



Parent Handbook

Essentials for New Families

2021





Contact Information

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Administrator – office@recc.com.au

Parent Management Committee – recc.committee@recc.com.au

Thank you for enrolling your child at Reid Early Childhood Centre (RECC), we hope your time spent with us is enjoyable.

This parent handbook will provide you with information that you need to know whilst you are part of the RECC community. If you are unsure of anything, please don't hesitate to ask and feel free to share any comments or concerns with us. It is also important for you to share with your child's carers as much information as possible about your family.



Contents

About us	3
Operating hours	4
Christmas shut down	4
Signing in and out	4
Enrolment	
Waiting list and bond	5
Fees	6
Childcare Subsidy / Rebate / Benefit	7
Immunisation requirements	7
Settling into care	8
Educational Program	
Our Philosophy	9
Family involvement	11
Educators	11
Communication	12
Daily Routine	13
What to bring	14
Clothing	14
Policies	15
Checklist	19



About us

Welcome to Reid Early Childhood Centre, a community-based not-for-profit long day care centre offering both full-time and part-time care for children to families. Reid Early Childhood Centre offers a highly inclusive and supportive community environment where children, families and educators feel safe, respected and valued. We offer high quality literacy and numeracy programs as well as play based educational programs which reflect individual needs, interests and skills.

RECC is situated in the grounds of the Reid Campus of the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) on Constitution Avenue, Reid. The Centre is a community-based centre, run by a not-for-profit association made up of the centre's parents as well as our qualified centre Director.

Our aim is to provide high quality care and education for children whilst their parents or primary carers are at work or studying. We cater for children from six weeks old to school age.

Our qualified staff are able to accommodate and provide care for 67 children, which are spread across the following age groups:

- Nursery (6 weeks – 2 years) **10**
- Toddlers (18 months – 2.5 years) **16**
- Junior Preschool (2.5 years - 3.5 years) **19**
- Preschool Room (3 years – 5 years) **22**

These age divisions may vary depending on each child's developmental stage. When children are ready to move up to the next room, every effort is made to accommodate them as soon as a space becomes available.



Operating Hours

The Centre is open from 7:30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday, except for public holidays and the Christmas shut down (see below). To meet licensing and legal requirements children cannot be on the premises before or after these times.

All children must be collected by 6.00pm. To ensure this, we ask you to be at the centre by 5.50pm to allow time to exchange important information about your child's day and to collect their belongings. If you know that you are going to be late, please call us on 6230 5660.

A late charge of \$15 will be applied if you arrive to collect your child after 6pm for the first 5 minutes and \$2 for each additional minute will apply.

Christmas Shut Down

RECC is closed each year for around two weeks during the Christmas and New Year break. No fees are charged for this period. Please ensure that you read centre emails and newsletters so that you are aware of closing dates, as they will vary each year. The first day back at the commencement of the year is a pupil free day, allowing for staff to engage in professional development and prepare for the new year.

Sign In and Out

When arriving and departing the centre, you are required by law to sign your child in and out. The sign-in KIOSKS are located in the foyer and are available for parents at all times. The sign-in KIOSKS are also used during emergency evacuation procedures to assist staff in knowing the numbers and names of children in their care.

The sign-in KIOSKS are a legal record that are kept for up to 21 years for insurance purposes and as proof of your child's attendance. These records are also required as part of the Child Care Subsidy administration.



Enrolment

We offer any combination of five, four, three and two day per week enrolments. When enrolling your child, you will be asked to choose either a Monday or Friday as part of your child's enrolment. Where possible, we encourage consecutive day attendance, this can be particularly helpful for children who are new to the centre.

If space is available due to another child being absent, there is the possibility of being able to book additional care days for your child on a casual basis. This can be particularly helpful during school holidays for parents with a child who also attends preschool. Any request for extra days will need to be made via email to the Director.

If your child is away, please advise the centre as soon as possible. In the case of illness, we may need to advise staff and parents if it is a contagious illness. If your family is going on holidays or your child is having a day at home, we will then be able to provide an extra day to the parents who need it.

You are required to give 2 weeks written notice when cancelling your child's place in the centre or decreasing their days. Increasing or swapping days can be made in a timeframe agreed upon by the Director and parents.

