

Employees Handbook

Ballina River Street Children's Centre Inc.

2013

Introduction

Welcome to the Ballina River Street Children's Centre Incorporated. This employee handbook is designed to give you the information you will need whilst you are employed at our Preschool and Occasional Childcare Centre.

The Ballina River Street Children's Centre Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer. This means you will not be discriminated against based on legally protected qualities including race, colour, sex, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family or carer's responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

Anti-Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly because they belong to a particular group of people or have a particular characteristic.

Many people have fixed ideas about groups of people who are different from themselves. If we aren't careful, this can lead us to discriminate against people who belong to those groups.

The Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW is part of the NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice. It administers the anti-discrimination laws.

Staff at the Anti-Discrimination Board:

- deal with complaints of discrimination;
- try to prevent discrimination — by educating people about what the anti-discrimination laws say and why they are important; and
- report to the Government if they think the law needs changing to help prevent discrimination.

In NSW there is a law that says people must be fair to you —

- when you go for a job
- at your work
- at your school, college or university
- in shops, banks, hospitals, hotels, clubs, coffee shops and offices
- when you rent a house, flat or room

This law is called the Anti-Discrimination Act.

This law says people must not treat you unfairly, just because —

- you have a learning difficulty
- you have a disability
- you are black or from a different country
- you are going to have a baby
- you are breastfeeding your baby
- you work and look after a family member
- you are old or young
- you are a man or boy
- you are a woman or a girl
- you are single or married or defacto
- you are gay or lesbian

- you are transgender (you are a man who has become a woman, or a woman who has become a man)
- you have HIV or AIDS

(Source: The NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice).

If you feel you have been treated unfairly at our centre and internal grievance procedures have not satisfied you, you have the right to complain to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board.

You can also address your concerns to the Fair Work Ombudsman. The Fair Work Ombudsman can help people who believe they have been subject to unlawful discrimination in relation to their employment. The Fair Work Ombudsman investigates allegations of unlawful workplace discrimination and may initiate litigation against an employer for contravening the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

Your role at the Centre and responsibilities are outlined within your position description and contract of employment. Your employment conditions including hours of work, lunch break, pay, superannuation and leave entitlements are outlined within your relevant Modern Award and the National Employment Standards (NES) as well as within your contract of employment. You will be given copies of these documents upon employment. Copies of these documents are also kept at the preschool for your reference.

At the Ballina River Street Children's Centre, all employees are vital members of the Centre's team.

We believe that:

An education and care service operates most effectively when there is open communication and information is shared. Effective communication and problem solving between the adults in the service also models successful working relationships for children.

Teamwork and collaboration, where others' viewpoints are respected and contributions are acknowledged, are fundamental to the development of trusting relationships.

Diversity within the team in terms of skills, experiences and backgrounds enhances the team and ultimately leads to more effective and responsive programs for children.

Nominated supervisors, educators, directors, staff members and volunteers develop and maintain relationships with each other that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness.

Educators, directors and staff members respect and value the diverse contributions and perspectives of their colleagues and this is evident in their interactions with each other.

(Source: The NQS, QA 4).

Social Justice

At our Centre we actively practice the principles of social justice and we work to promote and encourage them in our pedagogy.

Social Justice Principles

Social justice is based on four interrelated principles of equity, rights, access and participation, to ensure that:

- There is **equity** in the distribution of resources
- **Rights** are recognised and promoted
- People have fairer **access** to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life and
- People have better opportunities for genuine **participation** and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.

(Source: The Social Justice Framework 2008 – 2012, Division of Local Government, NSW)

Preschool History

Ballina River Street Children's Centre is in its 32nd year of service. It began operating at this location (12 River Street) in 1980 in a small "cottage", originally a NSW Maritime Services Board residence. The cottage since then has undergone extensive renovation and extension in response to the growth of Ballina and was officially opened, as it exists now, on 27th November, 1993, by Mrs. June Wangman, who at the time was the Head of Studies at the Institute of Early Childhood Macquarie University.

