



Parent Handbook

Dawson Street Child Care
Co-Op Ltd

www.dawsonstreetcc.org.au



Welcome to Dawson Street Child Care Co-Op Ltd

We are thrilled to have you and your child join our loving community. This parent handbook has been thoughtfully prepared to provide you with all the essential information you need to familiarise yourself with our policies, procedures, and philosophy.

At DSCC, our primary goal is to provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where your child can learn, grow, and flourish. We believe that early childhood is a precious time for exploration and discovery, and we are committed to creating an enriching experience that promotes holistic development.

Within these pages, you will find detailed information about our enrollment process, daily schedules, curriculum, health and safety protocols, parent responsibilities, communication channels, and much more.

It is designed to serve as a valuable resource throughout your child's time with us, helping you navigate and understand the various aspects of our program at Dawson St.

We value open and transparent communication, and we encourage you to reach out to us with any questions, concerns, or feedback you may have. We firmly believe that a strong partnership between parents and educators is essential for your child's well-being and growth.

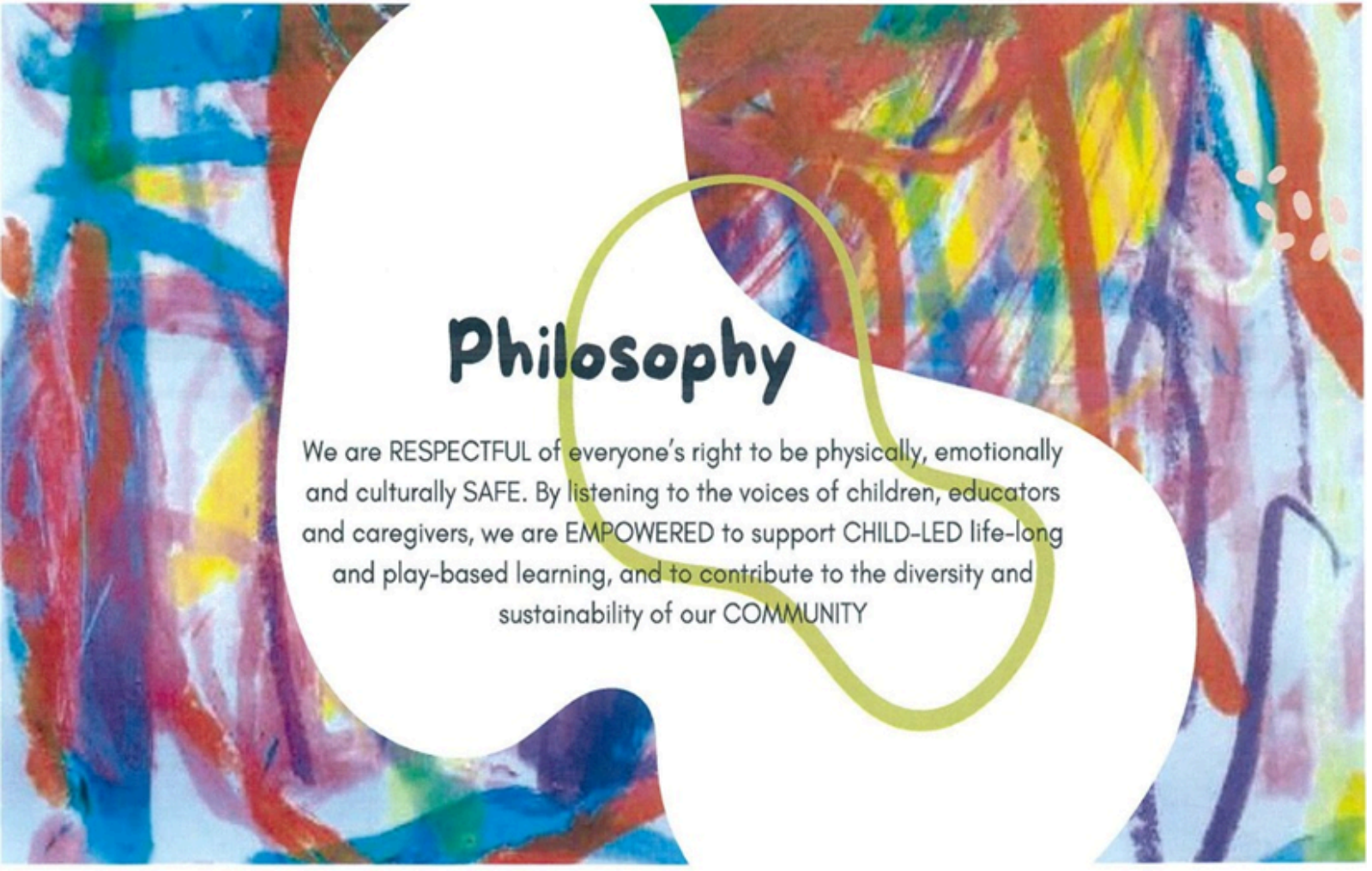
Thank you for entrusting us with the privilege of caring for your child. We look forward to embarking on this wonderful journey together and creating cherished memories.

Warm regards,
Centre Director

Centre Overview

Dawson Street Child Care Co-op Ltd is a 62-place long day care centre and kindergarten situated in Brunswick. We offer care, education and kindergarten for children aged 12 weeks to 6 years. We are a parent run community not for profit organisation committed to providing quality early education for the families of the local community.

Philosophy

An abstract background featuring vibrant, overlapping brushstrokes in shades of blue, red, yellow, and purple. A large, white, wavy-edged shape is centered on the page, containing the word 'Philosophy' and a paragraph of text. A thin, light green line loops around the text area. In the upper right corner of the white shape, there are several small, light pink flower-like icons.

Philosophy

We are RESPECTFUL of everyone's right to be physically, emotionally and culturally SAFE. By listening to the voices of children, educators and caregivers, we are EMPOWERED to support CHILD-LED life-long and play-based learning, and to contribute to the diversity and sustainability of our COMMUNITY

Values



The Philosophy and Goals of Dawson Street Children's centre was developed in consultation with Children, Parents, Educators and our Management Committee.



Inclusivity

At our centre, we uphold a commitment to acceptance, inclusion, and recognising individual abilities:

- **Diversity Valued:** We embrace diversity wholeheartedly, rejecting bias, inequality, exclusion, discrimination, and stereotypical attitudes.
- **Empowerment of Children:** We view children as inherently capable individuals.
- **Enriched Learning:** Our lives are enriched through mutual learning and understanding.
- **Guiding Principles:** Acceptance, inclusion, and recognition of abilities form the foundation of all our endeavors.
- **Zero Tolerance:** There is no room for bias, inequality, exclusion, discrimination, or stereotyping within our community at DSCC.
- **Embedded in Policy:** These principles are deeply embedded in our philosophies, Code of Conduct, Inclusion and Equity Policy, and among our diverse community members.

Active Sustainability

At our centre, sustainability is not just a goal but a way of life. We prioritise environmentally conscious actions in everything we do:

- **Environmental Responsibility:** Every action we take is guided by principles of environmental sustainability.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** We continuously educate ourselves and our community about sustainability practices.
- **Early Education:** We believe in instilling environmental sensitivity in children to nurture responsible adults.
- **Holistic Approach:** Our commitment to environmental education spans policy development, housekeeping, play experiences, and community engagement.
- **Continuous Learning:** We ensure ongoing education for children and staff alike to uphold sustainable practices.

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum at DSCC is built on two foundational pillars: learning through play and intentional teaching. But what do these concepts actually entail?

Play-Based Learning

Play-based learning provides children with opportunities to learn through play. These opportunities can arise both organically and through pre-planned activities designed by our educators and teachers, inspired by the children's current interests.

One of the key benefits of play-based learning is the development of social skills. Through both structured and unstructured play, children build relationships, learn conflict resolution, and develop the ability to regulate their emotions and behaviours. Play also serves as a stress reliever and contributes to overall well-being.

Beyond social skills, play-based learning enhances concentration, creativity, curiosity, and imagination. It fosters resilience and empathy as children begin to understand different perspectives.

At DSCC, we offer a mix of structured, unstructured, planned, and spontaneous play-based learning opportunities. Our staff dedicate time to carefully plan these high-quality learning experiences. Children's engagement is documented, and we reflect on these interactions to plan further learning opportunities. This "plan, do, review" process is a core element of our early years planning cycle, shaping our learning environments and experiences.

Intentional Teaching

Intentional teaching at DSCC involves educators interacting with children purposefully and thoughtfully. Every interaction is viewed as a potential learning moment, with educators responding deliberately to guide children towards specific learning outcomes.

Our educators and teachers seize many intentional teaching moments throughout the day, ranging from brief interactions to extended learning projects spanning weeks. These moments can occur spontaneously or be carefully planned. Documented intentional teaching plans, available in your child's reflection folder, detail the origins of these learning experiences, the desired learning outcomes, and the role of the educator in facilitating them.

At DSCC, our commitment to intentional teaching and play-based learning ensures a rich, supportive, and engaging educational environment for every child.

