



Hay Children's Services Inc.

Family Handbook

Acknowledgement of Country

Hay Children's Services Inc acknowledges the Nari Nari and Wiradjuri peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which we learn and grow. We pay our respects to their elders past, present, and emerging.

Vision Statement

To provide a safe, inclusive, nurturing learning environment for the children and families of Hay and surrounding districts. To champion excellence of Early Childhood Education and Care within communities by demonstrating best practice whilst valuing respectful partnerships. To cultivate strong relationships to maintain positive and fun work environments.

Revised May 2023

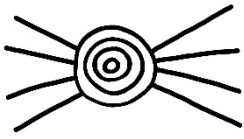
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Philosophy

Community

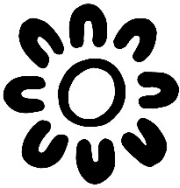
We appreciate that powerful connection between stakeholders drives authentic relationship building.



Parents and guardians are a child's first teacher. From there it is the role of Educators, and wider community members to collaborate with first teachers to adopt a holistic approach to every child's learning journey. Through information sharing, we build robust trusting relationships with families. We commit to engaging in community activities and spaces to invoke in children a sense of belonging and connection to community. Our powerful partnership with external organisations broadens our knowledge, compounding the delivery of exceptional education and care.

Inclusion

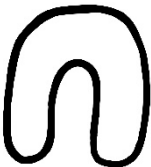
We acknowledge that differences make us interesting, and through interest, we learn and grow.



Through education and embracing diversity, we will authentically embed inclusive practices and attitudes within the services. We aim to be responsive to the needs of all who interact with our organisation by nurturing collaborative partnerships with children, families, community, and professional support services. Critical reflection will inform practice and ensure strategies are actioned to remove or reduce barriers to participation.

Individuality

We recognise the uniqueness of individuals and value the contribution they make.



Embracing the strengths and interests of children, families and staff is a precursor to powerful learning environments. By providing a welcoming platform to share knowledge and skills, we acknowledge the independent wisdom of all stakeholders. Although developmental milestones exist, we respect the uniqueness of the individual child's learning journey, responding and planning respectfully and attentively.

Child-led

We honour a play-based curriculum and an immersive learning journey for every child.



Play is a context for learning that enhances children's skills, development, and dispositions. Children are social beings who are intrinsically motivated to share thoughts, ideas, feelings, and questions. Educators are actively present to intentionally facilitate and extend on children's learning. Thoughtful planning scaffolds children's learning across all developmental domains and maintains a child-focused approach.

Risky play

We empower children to be confident, resilient risk takers.



'Yes, have a go' is our motto. By trusting children to measure and take risks in play, we bolster the development of a durable internal compass, aiding children to navigate the unknown. We are there to guide and encourage, celebrate, and commiserate. We are firm believers in offering genuine, rather than imitation objects for play. By expecting children to inquisitively explore and interact with their surroundings, we protect their ability to independently gather and process information to effectively make decisions.

