

Wingate Avenue

CHILDREN'S CO-OPERATIVE

Family Handbook

Please feel free to ask for any provided information in your home language

Version 1.1
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Greek:

Παρακαλώ αισθανθείτε ελεύθερος να ζητήσει οποιοσδήποτε παρεχόμενες πληροφορίες στην εγχώρια γλώσσα σας

Russian:

Пожалуйста чувствуйте свободно попросить любые обеспеченная информация в вашем домашнем языке

Italian:

Ritenga prego libero chiedere c'è ne le informazioni fornite in vostra lingua domestica

Vietnamese

làm vui lòng feel người tự do đến ask thay cho một được chuẩn bị đầy đủ sự cung cấp tin tức ở của anh nhà tiếng

Chinese (traditional):

請感到自由請求任何被提供的資訊用您的家庭語言

Arabic:

رجاء شعرت حرّة أن يسأل ل أيّ يزود معلومة في لغتك بيتية

Spanish:

Siéntase por favor libre pedir cualesquiera la información proporcionada en su lengua casera

Polish

Podobać się czuć się dobrze wobec poprosić wszelki zaopatrzonej informacja w twój ognisko domowe język

German:

Fühlen Sie bitte frei, um irgendwelche zur Verfügung gestellte Informationen in Ihrer Hauptsprache zu bitten

French:

En sentez-vous svp libre pour demander des informations fournies en votre langue à la maison

Hindi

pasanda karanA GYAta karanA svata.ntra ora pUchhanA bA.nkA kuchha basharte ki khabara bhltara ApakA ghara kA bhAShA

Croatian

Molimo samo izvolite tražiti bilo kakvu opskrbljenu informaciju u vašem domaćem jeziku

Table of contents

Introduction	5
---------------------------	----------

A cooperative approach.....	5
Commitment to families	6
Facilities.....	6
Parking	7
Security Access	7
Hours of Operation.....	7
Fees	8
Form of Payment.....	8
Fee Increases.....	8
Payment of Accounts.....	8
Late Payment of Fees (Dishonoured direct debits).....	8
Debt recovery	9
Child Care Subsidy (CCS).....	9,10
Centre Philosophy	11,12
Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)	11
Children's Program and Educators.....	12
Story Park – Individual Portfolios	12
Kindergarten Program	13,15
Access to a Funded Kindergarten Program	14
Family Participation	14
Children's Program.....	16
Family Committee - Working Groups.....	17
The National Quality Framework (NQF)	16
The National Quality Standard (NQS).....	16
Staffing Arrangements.....	17
Code of Conduct	17
Recruiting appropriate educators.....	20
Our Classrooms	18
Children with Additional Needs.....	18
Student Placements.....	18
Sustainability	19
Reducing the use of chemicals.....	22
Enrolling for care	21
Waiting List	21
Accepting a Place	21
Enrolment Process	21
Orientation.....	22
Bring a photo	23
Daily Sign In / Sign Out	23

Daily Sign In / Sign Out.....	26
Unregistered person collecting your child	24
Late Pick Up Fee.....	24
General Information	24
Types of Long Day Care Available	24
Booked Hours of Care	24
Absences	25
Sick days	25
Absences and Child Care Subsidy (CCS)	25
Public Holidays	26
Public Holidays and Full Time Children	26
Cancellation or Alteration of Care Requirements	27
Cancellation of Care and CCS	27
Complaints and Compliments.....	27
What you will need	27
What does Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative supply?	27
What to bring?	28
What to wear?	28
How to prepare your child	29
Food	29
Allergies.....	30
Birthday Celebrations	30
Rest and Sleep.....	30
Health and Hygienic Care	31
Accidents.....	32
Medication	32
Naturopathic Medications	32
Nappy Rash Creams.....	33
Ongoing Medical Conditions.....	33
Illness	33,37
Immunisation	35
Toilet and Nappy Change Practices.....	35
Emergency Procedures	36
Centre Policies	36

Introduction

Welcome to Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative. Our centre is a unique service with a long-standing connection to the local community.

Wingate Avenue is a 62 place, not for profit Long Day Care centre, providing early education for children aged 6 weeks to 6 years. We provide both a 3 year old Kindergarten program as well as a Government Funded 4 year old Kindergarten program.

Our commitment is to provide the best possible education and learning environment for every child in our care. As partners in your child's growth and learning our collaborative relationships with families ensure that together, we can achieve the best quality outcomes for your child.

We understand that children learn from birth and that all learning and development at each stage of life forms the foundation for the next. With this knowledge our qualified educators, deliver a child-centered educational program designed to meet the unique needs of every child from 5 weeks to school age.