The role of Anti Biased Education in Early Childhood

At DSCC, we are committed to fostering an anti-bias approach in all our activities. This commitment extends not only to the care and education of children but also to our purchasing practices and employment processes.

Our Approach to Anti-Bias Education

Anti-bias education at DSCC is designed to enhance understanding and appreciation of differences within our community. It teaches children to challenge biases, stereotypes, and all forms of discrimination. In our early childhood settings, this translates to a play-based learning curriculum that reflects and celebrates diverse experiences and perspectives. Our teaching practices are crafted to advance the learning of all children in a respectful and inclusive manner. The core principle of anti-bias education is the understanding that bias is learned, beginning when children first receive messages about their own identity and the identities of others.

These early messages can significantly shape a person's self-image and worldview, as well as their perceptions of others.

Our Practices

Our training, planning, and reporting processes are deeply rooted in anti-bias principles. To ensure we don't inadvertently favour one cultural practice over another, we avoid singling out specific cultural practices, religions, or holidays. Therefore, we do celebrate all festivals such as Easter, Eid, Diwali, Ramadan, or any other specific cultural events. Our goal is to create an inclusive environment where all children's identities are respected and celebrated.

Our Role

DSCC is committed to:

- the safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks
 - ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the Centre is protected, while also promoting their learning and development
- ensuring that educators and staff act in the best interests of the children, and take all reasonable steps to ensure the children's safety and wellbeing at all times
- developing and maintaining a culture in which children, as well as our staff and volunteers, feel valued, respected and cared for
- encouraging active participation from parents/guardians and families and ensuring that best practice is based on a partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development
 - promoting children's development and wellbeing
 - promoting diversity and tolerance and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds
 - the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability
 - facilitating robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers
 - regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks
 - maintaining specific policies, procedures and training that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Our Environment

Diversity is reflected in the resources we use, the songs we sing, the images we display, the games we play, and the people who work here. If children wish to explore concepts related to their own culture, we provide everything necessary to support this exploration. For instance, children might draw Easter eggs in April or Santas at the end of the year, sparking discussions about their own and others' celebrations. We always support child-led expressions that stem from their developing sense of identity within their family and community.



Governance & Management of DSCC

Management Committee

At Dawson Street Child Care Co-op Ltd (DSCC), our Management Committee is comprised of parents. Committee members are elected by fellow parents during our Annual General Meeting (AGM). You can find photos of the committee members, along with their positions and email addresses, displayed in the centre's foyer.

The Management Committee plays a crucial role managing legal governance, planning, and reporting and accountability requirements across the Co-op. They are responsible for approving the annual budget, authorising expenditures beyond the budget, and setting the annual fees. Director makes key decisions regarding Operational, finances, service delivery, strategy, risk management, broad policy issues, and responsible for staffing levels and wages and human resource.

The Management Committee meets monthly, with the Director's also in attendance. We encourage all families to participate in the AGM and the General Meeting held bi-annually. Your involvement is vital to the success and governance of our co-operative.

Management of DSCC

DSCC is managed by Director and Assistant Director who have been appointed to their roles by the Management Committee – they also hold the role of Nominated Supervisors. The Director and Assistant report to the Management Committee on the organisation's financial position and strategic progress.

See the link below for more information about Nominated Supervisors from the ACECQA webpage [here](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/22801).

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/22801>

Centre Accreditation

All child care centres in Australia need to be accredited through ACECQA.

Our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is updated and submitted to ACECQA yearly – information about accreditation and the QIP are kept on the resource shelf in the foyer. We are committed to high standards of education and care at our centre and in 2024 DSCC was rated Meeting by ACECQA, and this rating remains in place at the time of writing this manual.

For more information on the Assessment and Rating Process, please access:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/assessment/assessment-and-rating-process>

Structure

DSCC is licensed for 62 places and consists of four groups: Gumnut, Wattle, Mallee and Lilly Pilly (Mallee and Lilly Pilly are Kinder age group). Please note that the number of children in the kindergarten room varies each year.

These ages are for the start of the year and children will remain with these groups until the following year.

DSCC provides a 3YO & 4YO funded Kindergarten program.

The 4YO kinder children in the Lilly Pilly room, children who turn 4 years of age before April 30th may be eligible, the centres kindergarten teacher will consult with you as to your child's developmental level in order to determine when would be the best year for them to enter this program.

We also run a 3-year-old Kindergarten funded program for children who have turned 3 before the 30th of April and they will be in the Mallee 3YO room.

The kindergarten program runs in conjunction with the long day care. We employ a qualified Kindergarten teacher to co-ordinate this program. Please see the Director for more details and accessibility.

DSCC is registered with the Australian children's education and care quality authority. The centre is continually aiming to improve its practices and every 3 years is required to go through a validation of their accreditation. Throughout the year parents are encouraged to participate in many ways, reviewing policies and providing feedback through surveys and meetings.



Co-operative membership

All families are required to become members of the Co-operative. Each family will hold one share only. Shares are \$1.00.

Policies and Procedures

The Management Committee and Management team at DSCC work together to develop, approve, and implement a range of policies and procedures.

You can find all our policies on our website at [here](https://www.dawsonstreetcc.org.au/policies/):
<https://www.dawsonstreetcc.org.au/policies/>

If you prefer a hard copy, they are available in the black-labeled folder in the centre's foyer. Should you need any of the policies translated, please see the Director's.

These policies ensure that we adhere to current legislation and accreditation requirements, provide high-quality educational experiences, and maintain a happy and safe environment for children, staff, and our community. It's important for you to become familiar with our centre's policies and procedures.

Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
Administration of Medication and First Aid Policy
Anaphylaxis Policy
Asthma Policy
Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
Code of Conduct Policy - Employees
Code of Conduct Policy - Parents Guardians and
Volunteers
Complaints and Grievances Policy
COVID-19 Policy
COVID-19 Vaccination Policy
Curriculum Development Policy
Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy
Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
Determining the responsible person
Diabetes Policy
Disciplinary Policy
Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy
Enrolment and Orientation Policy
Environmental Sustainability Policy
Epilepsy Policy

Excursions and Service Events Policy
Extreme Weather Policy
Fees and Fundraising Policy
Food Safety and Hygiene Policy
Fraud, Theft and Corruption Policy
Governance and Management of the Service Policy
Illness, Infectious Disease and Emergency Care
Inclusion and Equity Policy
Interactions with Children Policy
IT Use Policy
Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy
Occupational Health Safety Policy
Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Relaxation and Sleep Policy
Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments
Staff Recruitment and Entitlements Policy
Staffing Policy
Sun Protection Policy
Supervision of Children Policy
Tobacco, E-Cigarettes, Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy
Water Safety Policy
Workplace Behaviours Policy

DSCC Budget

At DSCC, we operate as a service for families, not for profit. This means that any surplus generated beyond our operating costs is reinvested back into enhancing our centre.

For more insights into not-for-profit organisations, you can visit the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission webpage.

The Management Committee takes seriously its responsibility to maintain the centre's financial stability.

Every year, we develop a budget that considers factors such as inflation, cost of living adjustments, wage increases, and upcoming expenses. This budget is presented by the Treasurer.

Parents and carers are notified of any fee adjustments for the upcoming year after the AGM.

Changes to fees outside of this annual review may occur only if deemed necessary by the Management Committee, responding to evolving circumstances.

We are committed to transparency and ensuring that our financial decisions are in the best interest of our DSCC community.

Hours/Dates of Operation

Hours of Operation

At DSCC, we operate Monday to Friday from 7:00 am to 5:50 pm, offering our services approximately 50 weeks a year.

Additionally, the centre observes all recognised Public Holidays, and fees are applicable for these days, except during the year-end closure mentioned below.

End-of-Year Closure

The Centre closes over the end of the year, into the new year for a short time. The last day of operation and the opening dates each year varies and will be announced in November of each preceding year.

This allows us time to rest and rejuvenate, provides time to do minor maintenance on the building, and to complete major cleaning tasks.

DSCC strive to provide ample notice and transparency regarding our operating schedule and fee policies to best serve our families at DSCC.

Staff Professional Development Day

The centre will close for two days each year for Educator Professional Development Days. Parents are notified of these dates well in advance through newsletters, emails and notices posted on the front door. Fees are not charged for these two professional development days.

Student Placements

Throughout the year, Team Leaders take responsibility for supervising students on Early Childhood fieldwork placements from various institutions across Melbourne. Our staff have an excellent reputation for providing high levels of support to students, which means positive experiences for staff, students, and children. If there is a student on placement in your child's room, you will see an identification poster with a photograph on the door to the room the student is working in.





Program planning

Program Overview

At DSCC, our program is thoughtfully designed to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can learn, grow, and flourish. We are committed to fostering holistic development, recognising that each child is a unique individual with their own strengths and interests. Our play-based curriculum embraces the power of learning through exploration and hands-on experiences, empowering children to become confident and curious learners.

