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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Thank you for considering Communicare Occasional Care Centre for your family's child care and education needs. We understand just how difficult it can be choosing the right place for your child, and therefore hope that this booklet is helpful in assisting your family to make this important decision. Should you choose to enrol your child, this booklet will also act as a quick reference for all matters relating to our centre's management and operating procedures.

1.1 OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Practices of Communicare Occasional Child Care are based on this Philosophy which was developed in consultation with Educators and Management. Our Philosophy is reviewed annually.

We as Educators strongly believe that children have the right to free unstructured play which reflects their interests.

Communicare Occasional child Care Service recognizes and celebrates the uniqueness of children and families. We are committed to creating collaborative partnerships with families and see ourselves as a supportive base within the community. We endeavour to create strong links within the external community.

Our daily practice emphasis is on equality, non-discrimination, and the well-being and best interest of children and families. We acknowledge the diverse values and cultural beliefs of our children, families, Educators and the wider community, including those of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Our curriculums supports, empowers and recognizes the needs of all children and families as individuals and groups. We aim to create, nurture and maintain a safe, stimulating and productive environment while in our care. We use and acknowledge the importance of learning through play in our daily experiences and curriculum planning. It is through exploration and extending concepts with children that we plant the seed of curiosity and knowledge in areas such as sustainability, recycling, being part of a community and respecting diversity.

The professional development and training of our educators is a continuous process, and we value and respect the knowledge each educator has regarding the children. Our educators are supported and encouraged by Communicare to constantly develop their child development knowledge and strategies to support children’s learning. We provide professional opportunities for mentoring students.

1.2 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Our commitment to continual improvement and reflection on our care practices ensures we remain:

- Current and reflective in our care practices; Innovative when creating and planning our play environments passionate and committed in providing high quality care creating an environment that encourages a child’s sense of joy and merriment
- Challenged to provide innovative learning opportunities to enhance children’s learning.
1.3 CONTACT DETAILS

CHILD CARE ADMINISTRATION
9251 5707  8.30am-4.30pm

CONTACT NUMBERS FOR OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE ROOMS
3-5 room  8.30 - 5.30  9251 5782
2-3 room  8.30 - 5.30  9251 5781

EMAIL
occasionalcare@communicare.org.au

WEBSITE
www.communicare.org.au

ADDRESS
28 Cecil Avenue, Cannington, WA 6107
Postal Address: PO Box 730, Cannington, WA 6987

OPERATING HOURS
Occasional Care Centre operates Monday to Friday from 8.30am -1.00pm and 1.00pm – 5.30pm.

2.0 OUR CENTRE STANDARDS

In considering the best child care option for your family, you will want to know about the standard of care that we will provide for your child.

2.1 OUR STANDARDS

Standards are set by government, both state and commonwealth, to ensure that the service centre provides a safe and stimulating environment for your child. We are proud to deliver a standard of care that meets regulatory requirements.

2.2 REGULATIONS

Communicare Occasional Care Centre adheres to the West Australian children's services regulations. These regulations are mandatory for all Western Australian child care centres and are closely maintained and supervised by the Education and Care Regulatory Unit who visit and monitor centres throughout the year.

The regulations ensure the safety and well-being of children attending child care and they guide many decisions made in our centre. Amongst other things, they stipulate the size of furniture in our centre, the amount of play space and the type of equipment necessary. They also detail procedures to follow in the event of an emergency, accident, or occurrence of infectious disease. The children's services regulations are in place to ensure that the physical environment that we
provide for your child meets a basic safety standard, that we have the required number of staff for
the children in our care, and that our procedures and record keeping practices are satisfactory.

We pride ourselves on consistently providing a level of care and education that exceeds the
regulated standard. The regulations book is always available for you to read and is located in our
administration office.

2.3 ACCREDITATION

In 1994, the Commonwealth Government implemented a national quality improvement and
accreditation system to focus on the standard of care and education in child care centres
throughout Australia. It provides national guidelines for early childhood best practice. Whilst we
will adhere to the current guidelines, there will soon be changes to the accreditation system.

In December 2007, the Council Of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that the federal, state
and territory governments would collaborate on a national quality agenda for early childhood
education and care. A key element of this national quality agenda is Australia's first national early
years learning framework (EYLF) which will underpin the new national quality standard for early
childhood education and care as well as school aged care.