Along with the benefits of a personalised approach, our teachers create a dynamic and engaging environment that optimises learning throughout the day.

A co-operative approach

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative is governed by committed group of parents who are better known as our 'Committee of Management' (COM), working collaboratively with our centre director, Alison Owen to make business decisions about the centre and guiding the overall vision.

The COM is responsible for setting the strategic plan for the centre, while the centre director is responsible for the day to day running of the centre. This includes employment and mentoring of highly qualified educators, implementation of the educational curriculum and development of centre policies and procedures.

When families enroll at Wingate Avenue, they sign up as a 'member' of the centre and have voting rights when assisting with appointment the Committee of Management.

Our Committee of Management is made up of 5 members, including the three integral roles of:

- Chairperson
- Treasurer and
- Secretary.

The committee is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting.

The Management Committee understands some of the issues affecting early education and is:

- Responsible for the effective implementation of quality child care for the community;
- Responsible and accountable to the parents, families and children using this service;
- Accountable to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to ensure that licensing standards and regulations are being met;
- Responsible to the staff to ensure that fair and consistent employment practices are being met, including awards and legislation.

All parents and families are encouraged to join the Management Committee. Parents are welcome to attend meetings as an observer and offer their services at any time.

Becoming involved with Management can be a very rewarding job, not only do you get to network with other parents; you get to have your say in the day to day running of the centre.

Smaller 'working groups' are also great ways for families to get involved in the centre operations. These currently include:

- Grant working group – preparing and supporting the current building works throughout the centre and assisting with applications for future grants for the service.
- Financial Sub-committee: supporting the Treasurer in their role to ensure the service is operating safely within it's projected budget.

Commitment to families

The centre is committed to creating an environment that promotes:

- Each individual child's personality
- Opportunities for children to make choices about their day
- Inclusive Practices
- Diversity
- Play based Curriculum
- Indoor / Outdoor Program
- Sustainability

Facilities

Located within the Ascot Vale Housing estate, Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative has been transformed from an existing basketball stadium, which

contributes to our large Kindergarten classrooms and overall feel of the centre. Our building is leased through the Department of Housing (DHHS) with the agreement that 50% of our places will be offered to families living within the estate.

Over the years the centre has transformed into the unique and personality filled centre it is today, still holding onto much of that charm from the years passed.

In 2019 we applied for a large building grant through the Department of Education and are currently undergoing the building renovation, which is planned to be completed in early 2022.

Our service has 5 large classrooms which are currently organised as:

Seeds room (0 to 1 year): 8 place room

Seedlings Rooms (1 to 2 years): 12 place room

Sprouts room (2 to 3 years): 12 – 16 place room

Stalks room (3 year old Kindergarten): 15 place room

Blossoms Room (4 Year Old Kindergarten): 15 place room

The room structures and numbers will be updated once the renovations have finished and the maximum occupancy of the service increases from 62 children per day to 70 children per day.

Parking

The car park is located at the front of the centre and can be accessed from Wingate Avenue. Please follow the signs in the car park. The driveway is one way with a "keep clear" zone outside the centre entrance.

Parking is also available on the streets surrounding the centre. Please be aware of parking restrictions, especially through event times.

Security Access

Entry to the centre is via a security pin code entered into the keypad located at the building's entrance. We have a doorbell and intercom system for visitors who are not familiar with the pin code. Once staff verify the person wishing to enter the centre, the door lock will be released. Please refer to the 'unregistered person collecting your child' section of this handbook for more information.

Hours of Operation

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative is open Monday to Friday from 7.00 am to 6:00pm and is open 50 weeks of the year. We are unable to allow children to enter the building before 7:00 am as we are only licensed to open from 7:00 am.

The centre closes for two weeks over the Christmas and New Year period each year as well as any public holiday recognized in Victoria.

Fees

Daily Fee: \$125

Weekly Fee: \$615 – for full time families only

The fee structure as outlined above is accurate as of 11th November 2021

All types of care at Wingate Avenue will be eligible for the Childcare subsidy (CCS) for out-of-pocket expenses. (See below for further information)

Form of Payment

Fees are to be paid either via **direct debit** or **credit card**. For credit card payments, a 2.35% surcharge applies for Visa or MasterCard and a 4.40% surcharge applies for AMEX.

No surcharge applies for direct debit payments.

Details of an individual's account and all completed forms kept by Wingate Avenue will be confidential and stored in accordance with bank policy. Individual families may access their own account records at any time by contacting the Centre Director.

Fee Increases

Fee increases will occur between July and January each year. The date of the fee increase will be determined by the Committee of Management. Fee increases are to cover annual wage and rent increases, additional services required by the services and other associated costs.

Families will be provided with a minimum of 4 weeks' notice prior to any increases.

