and it is our aim to ensure that the relationship is maintained through supportive and considerate discussion. Confidentiality is essential in this environment to protect the privacy of individuals. Staff and parents are requested to maintain this at all times.



GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

If a serious problem arises, first speak to the people concerned to attempt to resolve the problem. If this is not successful, speak to the Director who will arrange to speak to everyone concerned in the issue and assist with resolution. If this too is unsuccessful, the Director, at your request and with your permission, can take the matter up with a Disputes Sub-Committee comprising the Director, a staff representative, and a parent representative. In the event that the Disputes Sub-Committee is unable to resolve the problem, the full Management Committee becomes involved. (This would occur only if the parties refused to accept the decision of the Disputes Sub-Committee, or if a general policy decision is required.) If this happens, the parties are given the opportunity to present their views at a meeting of the Management Committee before any final decision is made.

The Management Committee reserves the right to exclude any parent or child from the Centre, who persistently shows a lack of respect for staff, persistently breaches or disregards the Policies and Practices of the Centre, or whose behaviour is threatening or endangering the safety and wellbeing of others in attendance. In the event of such an occurrence, two weeks notice in writing will be given, with an outline of the basis on which the decision was made.

If parents feel that their grievance is not being dealt with appropriately they should seek help from an external body.

Human Rights Commission – Complaints
Phone 6205 2222
Fax
6207 1034
TTY 6205 1666
Email human.rights@act.gov.au
Website: www.hrc.act.gov.au

Children's Policy and Regulation Unit
Office for Children Youth & Family Support
Phone 6207 1114
Fax: 6207 1128
Email: ocyfschildrenserv@act.gov.au
Post: GPO Box 158 Canberra City 2601

OUR COMMUNITY



The Centre aims to maintain a sense of community among the busy daily routines. We have an "Open Door Policy" and welcome our families to visit at any time. We also invite you to build happy memories and positive relationships by participating in the social activities held throughout each year. These can include: - Morning and Afternoon teas, lunches, camping weekends, fundraising such as mini fetes and market days, working bees and a number of other incidental events. We welcome your family to the Centre.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Centre is open 51 weeks per year, five days a week, between the hours of 7:45am and 5:45pm. For one week over Christmas and New Year, the Centre is closed.

FEES

Payment of Fees

Parents are required to pay for the full 51 weeks of operation while their child is enrolled at the Centre. There are no concessions for holiday breaks.

Two full weeks written notice is required when children will be leaving the Centre. This should be addressed to the Director. If written notice is not received, fees will automatically apply. If required, children of school age can continue their care until the starting school date. Arrangements can be made through the Centre Administration.

Salary Sacrificing

Parents who are members of ANU staff are able to take advantage of salary sacrificing from 1 January 1998. Arrangements can be made through the Centre Administration.

Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate

This is available through Centrelink. Information on determining eligibility and information on applying can be found on the [Department of Human Services Website](#). The benefits are assessed according to income and can be paid directly to the Centre to reduce your fee payment or received as a lump sum.

WAITING LIST

The Centre maintains an enrolment waiting list for children. Applications can be made by filling in an application form on the Website or by visiting the Centre and completing an application form. Priority of access guidelines are in place. ANU staff and students are given priority over parents working, studying, or looking for work in the wider community. Siblings of children already in attendance and children of UPCCC staff are also given priority.

STARTING AT THE CENTRE

To acquaint you and your child with the Centre, we suggest that you organise a brief visit before commencing. Take this time to become acquainted with the Educators who will be caring for your child, the Centre routines and the general environment. This is also a time to familiarise the Educators with your child's personal needs and routines. We recommend that you organise as many brief visits as possible prior to starting, especially if your child will be in one of the under 3 year old groups. On the first day, it is a good idea to stay at least for the first hour. We suggest that you advise the staff member in charge when you are intending to leave and they will assist you. It is not unusual for both parents and children to experience some separation anxiety at first. Experience has shown that it is in the best interests of the child to make the separation calmly and briefly.

Arriving and Departing With Your Children



On arrival, please hand your child over to a known Educator. Never leave your children at the Centre without informing an Educator. You are also legally required to sign your children in and out of our care. We use an electronic sign in and out system and computers are located in each area for this purpose. Children will not be released to any adult who is not nominated on the enrolment form. If you require someone to pick your child up who is not nominated, a letter of authority signed by you is required. The Director or the staff member in charge of the Section must sight this written authority before the child can be released. This also applies in an emergency. Further details relating to this matter are explained on the enrolment form in the Parent Permission Section. As a child care provider we must always act within our duty of care to protect the child.