Centre Philosophy

The philosophical perspectives of the Ballina River Street Children's Centre underpin all of our actions and drive our Centre in all aspects, from management and governance, to staffing and the pedagogy that occurs with the children. As a new employee of BRSCC, your beliefs and theories will also shape the Centre's philosophy. Therefore it is important that our philosophy is seen as dynamic and fluid. For this reason our philosophy is revised, reviewed and reflected upon regularly.

The need for a written statement of philosophy is highlighted in the National Quality Standard 7.2.1 (page 181), which states that a written statement of philosophy outlines the principles under which the service operates and reflects the principles of the National Law, and the Early Years Learning Framework. "It underpins the decisions, policies and daily practices of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators, coordinators and staff members and assists in planning, implementing and evaluating quality experience for children" (NQS 7.2.1, 2011:181).

Currently our written philosophy reads as follows:

Ballina River Street Children's Centre Inc.
Centre Philosophy – 2012

Ballina River Street Children's Centre is committed to providing children, families, colleagues and the community with an environment that allows everyone to have a voice in the educational development of children within our centre.

We will respect the rights of children as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (1989) and Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics and commit to advocating for these rights.

We believe children are connected to family, community, culture and place. Their earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within the families, who are children's first and most influential educators.

We acknowledge that children are competent and capable learners.

We believe collaborative partnerships with families and the community and the centre assists children to develop to their full potential.

Through children's interests we will develop a learning environment, as co-constructors in an interactive curriculum. We will respect children's rights to participate through respectful reciprocal relationships.

We will collaborate with our colleagues to generate a culture of continual reflection and renewal of high quality practices in early childhood.

We respect our natural environment and the importance of this environment to our planet and we aim to support and implement sustainable practice within the centre.

Aims of Ballina River Street Children's Centre -

The pedagogy of our preschool supports the principles, practices and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework "Belonging, Being & Becoming" (DEEWR:2009).

Principles:

1. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.
2. Partnerships.
3. High expectations and equity.
4. Respect for diversity.
5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice.

Practice:

1. Holistic approaches
2. Responsiveness to children
3. Learning through play
4. Intentional teaching
5. Learning environments
6. Cultural competence
7. Continuity of learning and transitions
8. Assessment of learning

Outcomes:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity.
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
4. Children are confident and involved learners.
5. Children are effective communicators.

Governance

It is important that you understand the way the preschool is governed and managed. From January 1st, 2012 a new National Quality Framework came into being to "ensure the wellbeing of children throughout their lives and lift the productivity of our nation as a whole" (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:3).

The National Quality Framework (NQF)

All preschools in Australia operate under an Australian Governmental Quality Framework called the "*National Quality Framework*" (NQF).

The Law

The foremost component of the NQF is the National Law called "*Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010*". This Law regulates education and care services for children.

The Regulations

The way that this law is applied is detailed through the "*Education and Care Services Regulations*". These regulations are the practical details and rules under the law (A Really Simple guide to The New Regulations. Community Childcare Cooperative 2011:3).

The National Quality Standards (NQS)

The NQS is a schedule to the National Regulations (The Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA: 9). The NQS is part of the Regulations. Amongst other things, the Regulations set out the minimum operational requirements organised around each of the seven Quality Areas of the NQS (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:8).

The Learning Framework

NQS 1.1 states, "an approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child's learning and development". The approved learning framework for preschools in NSW is the Early Years Learning Framework called "Belonging, Being & Becoming (DEEWR, 2009). This document is generally referred to as the "EYLF".

The aim of the EYLF is to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school. It assists services to provide young children with opportunities to maximize their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:10)

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA)

Is the council that oversees the implementation of the NQF, makes the Regulations and appoints members of the ACECQA (see below) board (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:6).

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

ACECQA is the new national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to oversee the new system.

NSW Department of Education and Community (DEC)

Under the NQF, each state and territory has its own *Regulatory Authority* that has primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the NQS (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:4). In NSW, the Department of Education and Community is the *Regulatory Authority*.

Approved Provider

Our preschool operates under a community-based not-for-profit model of management. This means that we have a management committee (currently comprised of parents of enrolled preschool children) and, any profits made by the preschool are fed back into the service. The management committee of the preschool is referred to as the "*Approved Provider*" under the new Regulations. Our preschool is an incorporated association. This is the preschools business structure.