Bond and Waiting List Fee

Demand for child care placements with us is high; therefore, we keep a waiting list that allows us to manage future enrolments. Waiting list forms are available on our website recc.com.au, as well as in our centre office. Once on our waiting list you will be notified when a place for your child becomes available. We recommend for you to periodically confirm your position on our waiting list, as this assists us when offering places.

When we offer a placement at the centre, we require the payment of a bond of 2 weeks feed in advance. This bond will guarantee a place and start date for your child. It reflects the current value of two weeks of care and is non-refundable.

However, the bond may be used for your account for the last two weeks of fees, when we receive notification that your family or child is leaving the Centre.



Fees

All fees are reviewed annually by the management committee and adjusted as required. As of 15/2/2021, the current fees are:

Daily	\$125
Full time Mon-Fri	10% fee reduction \$565 per week

Included in the fees are children's morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late snack. We also provide bed sheets, baby wipes, sunscreen, as well as extracurricular activities held weekly in each room. A full daily or weekly fee is charged regardless of the number of hours that your child attends each day.

Invoices are emailed to you. Any account enquires should be directed to our Director in person or via phone or email.

Fees can be paid in the office by EFTPOS/credit card (2% fee on credit card). You can also use online banking to directly deposit your fees into our NAB account, the details are as follows:

Bank: NAB
Account Name: Reid Early Childhood Centre Inc
Account Number: 123524701
BSB: 082 926

Fees form the funding base for the centre. It is vitally important that accounts are kept up to date, to ensure the adequate ongoing operation of the centre. A late payment fee of \$15 is applied to all overdue accounts. A further late payment fee will be applied when the account is four weeks overdue. The child's place in the centre will be forfeited if the situation is ongoing.

Please refer to the Fee and Debt Management Policy available from the office or at recc.com.au/policies for further information.



Child Care Subsidy

As of July 2018, the Government will be replacing both the **Child Care Benefit** and the **Child Care Rebate** with a new **Child Care Subsidy**. This subsidy will be paid directly to the service and then passed onto RECC families as a fee reduction. You will be required to make a co-contribution to your child's fees and pay the service the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.

To check your eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy or if you have any queries, please visit the Department of Education and Training website <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-1> or speak with our management team.

Immunisation Requirements

It is a requirement of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 that the centre has up-to-date immunisation records for all children who attend RECC. Upon enrolment, for our records, we ask parents to bring in your child's recent immunisation statement from Medicare. We ask that each time your child has an immunisation; you provide an updated record to the centre.

If your child is not immunised, you need to provide us with a copy of the Conscientious Objection form. Please note that if your child is not immunised they will be excluded from the centre if there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease. The exclusion period will vary between each illness, with the average length being 2-5 days. If your child is excluded because they are not immunised, you will still be required to pay for the days that they are absent.



Settling into Care

Entering formal child care for the first time, or even changing services, can be an overwhelming experience not only for children, but their parents too. At RECC we understand how hard this can be and our warm, friendly staff will endeavour to support your family during the transitioning phase.

We highly encourage all new families to have 3 orientation sessions to help your child feel secure in their new environment. It also provides you with the opportunity to discuss with the teacher the routines and program in the room and to have any questions addressed. This time also allows staff to meet and get to know you and your child and begin to form a relationship.

It takes time for children and parents to settle into a new environment, so please feel free to call the centre to check on your child. As children's welfare and happiness are a priority for staff when welcoming new children, staff will always contact parents if they feel that the child is not settling.



Educational Program

RECC Philosophy

As a non-for-profit based Centre led by a Parent Committee, we pride ourselves on our sense of community. We believe this is a vital part for children to develop a sense of belonging. We are thankful, respect and acknowledge the Ngunnawal people and the land we learn and grow on each day. Meaningful connections with the community are important to us and are reflected through our choice of incursions and excursions.

We respect parents as the first and foremost important teachers for their child. We provide opportunities for parent input and feedback acknowledging the unique influence they do have. We embrace the variety of cultural backgrounds that come to Reid Early Childhood Centre, encouraging families to share their culture with educators.

At Reid Early Childhood centre we believe children have the right to be seen, heard, and valued as an individual. To feel safe and supported in order to develop a love for learning. Children have the right to feel welcomed and comfortable in an environment that mirrors their current interests. An environment where they can engage in long periods of uninterrupted meaningful, natural and challenging play.

