



Ripples Early Learning Centre Handbook for Families

SECTION 1 - Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to Ripples Early Learning Centre's Warners Bay and Warabrook. We are a privately owned centre that prides itself on having Owner/Directors that have extensive experience working with children and who have also worked in a variety of roles in Early Childhood, Education and Welfare.

The objectives of the service:

- To provide child care and education for children between 6 weeks and 5 years.
- To facilitate innovative programs responsive to individual, family and community needs.
- To create an environment that supports sustainability.
- To ensure children learn through hands on experiences in natural, inviting environments.

Values and Beliefs

We believe that the role of an Early Childhood Educator is to provide child-oriented programs that meet the needs of all children as individuals. Through ongoing observation, developmental knowledge and family input towards the program, we can extend and challenge the children to build skills they will require for life.

The environment is challenging and welcoming. Children can make choices in regards to activities, resources and equipment. Since children learn through play, we provide hands on experiences that motivate learning and encourage exploration.

All children are treated equally regardless of gender, race, ability, religion, economic status or family structure. In fact, we promote similarities between people rather than differences. As early childhood educators we guide and model respect and empathy for everyone.

Aims

- To foster a sense of belonging for children and families
- To ensure children are cared for, educated and respected
- To promote and encourage confidence and life skills
- To work in partnership with families
- To maintain a clean, safe and healthy environment for children

Operation Times

Warabrook Ripples is open from 6.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. Warner Bay Ripples is open from 7:30am to 6:00pm. Both service's close for all public holidays and a short time over Christmas to give children time to spend with their families.

What makes Ripples a centre of excellence?

- Dedicated Art Teacher who is inspirational and invites children to explore a range of art mediums.
- Higher ratios of staff to children to ensure the best possible care is provided.
- Hands on enrichment in learning about sustainability and looking after our environment.

SECTION 2 – Fees And Administration

Fee's

Fees are paid weekly and are paid through our direct debit system. Fees are taken from your account every Thursday for the following week. The 0.75 cent fee is added on to fees for the Direct Debit from IntegrPay.

When fees are two weeks in arrears you will forfeit your position at Ripples and we will move on to our waitlist to fill the position. If you are having financial difficulty please let us know so we can arrange a payment plan.

If you have insufficient funds in your account on the agreed date you will incur a dishonor fee.

Ripples is an Approved Service, therefore families are able to apply for Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) to assist with the cost of care. We can assist you by letting you know what your discounted fee will be if you provide us with your CCB rate from the Family Assistance Office. For more information regarding assistance please refer to the following link:

Child Care Benefit (CCB) - CCB is a means tested subsidy that is offered by the Family Assistance Office. We reduce your fees by offsetting the CCB amount against your weekly fees. The amount of CCB you receive has a number of variables as it is calculated by your family income, number of days your child attends care, number of children in care, and whether or not you pass the work, training and study test.

Child Care Rebate (CCR) - The rebate covers 50% of out-of-pocket expenses not covered by the CCB (up to a maximum of \$7,500 per financial year for each child). The CCR can be paid directly to your child's centre to reduce your fees or to your bank account in which case you are required to pay the full fee (less the CCB) to the centre. The CCR is not means tested but requires you to be registered for CCB (even if you get 0% CCB) in order to receive this rebate. You can use the online subsidy calculator to find out your rebate:

<https://secure.centrelink.gov.au/RateEstimatorsWeb/publicUserCombinedStart.do>

Bond

Bond is payable prior to commencement. We understand that this can be a large amount for full time children, so we are happy to discuss a payment plan with you.

Approved and Allowable Absences

Fees are payable for every day that your child is enrolled, including all absences. In accordance with NSW Industrial Relations Law, care must be paid for on public holidays as staff wages are paid for such days.

Government regulation states that children can have up to 42 payable allowable absences. For more information call 132 650.

Orientation

Once you have enrolled with the service, we welcome you for an orientation. This is a time where you can attend the service for a short visit with your child prior to commencing at the service.

This time allows you and your child to become familiar with the environment and may assist with separation anxiety. Families are able to make the decision based on the needs of your family.