Our daily schedule balances structured activities with ample time for free play, promoting socialisation, creativity, and problem-solving skills. We integrate age-appropriate learning opportunities in language development, math, science, arts, and more to ensure a well-rounded educational experience. Our dedicated team of educators strives to cultivate an inclusive and respectful atmosphere, encouraging positive social interactions and emotional intelligence.

We prioritise individualised attention and personalised guidance for each child. We take the time to understand the unique needs and interests of every child, tailoring our approach to support their growth and development. Our program is founded on the belief that early childhood is a critical time for learning and exploration, and we are dedicated to providing a safe, caring, and inspiring space for each child to thrive.



Types of Programs

At the start of each year, our staff focus on key priorities

- Establishing a consistent routine for activities like introducing and familiarising mealtimes, nap times, and transitions.
- Helping children feel comfortable and confident in their new environment by fostering familiarity. Supporting Children with adjusting new environment

During this period, our staff also prioritise building strong relationships with each child. As we move beyond this initial phase, our planning becomes more targeted and specific. Our program features a diverse range of play experiences to enrich children's learning:

- Active and quiet activities
- Indoor and outdoor play
- Structured and unstructured play
- Clean and messy play
- Wet and dry activities
- Opportunities for individual and group participation

These experiences encompass language and literature, music and movement, art, dramatic play, science, mathematics, sensory exploration, and physical activities. Many of these activities are open-ended, encouraging children to explore their own ideas and creativity. Our focus is on the process of learning through hands-on experience, rather than on achieving a specific end product.

At DSCC, we are dedicated to providing a nurturing environment where children can learn, grow, and explore through a variety of engaging and developmentally appropriate activities.

Sports and Yoga

Dawson Street offers an in-house sports and yoga program run by our qualified educators. Our Indigenous games integrate cultural heritage, physical activity, and teamwork into our sessions, incorporating reflective learning through exciting games and guided exercises. All educators actively participate, role modeling, co-teaching, and bonding with children as they learn new skills and develop their physical and communication abilities through sports and yoga.



Incursions

Each term, we host different incursions in the room that cover topics such as Science, Indigenous cultures, and visits from various animals and other themes based on children's interests. . These experiences provide children with diverse perspectives. We also organise visits from local professionals, such as dentists and police officers, to help children learn more about their community. Each year, the specific visitors may vary, providing fresh perspectives and experiences for the children.

Routine excursions

All rooms participate in regular outings to community places like the library, supermarket, Gilpin and Temple Parks. During orientation, all families will receive a Routine Outing Permission Form to sign. We encourage family members who assist on outings or excursion to obtain a Working with Children Check (WWCC).

Italian lessons

Dawson St. has been selected to run an Italian language program through play based structured activities for kindergarten age children. The ITALIAN LANGUAGE PILOT PROGRAM called - "IL GIROTONDO" is FULLY FUNDED by CO.AS.IT and will include qualified early years Italian teachers to facilitate classes and provision of all resources required. This program introduces children to the language and culture, fostering cognitive development and cultural awareness at no cost to families.

Music and movement

Dawson St. offer a weekly music and movement sessions led by professional external music and dance instructors. Each term, these sessions will be scheduled on different days to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate equally throughout the year.

Please note that there is a **small fee** associated with these sessions, which is payable on a per-term basis. We believe these classes provide a wonderful way for children to explore their creativity and develop important skills in a fun and engaging environment.

Observations

At DSCC, all our rooms are carefully programmed by our dedicated teachers and educators, aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework. Your feedback and input are invaluable to us, so please feel free to discuss the program with any educator at your convenience. At DSCC, we are committed to providing a comprehensive and engaging learning environment that celebrates diversity and supports every child's growth and development.

Each child is individually observed and planned for, and these observations are accessible to you anytime through Xplor/Playground. An invitation to join Xplor/Playground will be sent to one parent initially, with the ability to invite other family members through your account. We recommend having both parents to have Xplor/Playground to facilitate viewing community posts, receiving notifications, managing your child's educational learning account, and adding stories.

Xplor/Playground stories serve as documentation of children's learning experiences, aiding educators in curriculum planning and assessment. Families can also contribute stories, comment, and communicate with educators through the platform. Stories are added weekly during educators' allocated planning time, though delays may occur as educators prioritise engaging directly with children. For urgent matters, please communicate via email with our office.

Educators will keep families informed about the program and their child's progress throughout the year. A parent-teacher meeting is encouraged midway through the year, which can be arranged via Zoom or in person.

To maintain strong communication, we will:

- Be available at the end of the day for discussions about your child
- Use the Playground app for regular observations and monthly updates
- Schedule specific meetings as needed, especially for children transitioning to school next year
- Invite parents and caregivers to participate in the program

Parent Participation

DSCC is a community-managed co-operative. Parent participation is essential not only for maintaining a community atmosphere but also for helping to reduce centre costs. Without the work involved in activities such as Working Bees three times a year and individual projects, we would need to pay for these services, which would impact the environment provided for the children.

At enrollment, each family pays a \$150 participation levy. This levy rolls over each year and is refunded when a child leaves DSCC, provided the family has contributed 12 hours towards the centre within the calendar year. DSCC is a welcoming place for families, and we encourage you to bring extended family members to visit and see how the program operates. Family members can support the program in various ways, such as:

- reading to children
- teaching a song
- cooking or gardening
- bringing in pets
- talking about work, family, the environment or other topical issues
- sharing another language
- playing a musical instrument
- donating toys, loose parts, stationery, etc.
- wearing a national costume or dressing up

Our staff is eager to incorporate these positive learning opportunities from our community into the children's daily activities. If you have any ideas on how your family can contribute to our program, please speak with our staff.

Any family involvement in these activities will count towards your parent participation requirement.

Graduation

At the end of each year, we host a graduation ceremony for our 4-year-old kindergarten children to celebrate the conclusion of their early childcare experience. We take joy in recognising their growth and accomplishments and eagerly support them as they embark on their next educational journey.



Kinder Information

Benefits of Dawson Street Kinder

1) Quality Education

Dawson Street 3-year old and 4-year old kindergarten programs:

- are led by tertiary qualified Kindergarten Teachers with Bachelor/Or Master of Early Childhood Education
- Guide by the Early Years Learning Framework to direct learning outcomes, which is the curriculum for the early years of learning.
- offer play-based learning programs following ACECQA guidelines and the National Curriculum;
- Our program are developed based on your child's interests, strengths, and learning needs.

Close relationships

At Dawson Street children form friendships with other children as they explore and grow together. They also form strong bonds with Dawson Street educators who take great care to support their developing minds and look after their needs. These wonderful relationships are strengthened and continued through Dawson Street kinder. Socialisation and supportive friends are crucial to forming important social skills such as language and cognitive capabilities. Social and Emotional Development is the key factor for school readiness. The familiarity of educators they know, and trust, friends, surroundings, and routine create a relaxed space focused on your child's learning and development.

Family familiarity

Dawson Street kinder will give your family the option to have siblings attend the same centre. This can give a great sense of comfort and assurance to your children, knowing their siblings are close by.

Comparing Dawson Street Kinder & Sessional Kinder

Dawson Street Kinder

- Long opening hours 7am-6pm
- Open 49-50 weeks including school holidays (except Christmas closure)
- More choice of days – up to 5 days available
- Delicious homemade food cooked by our inhouse Chef Sema provided all day
- Casual days available

Sessional kinder

- Similar to school hours ~8:30am – 3:30pm
- Set drop off and pick up times
- Closed during school holidays including Christmas
- Less flexibility – set 2-3 days per week only
- Meals not provided – parents supply all food
- Casual days not available



3-year old Kinder- Mallee Program

At Dawson St, we believe access to two years of a full-time kindergarten program in the years before school is better than one which is why we provide a 3 -year-old kindergarten program 4 days a week. The 3-year-old Mallee Room Program reflects our philosophy that children learn through play. It is the primary process through which children learn about themselves, their peers, and the world around them. The environment that we provide will promote a mix of self-directed play opportunities as well as teacher led experiences and projects.

Nature Explorer

The children will be encouraged to choose their own experiences and be active participants in their own learning. As part of the Mallee program your child will participate in 'Nature Explorer' which will run one morning a week outside the Centre.

4-year old Kinder- Lilly Pilly Program

At Dawson St, we believe access to a full-time Kindergarten Program in the years before school provides children with the best opportunities to thrive.

- Our Bachelor/Masters Qualified Teachers and passionate Educators collaborate with families to develop learning goals that reflect their interests, abilities, and well-being.
- Our indoor curriculum compliments our outdoor curriculum.
- 4-year-old Kindergarten Program is designed and delivered to support children's cognitive and social development before their transition to Primary School.

To access this program, children need to have turned four before 30 April in the relevant year; however recent studies have shown that is it best for the children to be 5 before starting school so this is what we recommend. Our kindergarten teachers will liaise with you about school readiness and how your child is progressing to meet this milestone.