We believe each child is an active participant in their learning and through a play-based learning curriculum a child gains the foundations for lifelong learning. To promote this, resources in our environments should be open ended encouraging creativity and engagement as well as be accessible for all children.

Children are capable of caring and respecting these resources. We believe children should have the opportunity to engage with natural resources and experiences in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Such experiences give children the tools to learn and understand the environment and the importance of respecting it.

Educators provide a play-based curriculum that reflects the children's interests, following the National Early Years Learning Framework; "Belonging, Being and Becoming". All educational programs are developed following the planning cycle to ensure thoughtful, intentional and purposeful learning is catered to each child. Educators reflect on their program evaluating their current pedagogy and practices in order to always be improving. Educators are supported in their professional learning through access to ongoing training and support. We believe this is more achievable when a collaborative relationship is developed between children, families, educators and the community.



Our Program Goals for the Children

Belonging - the centre aims for each child to feel like they belong. This sense of belonging contributes to inner well-being, security and identity. We aim to create an atmosphere which has meaning and purpose in which the child feels welcomed and nurtured.

Develop - in all aspects - cognitive, physical, emotional, social, language, literacy and numeracy; and to learn through all the senses – sight, touch, sound, smell and taste; and with access to a wide variety of resources, with skilled, responsive and interested adults as the most important resource.

Explore - to actively and enthusiastically discover knowledge; to use initiative and achieve independence; to develop creativity, imagination, curiosity, a love of learning and a love of life.

Empathise - to recognise the rights of others to be safe; to understand fairness, cooperation, and to resolve conflicts peaceably.

Identify - with their families, and their community while also having a strong sense of self as an individual. To gain a sense of the wider world and their participation in it. To be aware of diversity of life, families, and other cultures within their community and the wider world.



Family Involvement

At RECC our friendly educators strive to ensure that parents, guardians and families feel welcome and supported whilst attending our service. Families are encouraged to participate in our working bees, participating in your child's room and fortnightly programs, joining us on excursions as a parent volunteers or joining up for the Parent Management Committee.

Throughout the year families are invited to join in on our multicultural activities, parent celebration days and any special events. Please let us know if you have any ideas or suggestions regarding family involvement.

Educators

Reid Early Childhood Centre team members are committed to providing high quality education to the children in their care. Educators employed by RECC have varying levels of qualifications and experience. All educators at RECC are required to have at least a Certificate III in Children's Services or be studying towards.

We pride ourselves as being professional in our approach to our personal and professional development, educators are consistently updating their professional skills through training and professional development courses.

In accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011, RECC meets or exceeds the minimum educator to child ratio for each age group.

Children under the age of 2 years require a ratio of 1 staff member to 4 children. Children 2 years and above will require a ratio of 1:5, children aged 3-5 years require a ratio of 1:11.

If an educator is absent, RECC endeavours to replace them with one of our permanent relief staff, or employ a casual staff member through a local, reliable agency.



Communication

We feel that it is important to have open communication with our families. To ensure that we meet the needs of your child, we encourage you to share as much information as you can. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to be involved in any decisions we make that may affect your child. We welcome all input into our programming and planning – each room’s program has space for you to leave your comments/feedback.

Other methods that we may use to communicate information include the following: Daily information records, as well as a ‘What We Did Today’ are displayed in each room every day and usually posted on Storypark.

We keep a portfolio for each child that provides visual and written information on children’s’ experiences throughout the centre. The centre newsletter is distributed via email monthly. We strongly advise that families read it, as it will contain important information about centre events, policies and staffing.

RECC uses Storypark to document children’s ongoing learning and development. Parents are encouraged to view their child’s profile and can make an appointment to discuss their child’s progress with their group leader at any time. Important notices, such as illness notification, are displayed on the front door or in the foyer.



Daily Routine

Our operating hours are from 7:30am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Children are encouraged to eat morning tea during the hours of 9:00am and 10:00am. As the ages in the room vary, children will engage in meaningful conversations and experiences in their classrooms.

Lunch is served to children between 11:30am for two younger rooms and 12:00pm for two older rooms with children encouraged to self-serve at all meal times.

