MIANDETTA
CHILDREN’S CENTRE

Information Booklet
Miandetta Children’s Centre

Berrigan Road, Devonport

Phone: 03 6425 6524 until opening
Fax: 03 6425 6858 until opening

Hours of Care: 6.30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Long Day, Sessional and Casual Care

E-Mail: miandettacc@telstra.com

Childcare Benefit Available

Welcome

Miandetta Children’s Centre extends a warm welcome to all children, parents and extended family members.

Our Centre is a privately run child care centre which was developed by the Education Department in conjunction with the local community to meet the needs of parents who require work related, respite and social care for their children.

The Centre is a participant in the National Childcare Accreditation Council’s quality assurance system which recognises the provision of high quality care in areas such as the care environment, family support and information and carer / parent relations.

Our qualified staff are available to care for children from 6.30 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday to Friday. We are open 52 weeks of the year and close only for gazetted public holidays.

Our Centre is licensed by the Department of Education to provide care for up to 50 children aged between birth and 7 years.

At Miandetta Children’s Centre we believe that the first 5 years of a child’s life are the most impressionable and formative and we aim to work with parents and families to help make the most of these years and see children enter their formal school years with ease and confidence.

As many children will spend long hours with us, we ensure that they are at all times provided with a safe, secure and happy environment in which to grow.
**Centre Philosophy**

We acknowledge that all children are individuals and deserve to be treated equally.

Children learn naturally through play

Children learn at their own pace and we will encourage and support their learning every step of the way.

During everyday experiences, opportunities arise to explore and create their own understanding of the world.

Children need to be encouraged to take new steps in all areas of development in order to grow freely and in their own time to achieve their full potential.

We are here to help extend each child’s independence, skills, positive behaviour and remembering that the effort children make is more important than the outcome.

There is a great deal to be gained for the children and their families by working in co-operation with the carers and staff of the Centre.

**Centre Goals**

Children require guidance within the ideal learning environment and we will provide that in a non-intrusive, encouraging way.

Our Carers will generate an open, warm and stimulating environment which allows children to strengthen self-esteem and confidence to further develop their values, opinions and beliefs.

Our Centre will provide an environment which supports and strengthens family ties and which reflects the socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds of its families.

Our Centre will provide an environment in which children can foster a deep sense of security, trust and acceptance of themselves and others.

We will provide carers who respect children as individuals and who will foster their unique abilities, backgrounds and ethnic identities.

We will provide an environment which helps children make sense of their everyday experiences and feelings and where adults understand development and support children’s efforts to regulate their own behaviour.

Our Centre will provide carers who respond positively and who encourage autonomy, initiative, independence, responsibility, cooperation, choice and self-control.

We will provide a programme which supports parents in providing an environment which promotes the overall developmental needs and interests of their children.
Staff / Children Ratios

These ratios are established by the Department of Education and are to be adhered to at all times.

1 carer for every 5 children aged birth – 3 years
1 carer for every 10 children aged 3 – 7 years

There may be times where age groups cross over the standard ratio ages and a ratio of 1:7 may apply.

Centre Staffing

We pride ourselves in having a professional, warm and friendly team of Carers and staff. Our team consists of qualified carers and administration staff. Each Carer works on a rotating shift roster to ensure that the children are fully supervised at all times. Each room has a Senior Carer responsible for creating the weekly educational programme which the children will participate in.

From time to time throughout the year, our staff will be attending workshops, conferences and the like in order that they may sustain and expand their care skills. At such times, you may notice relief staff taking their place. We endeavour to use the same relief staff each time to provide your child with consistency and a feeling of security.

All staff, both permanent and relief, are screened by the Education Department, Tasmania Police and the Child Protection Assessment Board prior to taking up any position within the Centre.

Enrolment At Miandetta

An enrolment form needs to be completed and returned to reception prior to your child commencing care. Depending on the days of care required, you will have your care arrangements confirmed immediately or placed on the appropriate waiting list.

To claim Child Care Benefit to help reduce your fees, simply call the Family Assistance Office on 136150 and quote our reference of 555 003 909B. You will be given a percentage which we can use to reduce your care costs. Should your child commence care before this has been arranged, you will be charged at the maximum daily or sessional fee until you have registered.