Tree Kinder

As part of our kindergarten program at Dawson Street we offer a program called 'Tree Kinder'. "Tree Kinder is based around the concept of Bush Kinder which comes from the Danish forest school movement in Europe which has shown benefits in connection with nature, resilience, risk taking, using imagination and creating opportunity".

During Tree Kinder sessions, children will be given the chance to engage in unstructured, free play. This gives children the opportunity to explore the environment at their own pace and uncover the many wonders of being in the outdoors. Children will be guided by intentional teaching strategies during their time at Tree Kinder, this includes the educators intentionally discussing or demonstrating concepts and ideas with the children. The children will also be encouraged to investigate, discover, explore and hypothesize on their own to encourage self led learning and investigation.



Enrolment, Bookings, Fee & Payments

Fees

The centre's daily fees are set by the Co-operative during either the General or Annual General Meeting. Parents will be notified of any fee increases with a minimum of four weeks' notice. Fees typically rise annually on July 1st, usually due to wage increases for our educators.

The centre is registered to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS). All parents are eligible to apply through Centrelink/Family Assistance Office.

Fee statements are issued fortnightly and the statement cover two weeks in advance. All accounts must be paid two weeks in advance. Payments can be made via direct deposit, with details provided in your enrolment pack.

All outstanding fees must be settled in full by December 20th, before the Centre closes, to secure your child's place for the coming year. Fees cannot be carried over into the Centre's new financial year. Unpaid fees at the end of the year may result in the withdrawal of care and the risk of losing your child's place permanently.

Permanent bookings commence on the first operational day of January each year, and fees will be charged regardless of absences.

If you wish to temporarily or permanently change your booking, please arrange this with the office staff. We strive to offer flexibility to our families. A four-week notice is required for cease of care and the same notice period applies for families requesting to reduce care (dropping days), unless a family on our internal waiting list can take up the day(s).

If families are away for a 4-weeks stretch block, they are entitled for a 25% discount on their daily fees. This will need to be email and communicated to the office.

Administration Payments: A one-time administration fee of \$100 is required from all new families upon enrolment.

Co-operative Membership: A \$1.00 share per family is required.

Parent Participation: A \$150 fee is applicable (see the Parent Participation section for details).

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is how the Government assists families in paying for the cost of child care. The CCS is calculated according to:

- Your family's income
- The hourly rate cap on the type of approved childcare you use
- Your child's age
- The hours of approved activity you and your partner participate in.

You can estimate how much Child Care Subsidy you may receive on the Services Australia website (see links below)

For children who live in separate households, each parent can apply for their own CCS based on their income and activity conditions. Parents need to agree on a pattern of bookings they will be individually responsible for. If you wish to do this, please talk to us.

The CCS is paid directly to DSCC. We will then reduce your fees — you just pay the difference between the service charges and the amount paid by the subsidy – this is called the GAP fee.

You must claim your CCS through Services Australia – DSCC cannot complete this process on your behalf. To find out more about making a CSS claim, see the links below:

Child Care Subsidy: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy>

How to claim the Child Care Subsidy: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-to-claim-child-care-subsidy?context=41186#dc-53804-s-0-1-3-5-8-10-17-21>

Confirming Your Enrolment with Services Australia

Once you have enrolled at DSCC and submitted your CCS claim, you will need to confirm your enrolment with Services Australia – you can find the webpage to do this on the Services Australia website or by following the link below:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/centrelink-online-account-help-confirm-your-childs-enrolmentdetails-for-child-care-subsidy>

Immunisation History Statement

Under the No Jab No Play legislation, you must provide an Immunisation History Statement to confirm your child's immunisations are up to date for their age. This is required to finalise your child's enrollment and must be submitted before they start at our service.

You can obtain the statement through your Medicare online account via MyGov, the Express Plus Medicare mobile app, or by visiting your local medical service centre. Alternatively, you can call the AIR enquiries line at 1800 653 809 to request a mailed statement, which may take up to 14 days. Some GPs or immunisation nurses may also be able to print the statement directly from the AIR. If you have difficulties accessing the documentation, please contact us for assistance.

For detailed instructions on obtaining your Immunisation History Statement, visit the Services Australia website: [How to get an immunisation history statement - Australian Immunisation Register](#).

To continue receiving the Child Care Subsidy, ensure your child's immunisations remain current throughout their early years.

Enrolment

You will receive an enrolment pack if you have been offered a place. This will include the following:

- Enrolment form: These must be completed by the parent/online, before your child commences child care at DSCC.
- Acceptance of Place
- Confirmation letter
- Payments required upon enrolment (2 weeks in advance) will be in credit once your subsidy starts coming in)

Upon enrolment, parents are required to review and sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the parent handbook. This ensures that parents are familiar with our policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Collecting and maintaining correct information

For DSCC to collect the information required to enrol your child, families must complete our enrolment form. The information we have on file must be complete, accurate, and current - parents/carers need to ensure the management team is notified of any changes to these details throughout the time your child uses the service.

Occasionally, information may be supplied to the Centre by a third party, such as Centrelink or the Department of Education and Training. However, only information necessary for the Centre's operations and the well-being of the children enrolled is collected.

Privacy and your families information

At DSCC, we take the privacy of your family's information seriously. We collect, store, and protect personal and sensitive information about children and their parents/carers during the enrolment process. Our practices are governed by the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, and we have developed a Privacy and Access Statement outlining the Centre's responsibilities and families' rights under this Act. All Board of Management members, staff, and students at DSCC adhere to both the Act and our Privacy Statement.

The details provided by parents/carers on enrolment forms serve four main purposes:

- To fulfil statutory legal requirements as stipulated by the Children's Services Regulations and other relevant laws governing the Centre's operations.
- To create a personal profile for each child and their family.
- To ensure our Duty of Care obligations are met.
- To accurately record information related to each family's entitlements under the Child Care Subsidy Scheme (CCSS).

At DSCC, safeguarding your privacy and maintaining confidentiality are fundamental to how we operate, ensuring a secure environment for all families and staff.

Disclosure of Information

Where necessary:

- Personal and sensitive information may be disclosed to staff to ensure the highest quality care and education for the child/ren
- Personal and sensitive information may be disclosed to relevant Government and regulatory authorities as required by authorised law
- Students on workplace training placements may need to gather information about a child for their assessments. This information can only be collected if the children and their information remain unidentifiable.

Bookings

If you secure a place for your child at DSCC, we will notify you of the days of your booking based on your preferences outlined in your enrolment form and the Centre's availability. DSCC operates from 7 am to 5.50pm on weekdays, excluding public holidays, PD Day and the end-of-year closure period. Permanent bookings continue until the end of the year. Your child's booking for specific days will recur weekly unless you cancel the enrolment.

Absences

Please notify the centre by email before 9 a.m. on the day your child will be absent. We also appreciate advance notice for planned holidays. We apply 25% discount of your fee if you are away for 4 weeks stretch block and email us the dates in advance for us to be able to offer the spot to other families that needs the spot while you are away.

Each child is allowed up to 42 absences per financial year, including public holidays. Once this limit is reached, the family will not receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for any additional absences. For more information, please contact Centrelink.

Services Australia generally do not pay CCS for any absences before your child physically attends or after the last day your child physically attends care. You'll need to pay full fees for these days. For further information, see the Services Australia page on Child Care Absences: Long Day Care (LDC) If you secure a place for your child at DSCC, we will notify you of the days of your booking based on your preferences outlined in your enrolment form and the Centre's availability.

Late pick-ups

The centre closes at 6:00 PM. All children must be picked up by 5:50 PM. A late fee applies for any children picked up after 6:00 PM. The fee is \$10 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, for the first offence. Charges will increase for subsequent offences.

Notification of Cessation of Attendance

If you wish to cease or reduce your child's days at the centre, 4 weeks' notice must emailed to the Director or Assistant Director.

Children Moving Rooms

We aim for children to transition to new rooms with a group of their peers and a familiar educator, typically at the start of the year. Room changes during the year depend not only on the child's age and development but also on available vacancies and the child's readiness. These decisions will be discussed with parents in advance to prepare a smooth transition process for their child.

Re-enrolment

All parents with children currently enrolled in the centre will be notified about re-enrolment for the following year at the start of October or November. More information about the process will be provided at that time.

Management of the Waitlist

Determining Vacancies and Offering Priority

To determine vacancies for each new year, we prioritise addressing the needs of current and returning families. Once these needs are fulfilled, we assess the available vacancies that can be offered to new families on our external waiting list. At DSCC, we highly value our relationships with families.

Guaranteed Booking Patterns and Priority of Offerings

We ensure that current families enrolled in long day care will retain their permanent booking pattern into the following year.

Requests for changes in booked days or transitions can be applied if there is availability.

DSCC adheres strictly to these guidelines to ensure fair and equitable access to our services.

Waitlist and Enrolment Process

Upon enrolment, parents are required to review and sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the parent handbook. This ensures that parents are familiar with our policies, procedures, and guidelines.





What Happens at the Centre?



Code of Conduct

All adults (staff, families, and visitors) entering the Centre are expected to adhere to the DSCC Code of Conduct while in any part of the Centre environment. By modeling this behaviour, all adults actively encourage children to behave similarly.