Environmental Sustainability

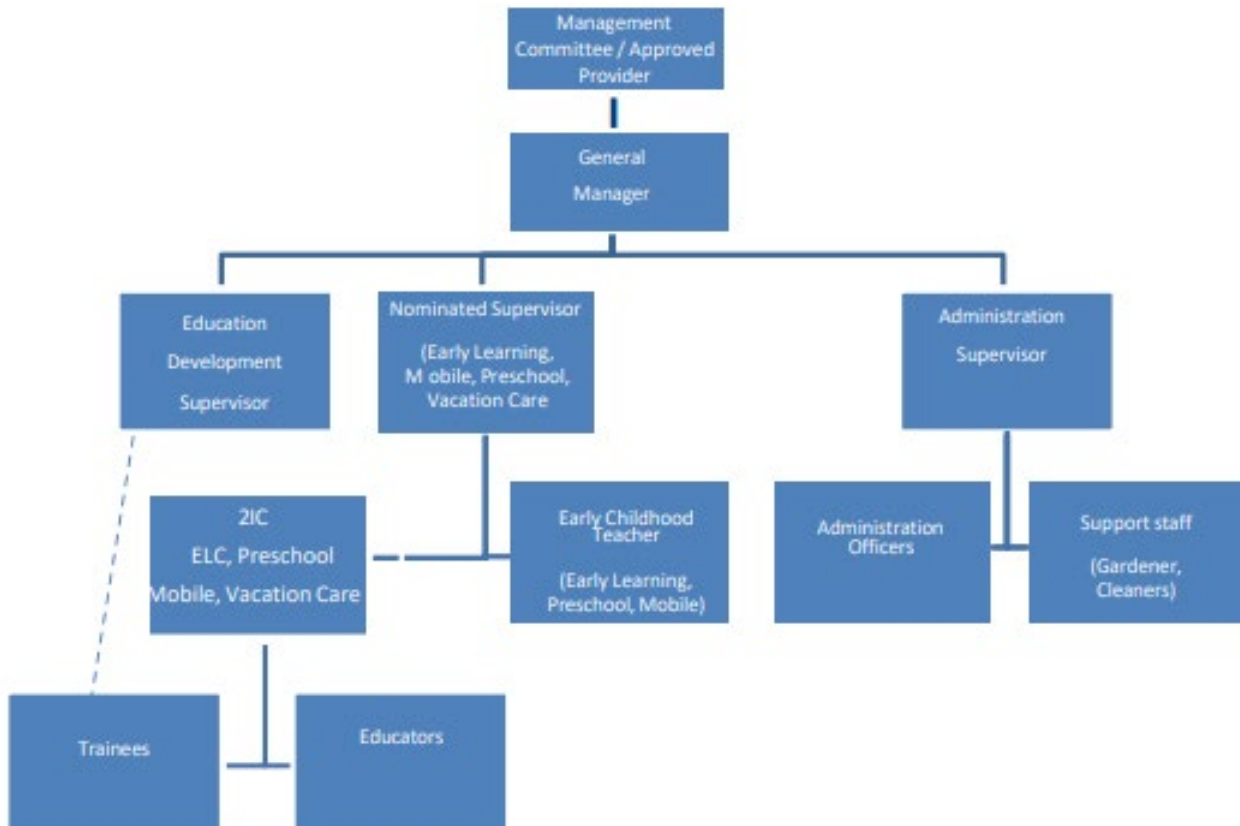
We aim to genuinely embed environmentally sustainable practices, and transfer to children an ardent responsibility to protect their natural world.



We will become champions and drivers for sustainable living. Using what we have for today, tomorrow, and beyond will be prioritised and we will extend our knowledge to engage in innovative ways to live sustainably.

Organisation Structure

Hay Children's Services Inc (HCS) is an incorporated association and a not-for-profit organisation. HCS is managed by a skill based Approved Provider/ Management Committee who are responsible for ensuring that the organisation operates in line with relevant guidelines and legislation. Each of the three services within HCS have a Nominated Supervisor who is responsible for day-to-day operation of the service. 2IC's support the Nominated Supervisors within the relevant service. All services have access to an Early Childhood trained teacher. An Education Development Supervisor, Educators, administration team and support staff make up the remaining roles within the team.



Operational hours:

Preschool	School terms 8:30am-4pm. After Preschool program - School terms 4pm-5:30pm.
Early Learning	50 weeks per year 8am-5:30pm.
Mobile Farm Based Education	50 weeks per year.
Mobile Venue Care	School terms: <i>Hay/Maude</i> 8:30am-4pm <i>Booligal</i> 9am-3pm <i>Ivanhoe</i> 9am-3pm <i>Coleambally</i> 9am-3pm <i>Goolgowi</i> 9am-3pm <i>Carrathool</i> 9:30am-3:30pm
Vacation Care	School holidays 8:30am-5:30pm

General Information

Hay Children's Services Inc is approved by the Early Childhood Education Directorate (ECED) and guided by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). The National Quality Framework regulates practice and includes the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation (for Mobile only), National Law, National Quality Standard, Assessment and Rating Process and the Early Years Learning Framework.