The first few weeks is a settling-in time for new children in care and some tears are to be expected. For some families this will be the first time you have accessed child care outside of the family. Making us aware of difficulties helps to avoid anxiety for first time parents who may not have experienced leaving their child for extended periods of time.

Visiting the centre in the lead up to enrolment is a great way to familiarise your child with their new environment and for staff and families to get to know each other.

Open communication is vital to the success of our relationship. The daily routine and weekly programs will be on display in the rooms at all times. Please feel free to call at any time throughout the day.

Change Of Details

If you have a new address, new work place or new phone number you must inform the centre. It is important that you are contactable at all times.

Extra Days

We book children in for extra days when we know that space is available. Please contact the centre directly so we can check if a place is available for the day.

If you know you will be absent, prior notice assists us in placing children for an extra day. Once you have accepted an extra day you are liable for the fee unless 24 hours notice is provided.

Changing Days Or Withdrawal

Two weeks written notice is required when changing days or withdrawing your child from the service.

Custody Arrangements

Certified copies of any court orders regarding custody and access arrangements must be provided.

Late Collections

If you are going to be late collecting your child you should contact the centre immediately. Fees are charged for late collection at \$40 per ten minutes or part thereof so arranging an authorized nominee to collect your child should be your priority if possible. Our staff are dedicated to your child's wellbeing but they have families of their own they would like to go home to. Please be pro-active and understanding on this matter.

SECTION 3 – Operational Procedures

Arrival and Departure

Please ensure that when you arrive you sign in and place your child's belongings in the allocated belonging area. When leaving the service, ensure that an approved person (person over 18 years nominated on your enrollment form) is picking up your child.

We will only allow children to leave the service with adults listed on the enrolment form. Please inform us in writing if a new adult is collecting your child.

First Day

All children are individual; they react differently on their first day of care. We will encourage your child to begin an activity. It is then your choice to stay for a short time or say your goodbyes. The most appropriate way of letting an older child feel secure is by telling them you will be back to pick them up later.

Things to Remember

A new environment can be an overwhelming experience for a child. However, he/she will also be developing independence, trust and security outside the home environment.

You can help by:

- Visiting the service prior to your start date
- Spending some time with your child on the first day
- Saying goodbye when the time comes, but do not sneak off as you need to build trust
- Phoning during the day to see how your child has settled

What To Bring

Please label every item clearly as it is difficult to keep track of every child's loose items.

Bag – labeled clearly.

Clothes – spare clothes are needed when the weather becomes cooler or warmer and perhaps for any unexpected mishaps.

Sheets – We ask that families bring in a fitted cot sheet and top sheet. Cot sheets fit our beds and cots.

Bottles – Please ensure that all bottles with formula are pre-mixed. Milk bottles should be placed in the room fridge on arrival.

Hat – Children should have a hat each day. The most appropriate hat is a bucket hat with a wide brim, rather than a cap.

What we provide

Wipes – The centre uses high quality, low perfumed nappy wipes.

Nappies – The center uses high quality nappies in a variety of sizes to fit all children appropriately.

Face cloths – The children are wiped down with face cloths after each meal.

Painting Aprons – We cover children with an apron when they are engaging in messy play to protect their clothing where possible.

Milk and water – Children will be given the option of milk at morning tea and will have access to fresh water throughout the day.

Lunch - Daily food requirements are met by our onsite Cook. The homecooked meals are delicious. We provide Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Tea and a Late snack. The menu's are displayed outside our kitchen.

Sun cream – We supply sun cream for the children to keep them safe.

What to Wear

Casual play clothes are best. Children can then have the freedom to move and explore. Older children should not have to deal with buckles or belts. Children who are toilet training are asked not to wear overalls or jeans with difficult buttons.

Sun Smart

Children are encouraged to wear a hat if they wish to play outside. Ripples provides wide brimmed hats that are sanitized after morning play and then again at the end of the day.

We ask that parents apply sun cream at the sun cream station on arrival. Educators apply sun cream throughout the day. If your child is sensitive to sun cream, you can provide your own.

In keeping with our Sun Smart policy, we encourage children to wear short sleeves rather than singlet tops in warmer months. Staff role model by wearing appropriate sun smart clothing.