We are proud to advise that we develop our curriculum in line with the new framework, and
participates in the new national quality standard. Through on-going reflection and quality
improvement, we will continue to provide your child and your family the very best education, care,
and service.

3.0 OUR EDUCATION AND CARE TEAM

At Communicare Occasional Care Centre, our educators are our greatest asset. We know that the
quality of education and care that your child receives each day rests on the shoulders of these
very special people. They have been carefully selected for the breadth of their experience, their
training and their personal qualities and commitment to providing great standard of care.

Early childhood is an important part of your child's life. The emotional, social and physical
development of young children has a direct effect on their overall development and on the adult
they will become.

That's why our educators are experienced and skilled early childhood professionals, who recognise
the importance of your child’s early years, and who have the skills and knowledge to foster your
child’s overall development.
All of our Early Childhood Educators are provided with professional development opportunities
throughout their employment to enhance their skills and keep up to date with current knowledge
of best practice in early childhood. Regular Educator appraisals are carried out to gain an
understanding of the skills, knowledge and attitude of individual Educators.

At our centre Educators are nurtured and their skills are challenged. We respect the Educators
initiative, innovation and attention to quality as well as their commitment to the children and their
families.
3.1 STAFF RATIOS

The ratio of staff to children also plays a major role in the provision of quality child care. The children’s services regulations stipulate the minimum ratio of staff to children in an early childhood setting as being:

- Birth to 24 months of age – 1 educator to 4 children
- 24 months to 36 months – 1 educator to 5 children
- 36 months and over – 1 educator to 10 children

Children aged 36 months and over are also given access to a program delivered by an Early Childhood Teacher for at least 60% of our operating hours.

3.2 CONTINUITY OF CARE

Consistency and continuity is a vital component of quality care. We achieve this through a thoughtful staff roster system based on the belief that children need to feel safe and secure in their environment in order to explore and learn. Our rosters are developed to ensure consistency of care for you and your child. Any changes made as a result of staff absences and holidays will be immediately communicated to you.

4.0 OCCASIONAL CARE CENTRE

4.1 CENTRE LAYOUT

Occasional Care Centre is a 32 place early learning centre program. We are located within the Communicare Head Office Building. We have access to intimate activity rooms as well as different outdoor play areas including a natural play space and bike path.

5.0 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

We view curriculum as everything the children experience from our program. This includes routines like mealtimes, our physical environment, and our materials and equipment. It also includes time to play and discover at a pace set by the child, the interaction between, and engagement of children with other children and educators, as well as our partnerships and communication with families, other agencies and the wider community.

We understand the importance of appropriate planning for children’s learning. To ensure that our curriculum is of the highest standard, we employ a team of highly skilled and dedicated educators who are committed to challenging their own knowledge and being informed by the latest research.

5.1 HOW IS THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT DEVELOPED?

Knowing your child as an individual, and building up a relationship with your family is critical for curriculum planning and development. While your child attends our centre, our educators will keep written documentation on their learning to assist them individually and appropriately plan for your child’s participation.
All recorded information about your child is available for you to peruse at any time. All assessments of your child are kept within the centre and we encourage you to read the document and provide feedback. The room leader is available at any time by appointment to discuss your child’s progress and they also welcome the opportunity to chat informally with you.

5.2 WHAT VALUES UNDERPIN OUR PROGRAMS AND WHAT WILL YOUR CHILD LEARN?

Communicare Occasional Care Centre’s philosophy is based on the belief that children learn through play. We take a social constructivist approach to learning. We believe that children develop meaning in their world through their interactions with others and their environment. As they play and explore, they learn what things are, what things do, and how they connect. In other words, they construct their own meaning through social engagement with other people and things around them.

Our curriculum will be based on the framework for young children aged from birth to five years of age care in Australia, Early Years learning Framework (EYLF), which identifies five learning outcomes designed to capture the integrated and complex learning and development of children from birth to 5 years. These outcomes are:-

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

The outcomes are broad and observable. They acknowledge that children in early years care settings have choices and opportunities to collaborate with each other and educators. Children learn in a variety of ways and vary in their capabilities and pace of learning. Considerations need to be given to time and place. Children engage with increasingly complex ideas and learning experiences, which are transferable to other situations.