Management Committee

The *Approved Provider* or the Management committee is responsible for the overall performance of the organisation. They determine the service's mission and purpose, set the strategic directions of the organisation, that is, develop the service's strategic plan, appoint and

monitor the performance of the director/nominator supervisor, ensure staff are employed in accordance with industrial obligations, ensure compliance with legal obligations, ensure the ongoing financial viability of the service, monitor and evaluate the service's performance against the strategic plan (including the committee/board's own performance), enhance the profile of the service in the community and recruit and orient new committee/board members (Community Connections Solutions Australia fact sheet, Roles and responsibilities of the Committee/Board).

The Management Committee operates under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act 2009, and the Model Constitution. Therefore, we have executive committee member roles of president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and public officer, as well as committee members. These positions are annually elected and filled at each Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Centre/Preschool Director

While the director does not have voting rights at committee/board meetings, s/he forms an integral part of the management team. In children's services, the director is employed to: manage the day to day operations of the service including supervising other staff, provide relevant and up-to-date information to the committee/board to assist with their decision-making, work in partnership with the committee/board to achieve the service's mission and purpose, and report to the committee/board on progress against the service's strategic plan.

The director of the preschool is the expert in regards to the pedagogy of the centre and informs the management committee through knowledge.

Responsible Person

The National Law requires service providers to ensure that at all times the service is educating and caring for children, there is a *responsible person* present at a centre-based service. A responsible person is either:

- The *approved provider*
- The *nominated supervisor*
- A *certified supervisor* placed in day-to-day charge.

Nominated Supervisor

The committee nominates an educational staff member (usually the director) to be the nominated supervisor of the service. They are responsible for the operation of the service along with the approved provider and for ensuring it is following the Law and Regulations. (Community Childcare Cooperative, Really Simple Guide the New Regulations, 2011:7).

Certified Supervisors

In order to be a nominated supervisor, a *responsible person* or a supervisor placed in day-to-day charge of the service, the educator must hold a Supervisor's Certificate from the Department of Education and Communities. This is a personal approval. There is no maximum number of Certified Supervisors per service. An Approved Provider should assess how many staff may need to hold a supervisor certificate to ensure that the *responsible person* requirement is met (ACECQA Information Sheet – Certified Supervisors).

An educator with a supervisor certificate may consent to be placed in day-to-day charge of the education and care service. The designation must be made by the Approved Provider or the Nominated Supervisor and accepted in writing by the Certified Supervisor. A Certified Supervisor placed in day-to-day charge of an Approved Service **does not** have the same

responsibilities under the National Law as the Nominated Supervisor (ACECQA Information Sheet – Certified Supervisors).

Educational Leader

Under the National Law: Section 169 and the National Regulations: Regulations 118, 148 the approved provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as *educational leader* at the service, to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.

According to Community Childcare Cooperatives Educational Leader fact sheet; an educational leader, through a collaborative process with educators, families and the community will guide the development of the program of learning and education for children. They will also assist with educator growth in reflection and the understanding of children's learning and development. This role is key to sound practice in the education and care of children – it is a role of great significance and importance.

Early Childhood Australia Association (ECA) Code of Ethics.

A code of ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of members of a professional group and, as such, reflects its values.

The Early Childhood Australia *Code of Ethics* was first developed in 1990 by a national working party, with considerable input from the early childhood field. The 2003-06 *Code of Ethics Agenda* resulted in a new *Code of Ethics*, which was endorsed at Early Childhood Australia's National Council meeting in September 2006 (currently valid).

The *Code of Ethics* is owned by the field, rather than imposed upon it.
(Source: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code_of_ethics)

You will find a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics at the preschool. It is expected that at all times you will uphold the principles and values within it.

Policies

The NQS QA 4 (p.111) states the importance of clear policies and procedures to:

- Ensure there are common expectations about how things are done at the service
- Promote consistent practice.