Oct - March	Minimise outdoor activity between 11am and 3pm. Sun protection is required at all times.
April – September	Outdoor activity can take place at any time of the day. Sun protection is required between 10am and 2pm (EST) except in June and July when the UV index is mostly below 3.

SECTION 4 –Care and Education

Grouping

The children are grouped according to age. Family grouping tends to occur in the morning and afternoons and is a great time for siblings to spend some time together. It also gives the children an opportunity to interact with children of all ages.

Developmental Records

We regularly observe the children and record their strengths, needs and interests. This information is used to build your child's individual education plan and document development throughout the year.

All families have access to their child's education plan and documentation via the parent portal that can be logged into securely with individual password protection.

Curriculum

Parents can also access the curriculum via the parent portal. Parent communication and feedback is strongly encouraged as we rely on important information from home to build our curriculum. Room Leaders are available for face to face consultations to discuss your child's progress.

Rest and Sleep

Children requiring sleep will have small beds available for sleep or rest time. We encourage all children to have some quiet time during the day. Understandably older children may not need a sleep so we provide quiet activities.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an exciting time for children and we enjoy celebrating with them. We do however feel strongly that ALL children be given the opportunity to participate. To ensure inclusiveness and implementation of the allergy and anaphylaxis policy we provide all birthday cakes. The vanilla cakes are free of Wheat, Dairy, Egg and Soy Products.

The cakes can be ordered via the Ripples kitchen 3 days prior to the child's Birthday. Simply fill in the cake order envelope enclosed with \$16 and post into the birthday cake letterbox.

SECTION 5 - Health and Safety

Sick Children

The centre is not a place for sick children. If a child becomes unwell at the centre, staff holding a First Aid Certificate will assess the child's condition in the following way:

- a) Take the child's temperature and if it is higher than 37.5 degrees will refer to the procedures for dealing with a high temperature.
- b) Inform the Director of the child's condition
- c) Find a quiet area where the child can rest comfortably and be observed for escalating or further symptoms.
- d) Inform the parent/guardian/emergency contact of the child's condition.

Children can return to the centre when they are well. Children who have vomited or have had diarrhea may return to the centre 24 hours after the last loose bowel motion or episode of vomiting.

If your child has any of the following you should keep your child at home as sick children need to be cared for by parents/guardian.

- Consistently high temperatures
- Diarrhoea
- Excessive discharge from nose, eyes, ears
- Productive cough (i.e. producing phlegm)
- Tonsillitis
- Chicken Pox
- Ear Infection
- Hand, Foot and Mouth

- Parvovirus (Slapped Cheek)
- Vomiting
- Mumps
- Measles
- Untreated Head lice
- Scabies
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Whooping Cough
- Impetigo (School Sores)
- Urinary Tract Infection
- Influenza

Medication

Medication will only be administered if it has the official pharmacy label including:

- Your child's name
- The name of the medication
- Specific instructions
- Expiry date

(Please do not bring in Panadol as we have it on site. Children who need Panadol should not be at the service)

Over the counter and herbal medication will only be administered if accompanied by a practitioner's letter informing us of:

- The name of the medication
- Specific instructions from the chemist/herbalist/practitioner
- Expiry date

A Medication Form must be filled out when any form of medication is bought into the centre.

Allergies

Please inform the service if your child has allergies/food intolerances so that appropriate care can be taken when dealing with soap, bee stings, food items, insect bites.

Severe Allergies/Anaphylaxis requires an Action Plan signed by a doctor. It is the parent's responsibility to provide this document to the centre.

Asthma

If your child suffers from Asthma you must request an Asthma Action Plan that will be displayed in the centre. Children cannot attend the centre until the Asthma Action Plan has been submitted. It is the parent's role to inform the centre of any changes to the plan.

Medical Conditions

If your child has any medical conditions please inform the centre. This may include epilepsy, heart condition, cystic fibrosis etc.

A risk minimization and parent communication plan for all children with medical conditions is completed on enrolment.

Immunisation

Please provide your current immunisation record on enrollment. We also need updated copies as your child receives his/her immunisations. Children cannot commence care at the centre until the current immunisation record/ approved conscientious objection form is on file.