Orientation and Preparing Your Child to Start Day-Care

Having a baby sleep in a carrier on your body provides close contact and is a wonderful way for children to connect with their parents/carers. However, this is not feasible for Educators at the Centre due to physical strain and safety concerns in group settings. To help younger children prepare for childcare, it is beneficial to familiarise them with sleeping in a cot during the day whenever possible. This practice helps them transition into the childcare environment more smoothly and ensures they get the rest they need while with us.

Orientation Sessions

We encourage all families to participate in orientation before starting booked care. We offer two free 1-hour sessions. Please contact the centre to schedule these.

During orientation, educators will gather specific information about your child, including their interests and routines. This time also allows you to get to know the educators who will be caring for your child. Our educators strive to maintain a routine that is as consistent as possible between home and the centre. We ask parents to stay with their child for a short period to help them feel comfortable and engaged in the program. Additionally, educators will encourage you to spend some time away (in the foyer) from your child to assist with their adjustment to the new environment and caregivers. However, you are welcome to visit and participate in the program at any time.

What to bring

Items to Bring When Your Child Starts:

- A small bag: Your child will need a bag for their belongings. Each child will have a locker to store their bag and personal items.
- A change of clothes: Please pack a change of clothes (more if your child is toilet training). Children will engage with various materials like water, sand, dirt, clay, and paint, so their clothes may get stained. We recommend sending them in old clothes. A change of clothes is required for all children, regardless of age.
- Comforters: If your child has a favourite blanket, dummy, or other comfort items, feel free to bring them. We encourage all other toys to stay at home.
- Hat: All children need a hat for outdoor play during SunSmart times. Please provide a clearly named broad-brimmed or Legionnaire-style hat for your child each day they attend. We also ask that you apply sunscreen to your child upon arrival in the morning.
- Coat: During colder months, please provide a warm coat for your child.
- Plastic or wet bag: For any wet or soiled clothing.
- Drink bottle: Please send a water bottle with your child each day, to be brought home at the end of the day.

All items must be clearly labelled with your child's name. Labelling clothes reduces the amount of clothes in lost property (which is located in each room). The educators are not responsible for lost items of clothing.

What to wear

Please dress your child in sensible, comfortable clothes and shoes that allow them to move freely and get dirty. Children will go outside year-round, so it's essential they have appropriate protection from the elements, such as hats and coats. We recommend coming prepared for all seasons by packing a variety of clothing. Since all children are encouraged to participate in messy or wet play experiences, please ensure they are dressed appropriately for these activities.

Nappies/ Toilet Training

DSCC uses disposable nappies, which are provided by the centre. If you prefer your child to use their own disposable or cloth nappies, please provide them and inform the educators in the room.

Additionally, please let the educators know when your child begins toilet training so we can establish a consistent routine between home and the center. Educators have valuable information on this topic to support you.

Arriving at the centre

To access our Centre, please enter the PIN code at the front door. This code will be provided to you upon enrollment. Kindly keep this code confidential. For everyone's safety, please do not allow anyone to enter if you are not familiar with them.

Signing in/out of Kiosk

All families are required to sign their child/children in and out each day using the Xplor app, as well as confirm any missed sign-ins/outs or absences. The sign-in/out iPads are located at the front entrance in the foyer. Educators are available to assist you with using the iPads, and if you have any concerns, please visit the office for support.

Only individuals listed on your child's enrolment form are authorised to pick up your child from the centre. Each nominated person will have their own personal PIN for the Xplor app. If someone else is picking up your child, you must email the office with their details. The nominated person will be required to show photo identification when collecting the child.

No Child Can Be Left Unsupervised at the Centre

Childcare regulations mean that no child can be left unsupervised in the Centre environment – this includes children not attending the Centre, i.e. siblings, friends, and other children you may be caring for. There are couches in the hallway for waiting children or visitors. If your older child is waiting in the hallway or you wish to leave a smaller baby while settling your child into or collecting them from their room, please ask the office staff to supervise the waiting children.

Your child's First Day

We understand that your child's first day at DSCC comes with many emotions. DSCC management and Educators will guide you through the process of dropping off and picking up your child. Remember, confidence is key. Although you may not feel confident yet, your child will pick up on your emotions, so try to stay happy and confident in their presence. Starting with shorter days and gradually increasing to longer sessions can benefit both you and your child.

Avoid dropping off your child and then returning to the room to check on them, as this can make them anxious. If you want to know how your child has settled, feel free to call us, and we will check for you. We are happy to accommodate this request as many times as necessary.

Although the first few days, weeks, and sometimes months may be emotionally challenging, our dedicated and passionate educators will work closely to build trusting relationships with both the children and your family. There may be tears, but these will quickly subside as children become more comfortable. Additionally, we have an open-door policy, meaning you can call, email, or speak to us at any time during the day.

Communication is vital. Children will feel more secure when they see parents/carers and educators building trusting relationships. Some strategies to guide this process and help parents/carers, children, and Educators include:

- Make a list of things you want Educators to know –especially the home routine.
- Organise additional orientation sessions in consultation with Educators if needed.
- Feel free to gradually introduce your child to the Centre if necessary. Educators will suggest the optimal time to start leaving your child, typically during the second orientation session. We recommend spending some quality time with your child beforehand, then gradually leaving for short periods (two to three hours), ideally during the most engaging part of the day when your child is most energetic, usually in the mornings. Over time, you can extend this period to include lunch and naptime routines.
- Establish a goodbye routine. You should always say goodbye and tell your child you are leaving and that you will return to get them later in the day – a quick 'Bye, mummy/daddy is going.' is often enough. A quick goodbye helps support your child's emotional well-being.
- Be consistent and predictable. Consistency and predictability are very reassuring for children. We encourage parents/carers to keep to the same, predictable routine with the same parent/carer dropping off and collecting their child. We advise parents/carers not to surprise their children by having someone different collect them – it may create unnecessary insecurity. Please inform the Centre before someone different collects a child. Written consent must be provided for anyone other than the parents/carers picking up a child.

During the Day

What's Provided For Your Child at the Centre:

- Nutritious meals and snacks, freshly prepared by our cook each day
- Sunscreen: SPF 50+
- Disposable nappies
- All linen and bedding

Rest Times and Safe Sleeping

All children are encouraged to rest after lunch each day, and infants' rest time will vary according to their needs. While sleeping is not mandatory, quiet rest can still be beneficial for children (e.g., sitting quietly on a mat or cushion with a book, etc.).

Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)

Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) encompasses all cases of sudden and unexpected death in infancy, including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and fatal sleeping accidents. Safe sleeping recommendations aim to mitigate known risks associated with SUDI.

Parents/carers can discuss with Educators the level of rest/sleep they prefer their child to have throughout the day, and staff will endeavour to honour these preferences. However, occasionally, despite our best efforts, a child may not fall asleep.

We encourage you to communicate your child's sleeping arrangements with Educators, especially if their home sleep position differs from our practices at DSCC. If your baby/toddler sleeps on their stomach at home, please inform the staff. Staff adhere to the Red Nose Safe Sleeping in Child Care Kit and DSCC's Safe Sleeping Policy and Procedures.

For specific information regarding your child, please speak to the staff in the room. Additionally, our Safe Sleeping Policy is available on our website. Safe sleeping guidelines are also displayed in the Gumnut room rest area.

Toys from home

Children may require comfort toys from home to help them sleep or relax, and we encourage families to bring these items to childcare. However, other toys brought to DSCC can pose issues.

We cannot take responsibility for keeping track of or caring for toys brought from home, and children can be upset if their toys are broken or lost. Therefore, we request that toys remain at home. Comfort toys, security blankets, dummies, and similar items are exceptions to this rule. Children should never be denied these essential comfort items, as they can provide a sense of calm and security by offering familiar sensations.

Some items, such as comforters, may pose risks to children in cots. Please discuss any items that children sleep with our staff. An authorisation form must be signed by parents for children who use comfort items during sleep or rest time.

Nutrition and Food at DSCC

Sharing food is an important part of our day. We provide healthy, fresh, seasonal meals that the children enjoy. Our menu is developed in consultation with a qualified nutritionist and takes the children's preferences into account. It reflects our commitment to cultural diversity by incorporating local, ethical, and wholesome ingredients.

Meals are included in the daily fee and are prepared and served on-site by our centre cook. You can find the menu details on the Menu Board outside the kitchen.

Please remember that children should not bring food or drinks from home, and ensure that no food is left in your child's bag.

The meals provided by the centre include: Breakfast, Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Tea, Late Afternoon Snack.

All meals are planned to offer a balanced and nutritious menu tailored to the developmental needs of each child, adhering to current food safety regulations. We welcome parent suggestions and encourage feedback.

We cater to dietary requirements, food preferences, and allergies. Please record these requirements on the enrolment form and discuss any specific needs with our staff and cook. Children have access to drinking water at all times, and milk is provided with breakfast, morning tea, and afternoon tea (both cow's milk and soy milk are available).