By law, childcare places must be allocated according to priority. The categories are:

1. Children whose parent/s are working, studying or registered as looking for work.
2. Children with disabilities
3. Children who are one of several children under the age of 5

All categories are covered by Childcare Benefit, according to the relevant means test.

We employ a policy of non-discriminatory access. All children who are eligible for childcare will be treated equally and consideration will be given to special needs regardless of racial or religious affiliation or disability.
Quality Improvement and Accreditation Scheme

This system has been developed by the National Childcare Accreditation Scheme (N.C.A.C.) in consultation with the Childcare Industry. Their focus is on the development of quality child care and relationships for children, carers and parents within Child Care Centres.

Miandetta Children’s Centre is registered to participate in the QIAS process and will continually improve and reassess all areas of our care and we welcome and encourage your support in maintaining our standards of excellence.

Orientation

For children entering care for the first time, there are many new things that they will encounter. Some children will cope better than others.

To help each child cope with this new situation, we ask parents to involve their child in our free orientation programme, which allows families a gentle introduction to Miandetta Children’s Centre.

The children and their parents are invited to visit the Centre to familiarise themselves with our Carers, routine and facilities.

By arrangement with your child’s Senior Carer, you can then visit the appropriate Kindy Room at an agreed time for extended orientation. Through co-operation with your child’s Carers you will be advised as to a suitable time to leave your child for a short period to allow them to form the understanding that although their parent/s leave that they will most certainly return for them.

Once settled, children can commence their regular attendance at the Centre, hopefully relaxed and looking forward to their time with us.

Your Child’s Requirements

- A bag with your child’s name on it
- A lunchbox (for morning and full day care) and drink bottle with your child’s name clearly marked on them.
- A nutritious lunch (see acceptable and unacceptable foods list for guidance)
- A full change of clothes
- Nappies, if necessary
- A hat with your child’s name clearly marked on it. (Legionnaire style or broad brimmed in summer and warm beanie in winter) Hats are available for sale at Reception

Feel free to leave your child’s hat here permanently to avoid having it left at home.

All hats in the hat boxes are hot washed weekly so please send a hat which will stand up to a hot wash.

No Hat means No Outdoor Play

Children’s Clothing

We believe that children are creative explorers if not given too many restrictions.

Please dress your child in practical, comfortable clothing to enable them to actively participate in the day’s programme. Children need to feel that it is okay to get dirty while exploring and playing and that they will not be reprimanded for finishing the day with messy clothes.

The resources such as paint and glue that are used in the Centre are non-toxic and are designed to wash out.
Arrival and Departure

Parents are to sign their children in and out of the Centre each day on the sheets situated in the children’s locker areas. This is to be treated with great vigilance as these records are a vital tool in an emergency evacuation. They are also a required part of the Childcare Benefit programme.

Please place your child’s lunchbox and drink container in the relevant box provided in their Kindy room.

Parents are permitted to leave only when their child has been received by one of their carers.

We ask you to take great thought when completing the “emergency contact” and “permitted to collect” sections of your child’s enrolment form. Please be aware that emergency contacts will be permitted to collect your child only where they have also been noted as a person “permitted to collect”.

We are very strict in adhering to the list you provide us with. Your child’s safety is paramount and we **WILL NOT** allow your child to leave with a person unlisted on their enrolment form unless previously advised by the parent or guardian.

Any person listed but unknown to staff will be asked to provide photo identification prior to collecting the child. (I.e. driver’s license)

Where a custody order is in place or where there is a person who is restricted by law to have access to a child, please inform us immediately so that we are fully aware of any problems that may arise.

**All information provided by parents is held in the strictest confidence.**

Nutrition Issues

**LUNCH:**
One of the best things that we can do for our children is to help them form healthy eating habits. From the outset, we would like to ensure that all children are provided with a healthy lunch. We suggest foods such as sandwiches or rolls, fruits, yoghurts, nuts, vegetables, home-made leftovers and plain biscuits etc.
Should children arrive with any lollies, chips, processed food, dairy desserts and so on, they will be removed from their lunchboxes and returned to their bag at the end of the day. If this is necessary, we will ensure that your child is given adequate food as a replacement.

**DRINKS:**
Drinks are an extremely important part of a child’s daily needs. Water and milk is readily available for the children. We advise parents that the best choices are watered down fruit juices, milk and of course, water. Fizzy drinks are not acceptable as they contain a large amount of sugar and preservatives and these can sometimes be a contributing factor to behavioral problems.