The Management team (the Committee, the nominated supervisor and centre director) writes and reviews the policies and procedures that inform the way the centre is operated. These policies are informed by all the legal documents that the centre is governed by, including the Education and Care Services Regulations, the National Law, WH&S legislation, Fair Work Australia, the NQF and other relevant sources. It is expected that all employees of the centre adhere to the policies and procedures of the service and refer to them when needed.

These policies will aid you, should you need to find information on the grievance procedures, resolution of formal complaints, responding to a complaint, appeals, work-place health and safety (WH&S), staff conduct, leave, child protection, mandatory reporting procedures and policies relating to working with children.

Workplace Health and Safety

It is important that you understand your workplace healthy and safety rights and responsibilities. You have the right to a safe working environment that ensures you are not exposed to any risk to your health or safety. Your responsibilities are to take reasonable care of yourself and others in the environment and comply with reasonable instructions from the management team and preschool policies and procedures. Please read the below information further clarifying these points from the New South Wales Government, Work Cover Authority of NSW.

New work health and safety laws replaced the occupational health and safety (OHS) laws in NSW on 1 January 2012. The new laws will provide greater consistency, certainty and clarity making it easier to understand your work health and safety duties. Under the new work health and safety (WHS) laws, the term 'employers' will be replaced by 'persons conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) and 'employees' will be replaced by 'workers'.

Duties of a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (i.e. the Approved Provider)

Primary duty of care

The PCBU has a primary duty of care to ensure workers and others are not exposed to a risk to their health and safety.

A primary duty of care is owed by a PCBU when it:

- Directs or influences work carried out by a worker
- Engages or causes to engage a worker to carry out work (including through subcontracting)
- Has management or control of a workplace.

The PCBU must meet its obligations, so far as is reasonably practicable, to provide a safe and healthy workplace for workers of other persons by ensuring:

- Safe systems of work
- A safe work environment
- Safe use of plant, structures and substances
- Facilities for the welfare of workers are adequate
- Notification and recording of workplace incidents
- Adequate information, training, instruction and supervision is given
- Compliance with the requirements under the work health and safety regulation
- Effective systems are in place for monitoring the health of workers and workplace conditions.

Employees and workers

Duties of a worker

A worker must, while at work:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of others
- Comply with any reasonable instruction by the PCBU

Hazard Reporting

It is important that you report any hazards in the environment as soon as possible to a *responsible person* for them to address. This will ensure that our preschool continues to be a safe place.

Injury and Accident Reporting

The preschool has policies and procedures for reporting of injury and accident to yourself. Please ensure you follow these as your health and safety is of high importance.

First Aid Training

It is a requirement of your employment that you at all times maintain an up-to-date Apply First Aid certificate including the Perform CPR component and current Asthma and Anaphylaxis training.

Administration**Emergency Procedures**

It is important that you understand and comply with any emergency procedures that the centre has. The primary emergency procedure is that of the fire evacuation. At your orientation visit you will be guided through the procedure of the centre in relation to this.

Sign In and Out Book

You are required to *sign in and out* each day on our centre employee timesheets when you attend the centre. You will be shown the procedure for this during your orientation visit. Your timesheets are an important legal document for the centre.

Payroll

You will be paid via bank transfer fortnightly on a Wednesday in accordance with your award or workplace agreement. On this day you will also be issued with a hard copy pay-slip, which will be placed in your employee pocket or emailed to you. This details the name of the centre and the centre's ABN, your name, the date of payment, the pay period, the gross and net amount of pay, any loadings, monetary allowances, bonuses, incentive-based payments, penalty rates or other entitlements paid, your hourly rate and number of hours worked at that rate and the amount of pay at that rate and any deductions made from your pay, including the amount and details of each deduction (including superannuation).

Personal Leave/Absences from Preschool

Under the NES you are entitled to 10 days paid personal/carer's leave, two days unpaid carer's leave as required, and two days compassionate leave as required. Should you need to be away from the preschool please notify the director with as much warning as is possible. This will enable the director to find a replacement staff member for you.

Superannuation

In accordance with the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* the preschool will contribute 9% superannuation support to the Superannuation Fund of your choice on your behalf monthly.