Parents are asked to provide all bottles of breast milk or formula for their child, if needed. Please ensure that bottles, lids, and cups are clearly labeled with your child's name and transported in an insulated bag. Upon arrival, please place breast milk in the freezer located in the foyer and inform the educators in the Gumnut Room.

Birthdays

Birthday celebrations are very popular in most childcare centres, and ours is no exception. Due to the high number of children with potentially life-threatening allergies, we do not allow any food to be brought into the Centre. However, we are happy for you to bring an ice-cream cake for your child to celebrate with their room. Please also bring the receipt as proof of purchase.

We ask parents/carers to keep lollies, sweet treats, and other party items, including hats, balloons, and especially whistles, for their home parties and not bring them to the Centre. This avoids conflict and minimises the risk to children with allergies. This policy also aligns with our Nutrition Policy, which encourages children to experience healthy eating and understand the benefits of making good food choices.

Outdoor Play

The daily routine at DSCC includes outdoor play, even in winter. However, if your child is unwell and you prefer they stay indoors temporarily, please discuss this with your child's educators. Keep in mind that it can be challenging to keep a child inside for an extended period. If a child is too unwell to go outside during winter, we consider them not well enough to attend the Centre.

During summer and winter, staff and management may occasionally limit outdoor playtime. This will be a temporary measure in response to dangerous UV levels, extreme temperatures, damp winter air, asthma storms, or fog.

Safe Water Play

As part of our commitment to sustainability, we recognise the importance of water-based play experiences for children. We offer these experiences regularly and in various forms. Given that a child can drown in as little as 5 cm of water, we take water safety seriously and implement measures to ensure water play is safe for children and reduces the risk of injury to staff.

Regular Outings, Incursions, and Excursions

DSCC engages children in regular outings, excursions, and incursions, organised by Team Leaders and teachers in consultation with management. Outings to local venues like the Library or Woolworths and Temple Park, which are within easy walking distance, incorporate experiences that stimulate and encourage children's curiosity, creativity, and connection to their local community.

Our *Tree Kinder Program* runs on Lilly Pilly room and the *Nature Program* in the Mallee Room. The children are taken to Gilpin Park where they are free to explore in nature.

No child will be taken on an outing, excursion, or outside the Centre without the parent/carer's written authorisation and consent. We will obtain your consent before taking children outside the Centre.

Staff conduct risk assessments and take first aid kits, medications/ medical plans, and contact details for children on all outings. Please ensure contact details are up-to-date so that we have all the correct information and resources on outings.

Being Sun Smart in the Outdoors

In line with our Sun Smart Policy, all children must be dressed in a way that protects them from the elements, particularly the sun. Hats, dresses and t-shirts with sleeves, and sunglasses are recommended for summer and coats are essential for winter. Spare sets of clothes in your child's bag is necessary. Please note that well-fitted gumboots can be useful for wet and messy play, but oversized gumboots can pose a tripping hazard and running in them can lead to falls. We recommend properly fitted, all-weather shoes as a safer alternative. Please refer to the Centre's Sun Protection Policy for more information.

Leaving the centre

Authority to Collect Your Child

As noted previously, Federal and State Governments require that your child is signed in and out each day. On your child's enrolment form, you will be required to nominate individuals who are authorised to sign out and collect your child from the Centre.

Children will not be allowed to leave with an unauthorised person unless prior permission has been given by parents/carers. If anyone other than those specified on the enrolment form is to collect your child, we will require your written permission.

If someone authorised to collect your child arrives under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or attempts to drive while displaying impaired driving skills, staff will request another person to collect your child. Relevant authorities may be called to assist. The Centre reserves the right to accept or refuse authorisations and will seek further clarification from parents/carers if there are concerns about the identity or appropriateness of the person collecting the child.

Parents/carers listed on your child's enrolment form have legal access to your child unless we are provided with a copy of relevant court orders stating otherwise. Please contact us immediately if court orders are put in place.

The operational hours of the organisation are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays. Staff are rostered on duty until 6:00 pm to allow for end-of-day tasks and to be available for parents who may be unexpectedly delayed. Parents are required to have their children collected no later than 5:50 pm. The Centre closes at 6:00 pm. If a child is still at the Centre at 6:15 pm, and the child's family have not contacted the Centre, the staff have a set procedure to follow.

If a parent has not collected their child from the Centre, or the parent has not contacted the Centre by 6:15 pm and attempts by staff to contact the parent/carers are unsuccessful, the staff will contact one of the emergency persons nominated on their child's enrolment form and request that they collect the child.

Late Collection Fee

- 1st Offence: \$10 for each ten minutes, or part thereof after 6.00pm and a warning letter or email outlining future penalties that may apply.
- 2nd Offence: within the 3-month period of the first offence, to receive a \$100 fine per 10 minutes or part thereof and given a warning letter or email outlining future penalties that may apply.
- 3rd Offence: within a three-month period of the second offence, to receive a \$100 fine per 10 minutes or part thereof and provide justification to the Management Committee why their family should not be expelled from DSCC.



Behaviour Guidance

Behaviour Guidance

At our Centre, we strive to promote healthy behaviours, though inappropriate behaviours among children can occasionally occur. DSCC emphasises positive behaviour guidance at all times, offering choices that support children's development. We encourage you to review our behaviour guidance policy and discuss any concerns with the educators who care for your child. In line with our philosophy, staff use positive guidance techniques to address these behaviours, including:

Anticipation: We set up the physical environment to reduce inappropriate behaviour. We also look for potential trouble spots and neutralise situations before they develop into inappropriate behaviour.

Redirect/Distract/Ignore: Giving children a short break from the situation directly or indirectly encourages them to focus on positive actions and responses and, if appropriate, ignore inappropriate behaviour.

Positive Feedback: We actively acknowledge, value, and appreciate children's positive and appropriate behaviour.

Encouragement: We encourage children to behave in ways that make them feel good about themselves, developing their self-awareness and helping them learn to manage themselves properly.

Social Justice: Staff use daily situations to help children understand the feelings and emotions they and others experience. Through modelling and guidance, we offer children practical tools to support, care for, and respect each other. We assist children in learning appropriate behaviour and understanding social justice by applying these basic rules and techniques.

If there is significant concern about a child's behaviour from either families or staff, a plan of action may be required. Staff are available to discuss your children's behaviour and will work with parents/carers to develop a plan to address these concerns.

Challenging Behaviours

Our approach to addressing challenging behaviors is rooted in empathy, understanding, and proactive measures to support each child's individual needs. We follow a systematic and compassionate process to address and manage challenging behaviours, ensuring the well-being and success of every child. The steps taken for challenging behaviours areas follows:

Understanding Underlying Causes of Challenging Behaviours

Our educators closely observe and assess children's behaviours to identify any underlying factors that may contribute to challenging behaviours. These factors may include frustration, emotional stress, communication difficulties, or changes in routine or environment. By understanding the root causes, we can develop targeted strategies to address these challenges effectively.

Consulting With Parents

Effective communication with parents or guardians is crucial in understanding a child's behaviour holistically. We collaborate with families to share observations and gather insights into a child's behaviour patterns, routines, and any significant changes in their home environment. This partnership enables us to develop a comprehensive and tailored approach to support the child.

Collaboration With Professionals

In cases where challenging behaviours persist, or when specific needs arise, we may collaborate with specialised professionals, such as behavioural therapists, paediatricians, or occupational therapists. Working together with experts, we develop individualised behaviour support plans that target the specific needs of the child, incorporating evidence-based strategies to foster positive change.

Implementing Guidance Techniques

Our educators remain consistent in applying positive behaviour guidance techniques to redirect challenging behaviours and promote positive alternatives. By reinforcing desired behaviours and providing children with constructive choices, we help them build valuable self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

Recognising and Celebrating Positive Behaviour Changes

When children demonstrate progress in managing challenging behaviors, we celebrate their successes. Positive reinforcement and recognition encourage children to continue making positive choices, boosting their self-esteem and sense of accomplishment.



Keeping Children, Staff, and Our
Community Safe & Healthy at the Centre

Creating a child safe environment

At DSCC, we are committed to preventing child abuse by identifying risks and taking immediate steps to reduce and eliminate them. We have zero tolerance for child abuse; any allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and referred to the police where necessary.

DSCC recognises the increased vulnerabilities of certain groups of children. We are dedicated to ensuring the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We also strive to provide a safe environment for children with disabilities and those who are gender diverse. The participation and empowerment of children are fundamental to this work.

Our primary concern is ensuring each child's safety. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility, and we cannot assume that child abuse does not, and cannot, happen within our organisation.

Our guiding principles are to:

- Promote the safety of children
- Prevent child abuse
- Ensure we have effective processes to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse

We have systems across the organisation to ensure the safety of children is at the centre of all our decisions and actions. DSCC has risk management and mitigation strategies, as well as clear processes and systems for responding to and reporting concerns regarding child safety.

Child Safe Environment Policy

DSCC has a Child Safe Environment Policy that all employees must read, understand, and sign as part of their induction.