IF YOU ARE KEEPING YOUR CHILD HOME FOR A DAY.....

We would appreciate you notifying the section/centre that your child will not be attending....such a courtesy call is particularly important if your child is not able to attend for health reasons, as this may be of significance to other children and staff in the centre.

Late Collection of Children

The Centre has a policy relating to late collection of children. Please note that if children are not collected from the Centre before closing time, extra fee loadings will apply and will appear on your next account for fees. Further information about this is available at enrolment.

Change of Personal Details

Please inform the Centre Administration of any changes to your address, telephone numbers and emergency contacts. It is important that we always have current emergency contact numbers.

Personal Belongings

Each child is provided with a locker, hook, or basket for personal belongings. We suggest you provide your child with a soft school bag with at least two changes of clothing, several if they are a baby. Food should be stored in separate small containers for each serving and marked with your child's name.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

All children at times exhibit what is considered unacceptable behaviour in a group situation. Staff do encourage socially acceptable behaviour and develop empathy using positive reinforcement and setting of clear guidelines and limits. Children are not punished or spoken to harshly – rather staff model appropriate behaviour and introduce older children to simple conflict resolution skills. Children are given strategies to encourage the use of communication to resolve difficulties rather than resorting to unacceptable behaviour such as hitting or biting.



Biting can occur particularly during the toddler stage. Educators take Measures to ensure biting is prevented and 'biters' receive firm, but kind, expressions from staff that this is unacceptable. All children wish to 'belong' to their social group and will learn in time to modify their behaviour if provided with direct guidance and support. If biting or hitting continues, the child is separated from the rest of the group for a few minutes but remains within view. This is not meant to be a punishment, but act as a 'conditioner' that 'when you bite or hit you won't be included because it hurts'. The environment in each room is arranged to ensure that harmony prevails as much as possible. Activities are provided which keep children engaged and occupied and allow for self-expression.

If a child's behaviour is causing above average concern, the Director will contact the parents and arrange a time for discussion, to develop cohesive strategies for managing the behaviour and supporting the child during this period. This is part of the child care partnership between parents and staff.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Policy



Strict adherence to the Centre's Health Policies are necessary to keep cross-infection to a minimum. Exclusion protocols apply. These are outlined in our Management of Illness policy and our Outbreaks and Exclusions Policy. When your child appears to be very sick or has a temperature of 38°C or above, we will contact you immediately and ask you to take your child home and/or seek medical attention. We must act in the best interests of the child in this matter.

All children attending the Centre must be fully immunised. Please advise the Centre if your child has allergies to food or medication.

Medications must always be handed to a section educator and the appropriate Administration of Medication Form filled in and signed by parent. NEVER leave medication in your child's bag. The Centre is only allowed to administer prescribed drugs. Non-prescribed medications will only be administered if:



- 1) advised by a medical practitioner;
- 2) the medication is within the use-by date;
- 3) the medication does not contain Paracetamol; and
- 4) multiple medications have been acknowledged in writing by a medical practitioner.

Children must be EXCLUDED from the Centre whilst taking the following medications:

- ◆ **Flagyl** (used in the treatment of Giardia)
- ◆ **Koapectate**

Safety

The Centre must meet standard safety requirements to remain a licensed service. Insurance policies are held by the Centre to cover public liability, worker's compensation, and professional indemnity, fire and property loss/ damage. Gates, fences and glass panels at the Centre meet the national safety standards. All chemicals are locked away in an area separate from the children's play areas. Cleaning materials used in the areas are always kept on high shelves out of reach of the children. Fire and emergency evacuation procedures are posted around the Centre and regular fire evacuation and lock-down drills occur throughout the year. The University's Fire Safety Manager supervises these drills as well as providing training to the Centre staff. In the case of an emergency evacuation, police and emergency services are involved. The police supervise the contact of parents and advise on the whereabouts of children for collection. ANU Security are also involved for assistance and information.

When entering and leaving the Centre ALWAYS check that gates and doors are closed. Once children are signed out of the Centre they are your responsibility – this includes the car-park area.

Please do not allow your children to bring dangerous items to the Centre such as:

- ◆ Plastic wrap on food;
- ◆ Glass;
- ◆ Ropes, laces, capes;
- ◆ Toxic substances;
- ◆ Medication;
- ◆ Small beads;
- ◆ Sharp items, including pencils;
- ◆ Rubber bands and balloons;
- ◆ Matches; or
- ◆ Nuts of any description.

Pets

We have a policy regarding Inclusion of Animals in the Centre. If you wish your child to bring a pet to the centre, please discuss this first with the Section Leader for your child's Section or one of their Educators.