The *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Amendment Act 2012* received royal assent on 29 March 2012. In the legislation the superannuation guarantee rate will gradually increase from 9% to 12% between 1 July 2013 and 1 July 2019 (Australian Tax Office website).

Should you wish to make any extra superannuation employee contributions yourself, please let the administrator/payroll officer of the Centre know. She will be able to do this on your behalf or establish an arrangement for you do to this on an on-going basis.

Conditions of Employment

Code of Conduct

Your conduct within the centre is very important. Please ensure you are familiar with the centre's Staff Code of Conduct Policy. Ethical conduct guides the behaviour and decisions within the centre setting and is founded in respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and staff, and the extended community.

At our centre we aim to uphold the highest standards in ethical conduct in accordance with the ECA Code of Ethics (2010) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We view the National Quality Standards as minimum standards of which we constantly aim to far exceed.

Recruiting appropriate staff

At our centre we aim to have consistent and committed educators and directors who support good quality standards and continuity of care for children. We value effective, transparent and equitable recruitment processes that ensure the centre attracts and retains educators, directors and other staff members who can best meet the needs of children and their families (refer to NQS QA 4).

Staff Appraisals

At our centre we value conducting annual staff performance appraisals. This Appraisal Process helps you think about your work performance and achievements during your employment here. It gives you and your reviewer an opportunity to think about and discuss your skills, knowledge and attitudes. It allows you to pinpoint your strengths and helps to identify areas where you may benefit from training or development. Appraisal reviewers may be varied and can include peers, mentors, the preschool director or nominated supervisor, yourself, the approved provider, even the children of the centre.

Staff appraisals are a strategy to:

- Assist a manager to achieve the desired outcomes for the organisation;
- Extend staff's expertise and skills in specific areas;
- Empower centre employees to take a more active role in their own work, their own education, and their own professional development;
- Identify learning opportunities in a rapidly changing field and develop professional learning plans for employees;
- Provide an orientation to the profession for those staff who are untrained;
- Provide direction and focus to employees' work including reviewing job descriptions;
- Boost morale and self-respect, through recognition of achievements.

(Source: Community Childcare Cooperative The Manual, Managing a Children's Service 2009:201)

Employee Continuous Learning and Training

The NQS QA4 highlights that updating and maintaining educators' knowledge is a joint responsibility of educators, coordinators, the nominated supervisor and the approved provider, and includes a range of professional development strategies that challenge and extend current thinking.

The management of the centre acknowledges the importance of continued employee development and training. Funds are set a-side in the budget for this purpose. You will be encouraged to participate in training opportunities, which may include attendance in conferences, workshops and networking forums. Should you desire to attend a professional development opportunity you have come across please discuss this with the director.

Induction Program

The process of induction or orientation is the final step in your recruitment process and the first step in your professional development program. Through your induction you will be attuned to the policies and operating principles of the centre and be given an understanding of management's commitment to training and staff development.

This process is also an opportunity for you to feel welcome, learn the lines of communication and the importance placed on clear and open communication.

The nominated supervisor and approved provider will explain your conditions of employment and the organisation's requirements, and answer any questions you may have. You will also learn of any practical aspects of the centre and the program. You will be shown where to access the centre's policy documents, the components of the NQF, timesheets, accident and illness forms, WH&S information, your staff records, your staff pocket, the centre's facilities including staff facilities, fire and emergency evacuation procedures, procedures for absences from work, pedagogical meeting procedures, training procedures, and the centre's pedagogical and child documentation methods and resources.

Confidentiality

The NQS QA 7 highlights the importance of maintaining confidentiality and currency of information provided by families, educators, directors and staff members or other stakeholders of the preschool at all times. This practice is an indicator of the level of professionalism that exists within the service and builds families' confidence in the service's records management practices.

At our centre you will be required to sign our confidentiality agreement as an indication of your awareness of the significance of this area.

Working with Children Check

In keeping with the laws under which the centre operates, you will be required to undergo a working with children check through the NSW Department of Education and Communities. The Working With Children Check is a pre-employment check for child-related employment.

We are very excited to welcome you to Ballina River Street Children's Centre's community and to have the opportunity to begin a professional relationship.