The DSCC Child Safe Environment Policy guides all staff, board members, and volunteers. It clearly states unacceptable behaviours and outlines staff responsibilities for promoting children's safety, participation, well-being, and empowerment. Failure to comply with this code of conduct will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.

Creating an Environment Free from Risks

To ensure a child-safe environment, we will:

- Comply with the Children's Services Regulations 2009.
- Comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Comply with the Food Act 1984.
- Ensure periodic and unannounced collection of food samples for laboratory testing.
- Have the Centre regularly inspected for vermin and other pests by a licensed pest control company.
- Ensure all cleaning products and chemicals on-site will have Material Safety Data Sheets. These, along with dangerous items, will be stored in non-child accessible areas, such as in:
 - the locked outdoor non-child accessible shed
 - in the locked laundry
 - in the locked switch room
 - in a locked cupboard in the laundry.
- Have a minimum of one (1) fully trained OH&S Representative on the permanent staff at all times
- Engage the services of an OH&S consultant on an ongoing basis.
- Keep updated hazards analysis, risk assessment and risk control plans.
- Ensure staff know and promptly implement procedures for repairing or replacing broken equipment and attend to building maintenance issues.
- Ensure safe storage and/or disposal of medications, cleaning products, chemicals, fouled linen, sharps objects, and dangerous items.
- Ensure a thorough orientation process for all staff.
- Ensure all medications are stored in non-child accessible areas such as:
 - the kitchen refrigerator, or
 - the medication cabinet in the child's room or the first aid kit in the office.
- Conduct a daily indoor and outdoor environment safety check by staff while preparing the play experiences.
- Keep a register of dangerous and poisonous plants and ensure these plants are not grown at the Centre. This is kept on the bookshelf in the front office.
- Ensure staff know and can carry out all Centre procedures related to the safety and well-being of the children.
- Work within the Centre philosophy to:
 - Model and encourage non-aggressive strategies for conflict resolution
 - Develop strength and assertiveness in children that will serve them in situations that may jeopardise their safety.

- Ensure key staff know the Centre's procedure for acting on suspected child abuse and the signs of child abuse and neglect.
- Ensure staff actively supervise children at all times.
- Set up the environment in a way that directly/indirectly minimises the potential for accidents, conflict, or requirement for a level of adult supervision that cannot be maintained.
- Have agreed staff supervision visibility points and levels of staffing in specific areas.
- Be continuously active in directly and indirectly guiding children on modes of acceptable participation within specific play areas.
- Ensure appropriate supervision at all times while children play with water.
- Ensure staff communicate with each other when there is a change in the staffing level or potential supervision.
- Organise the staff roster to ensure the continuity of staff personnel and levels.
- Budget for and ensure training for staff to keep up to date in first aid, food handling, asthma management, and anaphylaxis management training, SUDI and Mandatory Reporting for Protecting Children.
- Include and pay all staff to attend staff meetings and staff training.
- Include all permanent staff in the planning process.
- Ensure a thorough recruitment and selection process for all permanent staff.

Health and Safety

Hygiene

Staff at DSCC promote, practise, and model good hygiene for children at the Centre.

Effective hand washing techniques are essential in preventing the spread of infection and disease, especially when handling bodily fluids such as during nappy changing, nose wiping, and cleaning up blood and vomit. DSCC has clear processes for maintaining basic personal hygiene and managing nappies and other bodily fluids. All staff are trained in workplace first aid and safe food handling. Additionally, posters outlining hygienic practices are displayed throughout the Centre to support good hygiene within our Centre and community.

When children have a cold, are teething, or are generally unwell, staff will plan appropriately for their needs, such as arranging for them to sit quietly or sleep. However, if your child's condition worsens throughout the day, we may contact you to collect them early.

If a child has an infectious illness or disease listed by the Department of Health (e.g., conjunctivitis or chickenpox), they must be excluded from the Centre for the duration specified by the Department. For more information, please refer to the Immunisation and exclusions (schools and children's services) - Changes to the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations:

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/immunisation-and-exclusions-schools-and-childrens-services-changes-to-the-public>

Families can also refer to the centre's Illness, Infectious Disease, and Emergency Care Policy for more information about exclusion.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to notify the Centre if your child has contracted an infectious disease or illness outlined in the above document. If your child has an infectious illness that is not listed, the Director may require a doctor's clearance stating that the child is not infectious and can attend child care.

Children Who Become Ill During the Day

If your child becomes ill during the day (e.g., becomes unwell after arriving), staff will contact you to collect your child. Please ensure all your contact details are up-to-date for this reason.

Management of Medical Conditions

Children diagnosed with a medical condition, including but not limited to asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, or epilepsy, must provide the centre with a written medical action plan from their doctor. Children will not be accepted into care until we have received a signed plan and the relevant medication for your child's condition. We recommend that your child's medication remain at the centre to ensure it is always available. We cannot accept your child into care without their medication if they have a medical condition. If you have any questions, please see the Director.

If your child has a medical condition, we may need to work with you to complete a Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan. This plan helps staff protect children identified as being at risk of a medical emergency.

Parents and caregivers of children with diagnosed conditions, including allergies, anaphylaxis, asthma, or diabetes, must provide a Medical Management Plan that outlines the nature of the condition, how to identify reactions, and the first aid procedures required. If your child is diagnosed with an allergy or medical condition after enrollment, please contact the centre as soon as possible.

Medication and Medical Management Plans

If your child requires medication while at the Centre, it must be supplied by parents/carers directly to staff. Do not leave medication in your child's bag – it must be handed to staff to be recorded and stored safely.

Your child's Risk or Medical Management Plan will be photocopied and displayed for all staff. Additionally, a copy will be kept in each room, the staff room, and the kitchen, where a complete list of every enrolled child with food allergies/intolerances is also kept.

Children's medication and action plans, including anaphylaxis, asthma, and diabetes management kits, are kept in an Allergy Buddy Rapid-Access Medical Panel in your child's room. Spare kits are held in the office. Each room team has a minimum of one staff member trained to administer these medications.

Risk and Medical Management Plans will be followed if any signs or symptoms arise. If symptoms accelerate, an ambulance will be called.

Regular communication is key to minimising the risks associated with these conditions. Parents/carers are asked to continuously keep staff informed of any changes to their child's condition.

Food and Allergies

At DSCC, we cater to individual children's dietary requirements and do not use products that contain nuts or sesame seeds. We will also periodically remove foods from the menu if they pose a significant risk to any child.

Bringing food into the Centre can cause serious harm to children who have been diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis. Even simple skin contact with traces of a food or substance could produce a significant reaction or prove fatal.

We ask that:

- Families do not bring food into the Centre.
- Do not leave food or other substances in your child's bag. Empty food packages, play-dough, or similar items could cause an unnecessary crisis.

Medication

If your child requires medication while at the centre, educators can administer it once it has been authorised in the Xplor/Playground under the medication record. Educators are not permitted to administer medication without parental authorisation.

Medication must be clearly labeled with your child's full name and dosage. Please ensure the expiry date is valid, as no expired medication will be given. All medication must be handed directly to an educator and should never be left in your child's bag.

If your child requires medication to be administered during the day, please follow these steps:

- Complete the required information in the Xplor app.
- Verbally inform the staff.
- Hand the medication directly to a staff member.

Our policy clearly outlines the procedures for both parents/carers and staff. A copy of our Administration of Medication and First Aid Policy can be found on our website.

Accident/ Illness

In the event of a serious accident or illness, educators will contact the parent or guardian immediately. If they cannot be reached, we will contact the designated emergency contacts. It is VITAL that all contact details are kept up to date at all times; this is the parent's responsibility.

Most DSCC staff are trained in First Aid, and there is always at least one staff member on site who is qualified in First Aid, Asthma, and Anaphylaxis.

All accidents and illnesses are recorded by educators in the Xplor/Playground system. Parents will be notified upon arrival of any minor accidents that occur during the day and will be required to sign against each entry.

If your child has any confirmed allergies or has been involved in an outbreak of a communicable illness, please notify the office via email so that necessary actions can be taken.

Medication/Action Plans

If your child has a medical condition requiring regular medication, you must provide an up-to-date Medical Action Plan along with the necessary in-date medication. Submit these to management before your child enters their room, as additional documentation will need to be completed.

Emergencies

Staff have a clear set of procedures to follow if your child is seriously injured or becomes extremely ill while attending the Centre. For more information on emergency protocols, please talk to centre staff.



Communication

Communication with families

At DSCC, we prioritise clear and effective communication between parents and educators to ensure the best possible care and support for each child. We understand that open lines of communication are essential in building a strong partnership between parents and our educators. We offer various methods of communication to keep parents informed and engaged in their child's daily experiences. The following are the primary methods we employ to facilitate communication:

Email Communication

We maintain open lines of communication through email, providing parents with a convenient means of reaching out to teachers or the administrative staff. Parents can use email to share any concerns, inquiries, or important information about their child. Our dedicated staff responds promptly to emails to address any questions or messages received.