After lunch children are given the opportunity for rest and relaxation on one of our mats, children who do not wish to sleep are offered a comfy cushion and blanket to rest with.

As children begin to wake up, educators assist children to put away their bed linen and mats and are invited to engage in quiet play.

Afternoon Tea is provided to the children at 3:00pm. Children who require nappy changes or assistance when toileting will be catered for throughout the day.

Educators are to ensure children's nappy changes and toileting occur every 2 hours. At 5:00pm children are offered a light late snack. All rooms will join together at either outside or in the Junior Preschool room.



What does RECC provide:

- Fresh, healthy meals cooked daily by our qualified chef (catering for all allergies and dietary requirements)
- Cow milk, soy milk, rice milk
- All linen – bed sheets, blankets, bibs, face washers
- Wet wipes
- Sunscreen– SPF 50+. If your child requires sensitive Sunscreen you will need to provide this yourself

What you will need to provide:

- At least 2 full changes of clothing – this should include;
 - Tee-shirt / long sleeve shirt, shorts / pants / skirt, jumper, singlet, socks, underwear (toileting children will require extra pairs of underwear).
- Sun hat (broad brimmed or legionnaires) for summer, beanie and raincoat for winter.
- Formula or breast milk for infants
- Minimum of 5 nappies every day for children who require nappy changes. Alternatively, you can provide a pack of nappies for your child, please check with educators regularly so you are aware of the amount remaining.
- Comfort items – dummy, bottle, teddy etc.

Clothing

The clothing that your child wears whilst attending care can influence the quality of their experiences, as clothes can affect their health, safety and comfort. Please dress your child in loose, comfortable clothing that is suitable for the weather.

Clothing with drawstrings, loose buttons or decorative items, as well as scarves and necklaces are not considered appropriate for child care. They may catch on equipment or come loose and cause strangulation or choking. Thongs or slip on shoes are also considered to be unsafe as they may cause trip hazards and do not provide sufficient protection.

Whilst we provide smocks to protect clothing from messy activities, please be aware that some paints, glues, etc. may get on your child's clothing, we therefore recommend that you do not dress them in their 'best' clothes.



Policies

The Centre has several policies covering our daily operations, procedures and practices. Parents can view our policies on the centre's website, recc.com.au. A copy of this folder can also be accessed from the Director. Each room has a policy folder for the purpose of assisting parents to understand the centre's policies. Please feel free to approach your child's Room Leader or the Centre Director with any concerns or issues you have regarding RECC policies and procedures.

Below is an overview of some important RECC policies.

Illness Policy

RECC has a duty of care to ensure all children, families and staff are provided with a high level of protection from illness through good hygiene practices and effective and timely responses to signs and symptoms of illness.

Families are asked to inform RECC if their child is absent due to illness. Families may provide a medical certificate, preventing sick days from being deducted as allowable days for CCB purposes. Staff members and families should refer to the NHMRC's recommended minimum exclusion periods listed in *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Disease in Child Care*.

The following exceptions or additional exclusion policies apply:

- Where live head lice are detected, the child will be excluded until effective treatment has commenced and lava removed;
- In the case of diarrhoea, the child will be excluded until the diarrhoea ceases;
- Exclusion is required for a minimum of 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting;
- Exclusion is required for a minimum of 24 hours after the last spike of temperature above 38°C; and
- Exclusion is required for 24 hours of commencing a new antibiotic (due to unforeseen reactions such as allergies or diarrhoea).
- RECC reserves the right to exclude any child from the centre if it considers that the child is not well enough to attend.

Exclusion periods for other illnesses or conditions are stated in the RECC Illness Policy.



Medical Conditions Policy

Parents are required to notify the Centre management on enrolment or as soon as a child is diagnosed with asthma, diabetes, allergies, anaphylaxis, or at risk of anaphylaxis. Parents must provide a medical management plan for the child, signed by a medical practitioner, that sets out the steps that are to be followed in the event of an incident relating to the specific health care need. At all times, there is at least one staff member present at the Centre with up to date specialist training in emergency asthma management and anaphylaxis. The Director will consult with parents of such children to develop a medical conditions risk minimisation plan and a medical conditions communications plan. Please refer to the Medical Conditions Policy or discuss the matter with the Centre Director.