Payment of Accounts

Fees will be charged weekly or fortnightly on Fridays for the week attended.

An invoice will be emailed fortnightly to families on the Tuesday prior to the Direct Debit. Printed copies will be arranged for families who do not have access to email.

Fees will be direct debited from families' accounts every Friday – weekly or fortnightly as selected by you.

Late Payment of Fees (Dishonoured direct debits)

In the event a direct debit is dishonoured; families will be given notice of the dishonoured direct debit. A \$15 administration fee will be charged

Families must pay the outstanding fee within 7 days of being notified, failure to pay the dishonoured fees within the 7 days may result in the family losing security access

to the centre. Failure to pay the dishonoured fees within the 14 days may result in the family being asked to leave the service.

Should families be experiencing financial hardships, we ask that the family notify the Centre Director. The Director will assess whether a payment plan can be arranged.

Debt recovery

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative reserves the right to take legal action to recover debts owing to the service. The cost of this action will be passed onto the family.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

CCS is a payment from the Australian Government to help families with the cost of childcare. The CCS will be paid directly to the centre. To be eligible for Child Care Subsidy you (as a parent or guardian) must meet the following requirements:

- you have a child in your care who meets the immunisation requirements (or have an exemption)
- you or your partner meet residency requirements (or have an exemption)
- your child attends approved care
- you are liable for the cost of your child care

The amount of benefit you are eligible for is dependent on:

- your income
- the amount of care you use
- the reason you are using care
- the number of children you have in care.

To be eligible for the CCS, you must first apply through your MyGov account or directly at Centrelink.

For more information of eligibility and how to apply, please go to [Child Care Subsidy - Services Australia](#) or call 136 150.

In order to take advantage of government child care subsidies, it is important to register for Child Care Subsidy prior to (or with 4 weeks of) your child commencing at Wingate Avenue and ensure you approve your child's session of care through your MyGov app.

Centre Philosophy

In relation to Children, we believe:

- Each child is respected as a unique competent and capable individual with his/her own needs experiences, abilities and interests.

- Play is children's work. Children are active participants in creating their own learning environment.
- Children's inherent connection to the natural world is encouraged and celebrated where they have the opportunity to explore all natural elements without restriction.
- Play will be fun and provide the opportunity for a challenge. Where appropriate play will be child directed, interest based and freely chosen.
- A play-based learning program will be provided which is designed to stimulate children's love of learning, exploration and social concepts
- Children are encouraged to make choices about their day and are included in regular discussions about their environment and setting up learning environments
- Children are seen as; People, Competent, confident learners, friends and Teachers

In relation to Families, we believe:

- That fostering a mutually respectful partnership with all families is key and we aim to collaborate with all families, acknowledging diversity, religious beliefs and cultural identities.
- Reciprocal Partnerships between staff and families are developed and valued.
- Families should be consulted and encouraged review centre policies, practice and philosophy
- Children have the opportunities to develop partnerships across ages and spend time with their siblings
- That a safe and confidential environment is accessible for all families to discuss the development and wellbeing of their children.

In relation to educators, we believe:

- Educators who work with children are incorporating diverse pedagogical practices that reflect varied perspectives, all of which contribute to each child's wellbeing and successful learning.
- A team approach is fostered where all team members are provided with encouragement, support & respected as individuals, as well as valuable members of the team.
- Staff promote a safe and confidential environment for all families to discuss the development and well being of their children.
- Staff respect the diversity of all families, children and other staff at the service.
- Staff aim to achieve excellence in their role as educators and nurturers, thereby earning the respect of children, families and other professionals within the community.
- Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative shall encourage staff to adopt and act in accordance with Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics
- Children will not be discriminated against as recommended by the UN convention on the rights of the child

- A team approach is fostered where all team members are provided with encouragement, support & respected as individuals, as well as valuable members of the team.

In relation to our Community, we believe:

- The Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative Community is defined as children, families and educators will facilitate and provide an opportunity for families to connect and feel a part of their local neighborhood
- That the unique and diverse cultures of our community should be celebrated and incorporated into our curriculum
- That children benefit from the opportunity to explore their local community from a young age.
- Wingate Avenue acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the tradition owners of the land on which it stands. We respectfully recognise Elders both past and present.
- Wingate Avenue Children's Co-operative understands it's position within the community and works to support other local organisations, neighbourhood groups and charities.

In relation to our Environment, we believe:

- Children will have the opportunity to explore dirt, sand, water, grass and all natural elements without restriction.
- The child's choice of indoor and/or outdoor play is highly valued and promoted by all staff, where an Indoor/Outdoor program is provided year-round.
- Sustainable practices and procedures will be embedded within the centre.
- A safe environment will be prioritized over any element of the philosophy, program or policy.
- That the use of recycled and repurposed materials and resources should be provided throughout the service wherever possible.
- That we should all play a strong part in minimising our environmental footprint and encouraging positive attitudes towards sustainable practices and educational programs.