6.0 OUR DAILY ROUTINES

Our routines are flexible yet also predictable. They have been developed to provide a framework for staff to meet your child’s individual physical needs, and their predictability provides your child with a sense of security and familiarity each day. Routine activities divide the day into blocks of time and form a reference point for other activities that occur within the program for children who do not yet understand the concept of time. This is important for your young child's developing self-confidence and trust. Please speak to your room leaders for more information on the routine of your child’s room.

6.1 MEAL TIMES

MORNING TEA
Parents and families are to bring a piece of fruit for each day their child is in care. This will be cut up by the Educators to be enjoyed for a group morning tea.

**LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA**

Parent and families are to bring a packed Lunches and Afternoon Teas for children. We ask that parents pack nutritious meals. We highly discourage bringing in fast food items. Please speak to staff if you need to consult as to the best foods to pack. We have fridge and microwave facilities for proper food handling.

Please ensure that you label your child’s lunch boxes and other belongings such as containers, milk bottles, water bottles and hats. You are encouraged to put away your child’s meals accordingly at our meal box station. Water bottles will be stationed in the rooms so that children will have access to drinking water at all times. Please ensure you put water only in their drinking water bottles.

**6.2 SPECIAL DIETS & ALLERGIES**

Should your child require a special diet, please bring this to the attention of the educators. Please note, the centre is an allergy aware centre therefore **STRICTLY NO** nut products are to be packed for children. Please do not send any such products with your child, including peanut butter, Nutella or pre-wrapped snacks that contain nuts or traces of nuts.

Some of our children are highly allergic to eggs. For the safety of all children, we request you exclude eggs and egg products from your child’s meals as much as possible. We also discourage bringing in birthday cakes or cupcakes for the children to share as the source of ingredients are unknown. Most bakery equipment might be exposed to traces of nuts.

**6.3 EPI PENS & MEDICATION**

If your child has a diagnosed allergy which requires an Epi pen, please supply the Epi pen and Allergy Action Plan signed by a Medical practitioner. Please supply any other medication outlined by your medical practitioner to manage allergies. In the case of the Epi pen being administered to your child at any stage, the parent will need to supply a new Epi pen on the child’s return to the centre.

**7.0 BOOKING INFORMATION**

**7.1 PERMANENT BOOKINGS**

As we secure the days booked in permanently, families will be charged for day/s, whether their child attends or not. This includes Public Holidays. To assist in the daily program, if your child is not attending on any particular day, please phone the centre to inform Educators.
If your child/ren has not attended for a period of two weeks without notification and we have not been able to contact you, your booking is subject to cancellation.

**CASUAL BOOKINGS**
Families need to notify the Team Leader in advance. Booking is subject to availability and payment is needed at the time of booking at all times.

**ANY CHANGE OF BOOKING OR CANCELLATION REQUIRES ONE WEEKS’ WRITTEN/EMAIL NOTICE DURING WHICH NORMAL FEES WILL APPLY.**

### 7.2 CHILD CARE BENEFIT (CCB)

Families may be eligible for Child Care Benefit and for Childcare Rebate. Information is processed through the Family Assistance Office (FAO), telephone 13 61 50 for more information.

The service will comply with the Commonwealth Government requirements.
- It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to complete and lodge their Child Care Benefit/Child Care Rebate application with the FAO.
- It is the parent’s responsibility to let Communicare Administration know if they have children attending another childcare.

### 7.3 FEES

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<th>Session Times</th>
<th>Fee</th>
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<tr>
<td>Toddlers</td>
<td>Full Day (8.30am-5.30pm)</td>
<td>$72 per day/child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindy</td>
<td>Full Day (8.30am-5.30pm)</td>
<td>$70 per day/child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toddler &amp; Kindy</td>
<td>Half Day (8.30am-1pm) or (1pm-5.30pm)</td>
<td>$40 per session/child</td>
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### 7.4 PAYMENT OF FEES

- We accept payments of Eftpos, Visa and Mastercard. We do not accept AMEX or Cash. Credit Card payments are also available over the telephone.
- BPay is available. Details are outlined in your Fee Statements.
- Payments for casual days are to be made on the day of care prior to child being admitted into OCC.
- Fees must be paid for every day your child is enrolled, including public holidays and when your child is sick. A half or full daily fee is charged regardless of the number of hours your child attends.
- Fees must be paid at least one week in advance.
- When the family does not have a current child care assessment notice for Child Care Benefit, full fees will be charged.
7.5 CESSATION OF CARE