Preschool

- Licenced for a maximum of 24 children per day.
- Provides Early Childhood Education for children aged between 3 to 6 years.
- Educator to child ratio 1:10.
- Funded by the NSW government Start Strong funding initiative to ensure children access 600 hours of quality preschool education in the year before school.

Early Learning

- Licenced for maximum of 24 children per day.
- Provides Early Childhood Education and Care to children aged 6 weeks to 6 years.
- Educator to child ratio 1:4 (0-2years), 1:5 (2-3years), 1:10 (3-6years).
- Funded under the Australian government Child Care Subsidy and Department of Education Start Strong Funding.

Mobile Venue Education

- Each of the 6 venues are licenced for a maximum of 20 children.
- Provides Early Childhood Education and Care for children aged 0-6 years with priority going to children aged 3+ in line with funding agreements.
- Educator to child ratio 1:4 (0—2years), 1:5 (2-3years), 1:10 (3-6years)
- Funded under the Australian government Child Care Subsidy for under 3 year olds and Department of Education Start Strong Funding.

Mobile Farm Based Education

- Available in the children's home for families with a rural address living up to 200km from Hay.
- Up to 3 visits per term (pending availability).
- One Educator attends and implements a developmentally appropriate program for the day.
- Funded under Start Strong Pathways.

Vacation Care

- Operates during school holidays.
- Ages 3 – 12 years inclusive

Fees

Fees are charged and collected in line with the HCS Fee Policy. Please refer to the current fee schedule for fee structure of each service.

Curriculum

We honour a play-based curriculum and an immersive learning journey for every child. Play is a context for learning that enhances children's skills, development, and dispositions. Children are social beings who are intrinsically motivated to share thoughts, ideas, feelings, and questions. Educators are actively present to intentionally facilitate and extend on children's learning. Thoughtful planning scaffolds children's learning across all developmental domains and maintains a child-focused approach.

Children are encouraged to rest as needed during the day. Please speak to educators regarding your child's sleep and rest routines. Educators will collaborate with families in the approach to children's toileting and self-care needs to ensure consistency. Please speak to Educators to discuss your child's individual needs.

To assist you in following your child's progress during their time at HCS, we utilise a digital App StoryPark which is a platform for communicating with you about your child's learning experiences.

Inclusion

We acknowledge that differences make us interesting, and through interest, we learn and grow.

Through education and embracing diversity, we will authentically embed inclusive practices and attitudes within the services. We aim to be responsive to the needs of all who interact with our organisation by nurturing collaborative partnerships with children, families, community, and professional support services. Critical reflection will inform practice and ensure strategies are actioned to remove or reduce barriers to participation.

Arrival and Departure

Access to services outside the opening hours is not permitted within our licencing requirements. Please adhere to opening hours at all times. Monetary penalties will be incurred if children are not collected by service closing time.

On arrival:

- Bring your child into the service.
- Help your child to unpack and put away their bag.
- Sign your child in.
- Medication consent forms need to be completed so please hand any medication to Nominated Supervisor or Educators.
- Ensure children have a hat on and apply sunscreen.
- Inform an educator you are leaving. They will support your child with transitions if needed.

At pick up:

- Ensure that you have signed your child out.
- Children may only be collected by parents and authorised nominees. Should you wish another person to collect your child, you need to notify the staff in writing or verbally. Educators cannot allow your child to leave the premises without the parents consent.
- Sign any documentation that might be relevant to your child's day i.e., incident report or medication form.
- Collect your child's belongings.
- Please let an Educator know of your departure.