**MORNING AND AFTERNOON TEA:**
We have a varied morning and afternoon tea menu which utilises seasonal fruit and vegetables, toast and the children’s own cooking. Milk and water will be provided for your child’s drinks if they do not have their own drink sent to the Centre or where they have finished their own drink.

If your child has any food allergies, please ensure that full details of the food and the reaction caused are noted on your child’s enrolment form.
**Health Issues**

**Child Immunisations:**
This Centre encourages full childhood immunisations. As from April 1998, it is required by law that proof of immunisation or a doctor’s letter stating that you have a conscientious objection to immunisation be provided prior to a child being admitted into care.

Many childhood infectious illnesses spread rapidly once in the environment. Please ensure that your child’s immunisations are kept up to date.

Whilst we acknowledge that immunisation is not a 100% guarantee, it certainly goes a long way in preventing illness among our children.

**Emergencies:**
In the case of an accident or serious illness which requires immediate medical attention (either occurring or noticed at the Centre) we reserve the right to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to contact parents and gain access to the appropriate medical services as soon as possible.

On your child’s enrolment form we ask for your written permission to access such services. Where necessary, an ambulance will be called and the child will be transported to the nearest hospital.

**Rest Time**
Each day, all children will be given the opportunity to rest. This will be after lunch. Some children will choose to sleep, others to play quietly or read. If your child requires a comforter (e.g. a dummy or special toy) which will help them to settle into sleep, please ensure that it is bought to the Centre.

**Administration of Medicine**
Medication for children is a very serious matter, whether it is medicine bought by prescription or an over the counter product. This includes products for Nappy Rash.

Whilst medication will be administered by staff, it will be done so under very strict guidelines.

For any medication to be administered, parents MUST complete a medication authorisation form. This is available from Senior Carers and must be completed BEFORE any medication can be administered. This will take a couple of minutes so please ensure that you allow for this time when dropping your child off.

The parents must sign the form at the end of the child's session / day to acknowledge that the medicine has been administered. The parent will then be given a copy of this form.

Prescription medicine must contain the following:
- The name of the child
- The correct dosage
- The times / frequency to be administered

Over the counter medication will only be given according to the age appropriate instructions on the bottle / tube / packet.

**Excursions / Escort Journeys**
Excursions and escorted journeys can consist of short walks or may take up a major part of the day. They provide children with first hand experiences and observations. A child’s concepts are broadened through experiences and this helps to reinforce what is learned at the Centre.

When trips are planned, a permission slip will provide full details of to where and when the trip will be, how the children will be transported and any cost associated with the outing. Due to the need for increased supervision, there may be times when we ask for parent help to ensure adequate adult to child ratios.
**Policy Issues**

The Centre has many varied written policies on issues related to childcare. A copy of these policies can be found at reception and is available for access to all parents and interested people. Please feel free to discuss any issues or concerns you may have regarding these policies with the Director. Should you require a copy of any policy please ask at Reception.

**Guidance and Discipline Policy**

Throughout the day there may be little disputes between children or behaviour that is not acceptable. At Miandetta we aim to provide the children with suitable strategies to use when solving their own problems with other children or staff.

Sometimes, however, an upset or angry child may need a quiet talk, positive reinforcement or some “time out” for a short period of time. We find that after a little rest and time to think, they return happy and refreshed and ready to participate again. If you have any concerns about your child’s behaviour, please talk with the Senior Carer in your child’s room and work with them to decide on the best strategies for the situation.

**Educational Programme**

At Miandetta, our staff provide planned programmes which are developmentally appropriate for each group of children in our care. They are specifically designed to help children function independently and happily in a stimulating and secure environment. The programmes incorporate all aspects of development as well as balancing indoor and outdoor, quiet and active, structure and unstructured activities. All of these activities are designed to promote each child’s social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs. Our programmes cater for whole group, small group and individual learning experiences.

Within each programme, opportunities are provided for children to use such skills as independence, self-help, co-operation, taking turns and sharing. All children are encouraged to express ideas, opinions, make decisions and solve problems.