Medication Policy

Following the 24-hour exclusion period after your child commences a course of antibiotics, educators are able to continue to administer the medication while the child is at the centre. Medication must be handed to an educator, and you will also need to complete a medication form authorising staff to administer it. Any prescription medications or over the counter medication must be clearly labelled with the child's name, use by date, directions, dosage and name of medication clearly marked. Please note that children at RECC are not permitted to self-administer medication.

Nut Free

RECC is a Nut-Free centre. All products containing nuts or traces of nuts are excluded from the centre in accordance with our Food and Nutrition Policy. Parents must ensure that no peanut butter, Nutella, or other food items which may contain any traces of nuts are sent to the centre. This policy also includes foods which may have been cooked in peanut oil.



SunSmart Policy

Our centre is working towards a SunSmart status and follows the Cancer Council's national standards. To minimise exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun, a combination of the following sun protection measures is required when UV levels reach 3 and above:

Shade: The Centre has adequate shade available in outdoor spaces and the availability of shade is considered when planning outdoor activities. Outdoor time is minimised between 11am and 3pm during the summer/daylight saving period.

Clothing: Loose fitting and closely woven fabrics assist in protecting children from exposure to the sun. It is recommended that shirts have a collar to protect the nape of the neck and long sleeves to protect arms. Longer style tops and shorts are acceptable items of clothing to protect children from the sun. Sleeveless shirts, sleeveless dresses and singlets are not considered appropriate clothing to protect children from the sun.

Hats: Children and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears whenever they are outside when UV levels are 3 and above. Parents are advised to pack at least one hat for their child. Children who do not bring a hat are either provided one by the Centre or will be restricted in their access to outdoor play.

Eye-protection: Eyes can be protected from over-exposure to UV radiation by wearing an appropriate hat. If sunglasses are worn, RECC recommends that they meet Australian Standard 1067 (sunglasses: categories 2, 3 or 4).

Sunscreen: Minimum SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is made available and easily accessible to all children, staff and visitors to apply. Children are assisted to apply sunscreen to exposed body parts before going outside when UV levels are forecast to be 3 and above. Sunscreen reapplication needs are monitored regularly.



Grievances and Complaints

Parents have an important role in the centre and we value their comments and feedback. To preserve the relationship between staff and parents, any complaints, concerns or differences of opinion will be dealt with promptly to minimise disruption to the running of the centre.

Any complaint should initially be discussed with your child's Room Leader. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, or if you are not comfortable raising the issue with the Room Leader, then the matter should be taken to the Centre Director. The Director may refer any concern or complaint to the Management Committee, particularly where the issue relates to the implementation of a RECC policy or procedure. If you are not satisfied with the response of the Director, or are not comfortable raising the issue with the Director, then the matter should be taken to the President of the Management Committee. Matters will be investigated in a discreet and timely manner, with any agreed actions communicated to you.

Parents Code of Conduct

Aggressive and abusive behaviour towards staff or anyone else in the centre is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. A breach of this code may have serious consequences, including being banned from the centre and/or mandatory reporting to authorities.

To comply with the code, parents will:

- Display respect for all people while at the centre, not using raised voices or threatening language which may intimidate or humiliate staff, children or other visitors.
- Communicate positively with carers (i.e. always speak with a respectful tone and language) and with children (i.e. do not discipline any child other than your own)
- Come to the centre unaffected by drugs or alcohol
- Work collaboratively with carers to resolve any behavioural issues their child may have
- Respect the centre's property and other families' property, privacy and confidentiality.
- Accept cultural differences, differing needs and different personalities.



Orientation Checklist for Parents:

Please go through the checklist below to determine if you have all the information you need, or feel free to ask us more questions to assist you. Are you aware of:

- RECC's opening and closing times?
- The contact numbers for the centre?
- How to enter the centre?
- Where the sign in and out Kiosk and how to use it?
- How to pay your fees?
- What to pack for your child each day?
- The name of the staff in your child's room?
- Where the weekly program and daily information for your child's room are displayed?
- Where to put your child's bag?
- What the sleep and meal routines are?
- What you need to do if your child will be absent from the centre?
- The procedure to follow if your child requires medication?
- What to do if someone else will be collecting your child?