BUS CHILDREN ONLY

You are required to complete a separate Authorisation for Bus Travel Form. These children will be supervised by educators upon the bus arrival, signed in and out for the day to record their attendance, and escorted onto the bus at the end of a session. **All children that arrive/depart by bus should have a tag attached to their bag that states the address of where the child will be dropped off and a contact phone number.** Please ensure that you contact the bus service of any changes concerning your child.

What to bring:

All children's belongings need to be clearly marked with their names to avoid mix ups and loss of items.

- **Bag** - A bag clearly marked with your child's name on the outside.
- **Sun hat** - wide brimmed hat (not a cap).
- **Lunch box** - Some suggestions are fruit and vegetables, eggs, cold meat, rice crackers, sandwiches, yoghurt, popcorn, and nuts. Please ask Educators for more lunch box ideas. Fruit is provided by HCS once a day.
- **Refillable bottle** - HCS recommends water as a preferred drink.
- **Bottles, formula, milk** (if relevant).
- **Nappies** (if relevant). We provide wipes.
- **Clothing** - Extra clothing including underwear and socks. Please send children in clothes that can be stained (we encourage and facilitate active and messy play).
- **Comforter** (if relevant)
- **Bed linen**- fitted and flat cot sheet (for children who sleep). For children sleeping at Mobile Venue Care - porta cot/sleep mat.

Sun Safety

Being sun smart is a simple and effective way to reduce the risk of developing skin cancer. All children are encouraged to wear a hat when playing outside, and Educators will apply sunscreen throughout the day when required. We provide sunscreen at all services.

Settling In

When entering care for the first time, children react in different ways. Some transition into care quickly and confidently while others may take days, weeks or even months to feel confident. It is quite normal for a child to experience separation anxiety when attending care for the first time or returning after a period of absence. Educators will work closely with families to ensure the smoothest possible transition into care. If you have any specific suggestions that may help your child or you are concerned about your child, please discuss this with staff.

Excursions and Special Events

Children's Birthdays

We love to celebrate birthdays with the children and invite families to bring in a cake/cupcakes or other culturally specific foods to share. Please advise your child's educator if you are bringing food as we may have children with allergies/intolerances to plan for.

Excursions/ Incursions

In line with our service philosophy, the children participate in experiences and events within the local community. Families will be informed prior to these taking place.

Exclusion due to Illness

In line with the HCS Infectious Diseases Policy, children who are unwell must not attend care. HCS adheres to the NSW Government 'Staying Healthy in Childcare' documentation and Public Health Unit recommendations relating to exclusion periods for children's illnesses.

Immunisation

All children must be fully immunised OR have a medical exemption OR be on a catch-up schedule in order to enroll at an education and care service in NSW. **Please provide an updated immunisation history statement to the service when your child has each immunisation.**

Family feedback is welcome and encouraged via:

Our digital StoryPark app, informal conversations with educators, prearranged interviews, questionnaires, surveys, email.

Family involvement:

Families are most welcome at HCS services. The children love having families visit and help. HCS values family participation which can take many forms including a family member undertaking the role of management committee member, attendance at working bees, assistance with excursions and/or inhouse activities, sharing of cultural traditions, sharing an interest or skill, reading a book, or telling a story to the children.

Grievance Procedure

HCS seeks to resolve any parental concerns that impact the wellbeing of children, parents or staff or adversely affect the operation of the service, as quickly as possible. It seeks to do this in a fair and positive manner and in the spirit of consultation, cooperation, and resolution. Concerns about the care or safety of your child or any matter regarding HCS should be discussed with the 2IC in the first instance. If you do not receive a satisfactory resolution, please address your concerns with the Nominated Supervisor. If concerns remain unresolved, please address written concerns to the President of the Management Committee. At all times, HCS expects respectful communication between staff and families and will not tolerate abuse towards either staff or families.

Thank you for choosing Hay Children's Services Inc as the education and care service for your child. If there is anything we can assist you with throughout your time with us, please don't hesitate to speak with staff. Open communication and feedback significantly increase the likelihood of a positive and meaningful experience for children and their families.