Families are required to give Communicare one week's written notice to cancel care. There have been changes in policy for Department of Social Services which means Child Care Benefit (CCB), Child Care Rebate (CCR) & JETCCFA (Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance) will not be paid if a child is absent on their first or last day of care. Websites for further information are:


7.6 OUTSTANDING FEES

Parents/guardians with overdue fees will be encouraged to discuss any difficulties they may have in meeting payments and make suitable arrangements to pay. If this is not done, or the agreed arrangements are not kept, the following procedure will apply:

- After one week overdue - a polite written reminder will be forwarded to the parent/guardian advising that the place may be cancelled in 5 days' time.
- After two weeks overdue - a letter advising that the place will be cancelled if the account is not paid in full or any agreed payment plans have not resumed. The letter will include a reminder that parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss payment difficulties and make suitable arrangements to pay.
- After three weeks overdue - if no arrangements to pay have been made or kept, the place will be cancelled and be referred to a Collection Agency. Costs associated with this agency as well as Communicare Administration fees will be incurred by parents.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION & CENTRE PROCEDURES

8.1 ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

At Communicare Occasional Care Centre, educators work to ensure that arrivals and departures to and from the centre are not only safe and secure for the children, but also a valuable means of exchanging information. In regards to arrival and departure times, we ask that you or your representative:

- Ensure that the attendance records are signed on both arrival and departure
- Leave your child in the direct care of a staff member
- Let staff know that you are taking your child home
- Feel welcome to spend time with your child both upon arrival and departure from the centre
- Keep goodbyes brief for children; and
- Ring to notify staff if your child's arrival and departure times are going to be varied dramatically at any time.

In addition to this we wish to draw your attention to the following:-

Authorised adults to collect children are those listed under the authority section of the enrolment form, and both enrolling parents, unless a magistrate’s court or family law court make different
orders, have lawful authority of their children, and are consequently permitted to remove children from the centre’s care.

Our educators always endeavour to be available and responsive to parents and children's needs at these times. Arrivals and departures, and greetings and farewells, are an important part of the centre’s day. Through creating an environment of trust and support, our educators ensure that the transition from home to centre, school to centre and centre to home, is at all times a pleasant and positive experience for you and your child.

Please note: If you are picking your child up after 4.30pm you will need to use the door buzzer located outside the front entrance glass doors, and wait for the Educators to identify you before buzzing you through.

8.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is of paramount importance in our centre. All of the information provided to us by you, such as addresses, phone numbers, and custody information, is seen and recorded only by the administration staff and the staff directly responsible for the care of your child. At no time will information be given out without your consent, and any individual meetings that take place between you and our staff will be undertaken with the highest degree of professionalism.

8.3 ENROLMENT FORMS - LAWFUL AUTHORITY AND CONTACT

The children services regulations require all centres to keep records of lawful authority, contact and residence arrangements for children. During enrolment you will be asked to fill in an authorisation statement in regards to lawful authority and contact relating to your child.

All sections of the enrolment form must be completed prior to enrolment, as staff will not permit a child to leave the centre without the appropriate written authorisation from you. Persons unknown to staff will be questioned on their arrival and lawful authority forms checked. If the person collecting your child is not listed, he or she will be unable to leave the centre with your child, and we will notify you by phone.

8.4 DAILY COMMUNICATION

We recognise that effective communication is vital in providing care that is personal and individualised. We recognise that when it comes to your child, you are the expert. Our educators rely on you to share with them your intimate knowledge of your child each day, in order to provide care that is consistent with your home environment, and to develop a program that reflects an understanding of your child's changing needs throughout their growth and development.

Our educators in turn welcome the opportunity to share their professional expertise in child development with you, as well as their knowledge and growing understanding of your child. We see both parents and educators as a resource to each other, and therefore, as active partners in the care and education of children.
Daily communication between you and your child’s educator is an essential element of a quality early childhood program. We look forward to many conversations and opportunities for exchanging information, and getting to know you and your child personally during your time at our centre.

**8.5 ORIENTATION**

We have developed a comprehensive and effective orientation process to ensure that you and your child have a smooth transition into our centre. We recommend that all families should complete this process, as we feel it is very important that both you and your child feel welcome, comfortable and settled into the program, before commencing care. The orientation process may take one or more visits, and is tailored to meet the individual needs of your family.