In accordance with NSW Legislation, in the event of an outbreak for which immunisation is available, all children who have not been immunised will be excluded from care. This is a precautionary measure to prevent cross infection. It should be noted that fees are payable on exclusion.

Emergency Evacuation

Children practice emergency evacuation routines throughout the year. Evacuation plans are located at each exit of the building and in each room, for the safety of everyone in an emergency situation.

Child Protection

As Early Childhood Educators, we are 'mandatory reporters'. This means that we are required by law to make a report if we suspect a child is at risk of harm.

Required Safety Practices

In accordance with Occupational Health and Safety Laws we are obliged to provide a safe environment for children, staff and visitors to the centre. This includes fitting safety glass,

storing chemicals and hazardous products in lockable cabinets, ensuring furniture and equipment meet Australian Standards, regularly facilitating fire and emergency drills, minimising trip hazards and providing a safe environment.

We have specific procedures to implement in relation to hand washing, nose blowing, nappy changing and sun-care to meet appropriate standards and ensure your child's safety. We pride ourselves on the commitment we have to ensuring your children are safe.

You can assist by shutting the gate properly, closing doors, not smoking, handing plastic bags to staff, ensuring medication is handed to staff, leaving animals at home and holding your child's hand in the car park. If we work together our children will stay safe.

Working with Children Check

All staff members are certified as authorised and capable to work with children. Every staff has a mandatory 'Working with Children Check.'

First Aid Certificates

All staff members will acquire a First Aid Certificate and update the Anaphylaxis and Asthma component every three years. CPR will be updated annually or as required.

SECTION 6 - Parent Involvement

Parents as Partners

Parents/Guardians are the most important person in a child's life and we therefore encourage all families to be involved in the service. If you have a musical talent, cooking talent, enjoy gardening or any other hobby we would encourage you to spend some time with the children and be an integral part of our program.

We welcome ideas and input from families and will endeavor to incorporate these into our program.

We have a parent library located in our foyer for you to borrow books and information on a variety of topics. If you need any advice or support please do not hesitate to ask the room leaders or directors.

Grievances

At times you may have a query or grievance and we would like to assist you. This is only possible if you approach us. It is important to know that both Directors are available for you at any time.

We have a grievance or complaints form in the foyer that you can fill in. We have step by step procedures to ensure that we listen to and work towards rectifying any complaints or grievances.

SECTION 7 – Policies

Governance

Our service will meet its legal and financial obligations by implementing appropriate governance practices that support our aim to provide high quality child care that meets the objectives and principles of the National Quality Framework, the National Quality Standard and the Early Years Learning Framework.

Service Structure

Our service has the following organisational structure.

The Approved Provider is: Hillsborough Road ELC

The Owner / Directors: Sharon Jobbins and Kelly Yeung

The approved provider has a range of responsibilities prescribed in the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, including keeping accurate records and retaining them for specified timeframes.

Our approved provider is also responsible for ensuring the financial viability of the service, overseeing control and accountability systems and supporting the Nominated Supervisor /

Responsible Person/Certified Supervisors in their role and providing resources as appropriate for the effective running of the service.

Our Nominated Supervisor is Sharon Jobbins and she is responsible for the day to day management of our service and has a range of responsibilities prescribed in the national law and regulations.

Our Educational Leaders are Louise Perrett and Melanie Gebbard. They are responsible for supporting the Educators with the implementation and delivery of the curriculum.

Policy Manual

Our policy manual is located in the foyer for you to view. The policies give staff and families guidelines and insight into the procedures we use to maintain a high level of care. We update our policies annually. Families and staff are asked for input through our review process.

In Summary

At Ripples our aim is to work in partnership with parents to foster the development of each child. We believe we need to value a child's independence and it is our role to provide appropriate experiences and opportunities for children to develop.

Day Care provides children with opportunities to express their individuality and promote decision making, cooperation, resilience and problem solving. At Ripples we embrace the diversity of the wider community and this is reflected in our cultural group activities and participation in culturally significant celebrations and events.

Communication between parents and educators is vital to maintaining successful and positive relationships. We look forward to building a long and nurturing relationship with enrolled children and their families. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or questions.

Kelly and Sharon.