During daily activities, staff will make individual observations, conduct checklists and evaluate each child’s development to allow us to be aware of strengths, weaknesses and interests. From these observations, the next programme will be formed. Planning is based on the child’s needs and interests, yet it is designed to foster the development of concepts, skills and knowledge.

In June and December each year, individual reports will be given to each parent to indicate the progress that each child has made in each of the above mentioned areas.

If at any time there is any area of concern regarding your child’s development, we will discuss the matter with you. An appointment can be arranged to allow for a consultation between yourself and a Child Health Nurse should it be required.

Should any further referrals be necessary, they can be arranged.

**Unacceptable Behaviour**

The Centre has a policy regarding unacceptable and dangerous behaviour of children. If after consulting with parents, specialists and support services, we feel that the behaviour of a child is upsetting, distracting and a danger to other children, we reserve the right to ask parents to withdraw the child from Miandetta Children’s Centre.
Sharing Information

Events in the family life can be a major concern for young children and markedly affect their behaviour. It is important at both home and Miandetta Children’s Centre to share information which may affect your child. We appreciate that any information of this nature is to be reported to your child’s Senior Carer or the Centre Director. Each staff member is available to discuss any concerns that you may have so always feel free to approach them.

Parent’s Committee

We have an active Parent’s Committee who play the role of fundraisers, policy reviewers and all round suggestions makers. We meet once every 8 weeks on a Tuesday evening. The next meeting date is posted on the Reception notice board and all parents are welcome to attend.

Communication Methods

We have a noticeboard in reception which displays information, interesting topics and messages. The board features any upcoming events and happenings. Please allow yourself the time to check the board every now and then,

Any issues that require immediate notification will be posted on the front entrance gate (i.e. reminders of public holidays etc.)

The carers in each room contribute to the Miandetta monthly newsletter. This will also feature the birthday list, welcome list, parent’s committee updates and any other information that we wish to share with our families. Please feel free to contribute to either the notice board or newsletter.

Each room has a daily report sheet which has information on your child’s daily activities. This will include their eating, sleep and any other details of interest. This sheet is located next to your child’s sign-in sheets.

During the year progress reports are put together by your child’s carers and are given to parents. These allow parents and staff the opportunity to discuss any developmental concerns that either may have.

We invite all family members to be part of our daily programme. If you have any special skills or ideas that you would like your child to experience, please feel free to speak with their Senior Carer. All parents and extended family members are welcome to spend as much time as they like at the Centre. Talk to your child’s carer to arrange a suitable time when you can come in and be part of your child’s care day.

For working parents, new parents or those who wish to check on a child’s health during the day, please feel free to contact us.
Fees

Childcare fees are subject to reduction where families are entitled to Childcare Benefit. **All fees are to be paid in the week that care is provided.** Should parents prefer to pay fortnightly, payments must be made for the week being used PLUS the week in advance. Payments can be made using cash, EFTPOS, credit cards and cheques.

Fees are calculated at the beginning of each week and each child’s fee envelope can be found in the fees box on the reception bench.

The amount due on the envelope has already had any Childcare Assistance deducted from it.

Fees in Arrears

Fees in arrears cannot be carried by the Centre. Where fees are more than two weeks in arrears your child’s place will be cancelled automatically.

Should you at any time experience difficulty in paying your child care fees, please speak with Reception or the Director at the earliest possible time so that payment arrangements can be made.

Sick Days and Absences

Should your child be unwell or absent for any reason, where reasonable notice is given, we will attempt to cover your child’s place from any waitlist. Should there be no waiting list for that day or session, the full normal fee will apply as your child’s bookings are held as a permanent, confirmed booking.

Late Fees

Children must be collected on time at the end of their session or day. Failure to do so will result in a charge of $1 per minute to your account. This is to cover the cost of paying staff overtime to care for your child.

Whilst we appreciate that emergencies do occur, frequent lateness is unfair to both your child and staff.

Public Holidays

As per the guidelines set down by the Commonwealth Childcare Assistance program, should a public holiday fall on a day that your child is in care with us, 50% of their normal fee will be charged to your account. To avoid this fee you are entitled to a make up day in the same week if there is room available.

Reduction or Cancellation of Care

Should you wish to reduce the number of sessions required for your child or cancel their placement outright, a minimum of 2 weeks notice must be provided to reception, not your child’s carers. Should 2 weeks notice not be provided then fees will be charged in lieu of notice.