Family Meetings

Conferences may be scheduled to foster face-to-face discussions about a child's progress, development, and any concerns. These meetings offer an opportunity for parents to actively participate in their child's educational journey and gain valuable insights into their child's growth and achievements.

Communication About the Program

The monthly program is prominently displayed in each room and is also distributed monthly via our Playground App. This platform also provides access to your children's learning observations.

Additionally, educators conduct mid-year and end-of-year parent-teacher meetings to discuss your child's progress. You are also welcome to speak with your child's educators at any time.

Grievance Procedure

At times, parents/carers may feel dissatisfied or unhappy with certain occurrences or practices at our Centre. If you find yourself in this situation, we encourage you to approach us immediately. We are committed to resolving issues together and have various tools and processes in place to assist. Please do not hesitate to raise any concerns with us—our door is always open.

Contact Us

We value open communication with families, and you can reach out to us in person at the Centre, via phone, or by email using the contact details provided below. We look forward to addressing any questions or concerns you may have.

News and Updates

At our Centre, we recognise the importance of keeping families informed about their child's experiences and learning. It is equally vital to update families on upcoming events and changes. To facilitate this, we have established various communication channels throughout the Centre. By providing regular updates on each child's progress, activities, and upcoming events, we aim to foster strong engagement and involvement from parents. These updates help parents stay connected with their child's experiences and offer valuable opportunities to reinforce learning at home, actively participating in their child's educational journey.

Parent Information Evenings

Each year, we host information evenings for every room at the Centre. These sessions cover topics such as asthma management, nutrition for pre-schoolers, behaviour guidance, and school readiness. Additional sessions may be offered throughout the year and we welcome your input on topics that would benefit you the most.

Monthly Newsletter

Our monthly newsletters are a comprehensive source of information for parents, providing an overview of curriculum themes, educational activities, and special events planned for the month. They include insights into each child's accomplishments, group projects, and noteworthy milestones. Sent via Xplor Comms and email at the end of each month, these newsletters summarize the past month's activities, highlight important updates, and offer information on community support and child subsidy matters.

Event Calendars

We distribute event calendars to parents, outlining important dates, public holidays, meetings, celebrations, and other significant events scheduled throughout the month. By sharing this information in advance, parents have ample time to plan and participate in these special occasions, fostering a sense of community and collaboration.

Visible Announcements

We post announcements in visible areas such as the front door, foyer, and entrance board within the Centre, providing parents with timely updates and reminders about changes, special projects, and upcoming activities. Our educators ensure that these announcements are regularly updated and easily accessible to keep parents informed.



Educators

The centre employs a range of full-time, part-time, floating, and relief educators. All rooms are staffed in accordance with the Children's Services Regulations 2021 ratio requirements. Every staff member holds a current Working with Children Check and first-aid qualifications.

Qualified Diploma and Certificate III early childhood educators work together in each room, along with an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) in the kindergarten room. Each room has a designated leader, but all staff collaborate as a team, so please feel free to speak to any educator in your child's room at any time.

The centre also employs a director, assistant director, finance manager, administration officer, program leader and a centre cook. Part-time and casual educators are used to cover annual leave, rostered days off, and sick leave. At all times, the centre aims to maintain a pool of regular educators to ensure continuity for the children.

Our educators are an integral part of the DSCC team, so please take the time to talk with them during drop-off and pick-up. However, please be mindful that they are busy with the children, so if you need to have a detailed conversation, we recommend making an appointment when they are not actively supervising.

At Dawson St., we do not encourage babysitting arrangements due to concerns about confidentiality and potential conflicts of interest. We have encountered various issues related to this in the past.

Parent Responsibilities

At DSCC, we believe that a strong partnership between parents and the daycare centre is essential for the well-being and growth of each child. By adhering to the outlined parent responsibilities, we can work together to create a nurturing and enriching environment for all children in our care.

Attendance Parents are responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at the daycare centre. If a child will be absent, parents should notify the centre in advance to help with planning.	Be On Time Parents are expected to drop off and pick up their child at the agreed-upon times. If unforeseen circumstances arise, parents should communicate with the centre to make appropriate arrangements.	Communication Parents are encouraged to maintain open communication with teachers and staff. Sharing important information about a child's well-being, changes in routine, or relevant events at home is crucial to provide comprehensive care.
Provide Supplies Parents are responsible for keeping an adequate supply of their child's things at daycare. This includes formula, extra clothing, special sunscreen, comfort items, and anything else the child may need while at daycare.	Update Forms Parents are expected to update their child's registration forms whenever necessary. Please make sure we have accurate contact numbers, pickup lists, allergies or health information, and other important information.	Fee Payments Parents are responsible for making timely payments for their child's fee and any additional fees as outlined in the enrollment agreement. Late payments are subject to fees and additional charges.



Confidentiality and Abuse Policies

Our policies and procedures are designed to ensure the protection of personal information and the well-being of every child in our care. We understand the gravity of our duty to report child abuse and the importance of adhering to data protection measures. Our staff is trained to handle sensitive information responsibly and to act promptly and appropriately when concerns arise. We value the trust placed in us by parents and are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of confidentiality and privacy at all times.

Confidentiality

All staff members are required to handle any information related to children and families with the utmost care and discretion. Confidential information should only be accessed by authorized personnel on a need-to-know basis. Personal information should not be disclosed or shared with unauthorized individuals or entities. We obtain written consent from parents or guardians before sharing any child-related information outside of the daycare center, except as required by law or for the child's safety and well-being. Parents have the right to specify their preferences regarding the sharing of their child's photos, activities, or artwork on public platforms, and we respect these choices. All staff members are bound by this confidentiality policy and are required to sign agreements to acknowledge their responsibility in safeguarding information.

Data Protection Measures

Data Security

We employ robust technical and organizational measures to protect personal information from unauthorized access, disclosure, or alteration. All personal data is stored securely in digital or physical formats, with restricted access granted only to authorized staff members.

Data Sharing Policies

Personal information is shared with external parties only when necessary for providing services to the child, with parental consent, or as required by law. When sharing data, we ensure that third-party entities comply with data protection regulations and maintain confidentiality.

Consent for Data Processing

We obtain explicit and informed consent from parents or guardians for processing their child's personal information. Parents have the right to withdraw their consent at any time, subject to legal or contractual requirements.

Retention and Disposal of Data

Personal information is retained only for as long as necessary to fulfill the purposes for which it was collected or as required by law. Data that is no longer needed is securely and responsibly disposed of in a manner that ensures it cannot be accessed or retrieved.

Data Breach Response

In the event of a data breach or unauthorized access, we have procedures in place to promptly respond, assess the extent of the breach, and notify affected individuals and authorities as required by law.

Staff Training on Data Protection

All staff members receive training on data protection, including best practices for handling personal information and identifying potential security risks. Regular updates and reminders are provided to ensure that staff members remain informed about data protection protocols.

Duty to Report

In cases where there are concerns for a child's safety or well-being, confidentiality may be waived to ensure the child's best interests. Our duty to report child abuse policy outlines the steps and responsibilities of our staff when they suspect or become aware of any signs of child abuse or neglect. The following are the key aspects of our duty to report child abuse policy:

Recognising Signs of Abuse

We provide comprehensive training to all staff members to help them recognise the physical, emotional, behavioural, or environmental signs that may indicate child abuse or neglect. Staff members are encouraged to be vigilant and attentive to any changes or patterns in a child's behavior that may raise concerns.

Reporting Procedures

If a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child is experiencing abuse or neglect, they are required to report it immediately to the designated child protection authority or the local child welfare agency. Staff members who make a report in good faith are protected by law from retaliation or adverse consequences. We maintain the confidentiality of staff members who report suspected child abuse or neglect, and their identity is not disclosed without their consent, except as required by law.

Collaboration with Authorities and Families

We co-operate fully with child protection authorities, law enforcement, and other relevant agencies in any investigations related to child abuse or neglect. While reporting is a legal obligation, we also recognise the importance of open and transparent communication with parents or guardians.



Acknowledgement Form

It is important that parents and families are aware of Dawson Street Child Care Co-op Ltd's policies and guidelines for care. Please read and familiarise yourself with these and use them as a reference for situations like tuition fees, illness, meals, and other day-to-day questions.

Acknowledgement

My/our signature(s) below verify that I/we have read the Dawson Street Child Care Co-op Ltd's Parent Handbook and agree to follow and abide by the guidelines and policies within.

Please return the form to the office to be kept with your child's file. All forms and documents as listed below must be submitted before your child may begin care.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Required Documents

- ☐ Enrollment Form
- ☐ Emergency Contact and Authorised Pickups
- ☐ Health and Immunisation Records
- ☐ Permission Forms (Excursions, Transportation, Bonjela authority, Nappy Change cream, Permission to apply Sunscreen, Safe Sleep and Media Release)
- ☐ Fee Agreement - Confirmation of payment
- ☐ Parent Handbook Acknowledgement
- ☐ CWA on Xplor