Only under extenuating circumstances will we enrol your child without adequate orientation. Under no circumstances will we allow your child to commence care without all appropriate forms completed, including immunisation records, enrolment form and copy of birth certificate.

**8.6 WHAT TO BRING TO DAYCARE**

For the comfort of your child, please remember to bring the following items:-

- A change of clothes including underwear, in case child needs changing
- Sufficient nappies, we recommend 4 or more a day
- Drink bottle
- Hat for outside play
- Appropriate footwear, closed shoes are highly recommended, and appropriate clothing according to weather conditions

**8.7 RECORD KEEPING**

The centre maintains all information provided by your family on computer and on file. We ask you to ensure your child's records are kept up to date by communicating any changes to your child's information to the centre. After updating the central administration records, this information is forwarded to the educators in your child’s room. If you have a change in any of the following please let us know:-

- Your child's diet
- Allergies
- Address or phone number
- Immunisations (dates please)
- Work/study address/phone number

**8.8 EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

At the beginning of each year, an enrolment and family information form, and immunisation update will be given to you to update and return to the centre. It is important that you complete and return these forms to our Team Leader, to ensure that the care your child continues to receive remains current and relevant.
We ask you to keep us informed of any changes throughout the year as we need to be aware of your child's needs and be able to contact you throughout the day if the need arises.

8.9 SAFETY

We view Communicare Occasional Care Centre as a haven for children, and take every precaution to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children entrusted to our care. We ask that you contribute to a safe and secure environment by ensuring that children coming and going from the centre are closely accompanied by an adult at all times, and that doors and gates are always closed safely behind you.

8.10 SIGNING IN AND OUT

It is a state legislation requirement that upon arrival and departure each day, your child's attendance sheet must be signed with actual times and signatures. Failure to do so can affect your Child Care Benefit claims made through Centrelink.

The attendance sheets for your child will be located in the foyer. In the event of an emergency such as a fire, this list will be relied upon as a checklist of all children in attendance. Correct details recorded daily in the attendance book are therefore crucial to your child's safety.

8.11 ABSENCES

The centre has a legal obligation to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services to record all absences of children who are in receipt of child care benefit within the centre.

If your child has been absent, and you receive Child Care Benefit, you have a legal requirement to notify the centre of the reason for each absence. Please notify the centre if your child is going to be absent and state the reason why your child is absent e.g. Illness, rostered day off, holidays.

8.12 ALLOWABLE ABSENCE DAYS

Child Care Benefit is paid for up to 42 days of absence for each child per financial year. For further information on absences, visit www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/child-care-benefit

9.0 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Families are reminded that a copy of our centre's Policy and Procedures Manual can be found in the Administration office. The state regulations require that families have the following information available upon request.

The service practices and policies include:

- Delivery and collection of enrolled children
- Managing the behaviour of enrolled children
- Food, nutrition and dietary needs of individual enrolled children
• Sun protection for enrolled children
• Illness and infections, including any practice or policy relating to the exclusion of enrolled children suffering from a communicable disease
• The appointment of a person to act in place of the licensee or nominated supervising officer
• Emergency and evacuation procedures
• Dealing with concerns of parents
• The periods of time for which particular records are required to be retained under regulation 69, 71 and 72.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The centre welcomes all parent feedback, including their grievances and complaints, as it considers this will improve the services we provide. The centre wishes to foster positive relations between all parents, management and Educators. Every parent has the right to a positive response to their concerns. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues or concerns that impact on, or affect the day to day well being of the centre or its clientele in a fair, prompt and positive manner.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PARENT/EDUCATOR CONFLICT

The parent should discuss the problem with the particular Educator of the centre.

↓

If the parent still feels action is necessary after the discussion with the Educator, they should take the matter up with the Team Leader.

↓

If the parent is still unhappy with the situation, the Team Leader can offer to take the matter to the Operations Manager for guidance.

OR

The parent can write directly to the Operations Manager to explain the problem.

↓

The Operations Manager will advise the Team Leader of its decision and convey that finding to the parent concerned.

OR

The Operations Manager will write directly to the parent concerned to advise of their decision.

↓

If the parent is would like a different outcome, the Operations Manager will offer to take the matter to the Director of Community Services and the Communicare Board of Management.