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

"The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework advances all children's learning and development from birth to eight years. It does this by supporting all early childhood professionals to work together and with families to achieve common outcomes for all children.

Children learn from birth and their learning and development at each stage of life forms the foundation for the next. During the period from birth to eight years, children experience more rapid brain development and acquire more skills and knowledge than in any other period in their lives. By the time they enter school, children have already developed key communication, learning and thinking skills; learned to build and maintain relationships; and formed a strong sense of their own

identity. These skills and knowledge are the foundation for learning at school, and for lifelong learning."

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, Page 5

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative strongly supports the VEYLDF and is committed to meeting all requirements in the children's educational programs, including the 5 outcomes as defined by the framework:

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

Children's Program and Educators

The children's educational programs are developed by our early childhood trained educators and supported by our Educational Leader, who is part of the management team. Each program reflects our centres philosophy, The EYLF and our strong commitment to the local community and our families.

Throughout the year children will also be included in local excursions and in-service visits which celebrate our local community and the emerging curriculum within each classroom.

Story Park - Individual Portfolios

Each child attending Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative will be set up with an individual learning journal which is accessible to families via the online app/program 'Story Park'

Our aim is to provide a clear cycle of planning for each child, where their individual learning journey is celebrated and extended on with a huge emphasis on family input.

Through Story Park, families have the option to add additional relatives to view children's learning.

Throughout the week, Educators will upload photos, stories and reflections on both group and individual learning.

Families will be encouraged to participate in their child's portfolio, adding family reflections and photos as well as regularly looking through the portfolio. The benefits of families involvement in the portfolios are;

- ❖ It allows families to actively participate in their child's learning

- ❖ The child's learning experiences at Wingate Avenue can be shared with extended family members and friends
- ❖ Families have the opportunity to write and share stories about their child's experiences and learning over the weekends and holidays
- ❖ Families have the opportunity to provide comments about their child's learning at Wingate Avenue
- ❖ It gives our educators further knowledge of the child's interests which can be incorporated into the curriculum.

Kindergarten Program

The Kindergarten year is a rich and stimulating experience that provides a range of important opportunities that not only prepare your child for school, but prepare your child for life.

Kindergarten (also known as preschool) is a program for children in the year before they start primary school. In Victoria, children are able to attend school on the provision that they turn 5 years old by 30th April. However, it has become common practice for children born between January and April to begin school the following year.

Early Childhood expert Dr Kay Margetts' (University of Melbourne) research shows that it can be quite stressful for children moving into an environment where the adult – child ratio is very different, more independence is required, the physical setting is bigger and there are more rules. Due to these factors, Kathy Walker (renowned Education Consultant) believes that "it's better to go to school too late rather than too early, particularly in Victoria, which has one of the world's youngest starting ages".

In light of this growing practice, and the research done by early childhood experts, Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative will be offering a 3 year old kindergarten program to children turning 3 by 31st December, prior to commencement, and a 4 year old kindergarten program to children turning 4 by 31st December, prior to commencement. Children born between January and April may be placed in a 3 - 4 year old kindergarten program subject to availability.

The kindergarten program for 3 and 4 year old children follows a play based approach that emphasises learning through exploration and investigation. The program encourages children to be creative in all areas, whether it is problem solving or the expressive arts. It also encourages lateral thinking and has a strong focus on positive social interactions and building resilience.

Funded 3 year and 4-year-old kindergarten

All Kindergarten programs are state funded programs and are run by qualified Kindergarten Teachers, who hold a Bachelor of Early Childhood Degree recognised for kindergarten funding. The kindergarten teachers are available throughout the day to implement their program between 9am – 4pm (as a minimum).

The program is designed to extend children's ongoing development in all domains, but also concentrates on the importance of children developing life skills in preparation for entering Primary school. This is the time when educators and parents need to give children additional opportunities to practice their independence and self help skills.

The centre promotes the following strategies within our program:

- Encouraging children to make choices about clothing and dressing themselves;
- Encouraging children to work through, navigate and problem solve different social conflicts with their peers;
- Encouraging children to express their wants and needs;
- Allowing time for children to recognise emotions, educators will guide appropriate expression using appropriate child care practices;
- Allowing children to answer questions from their peers and other adults;
- Facilitating children's conversation and discussion;
- Encouraging children to explore their natural environment;
- Developing maturity through the above strategies.

Access to a Funded Kindergarten Program

The State Government provides 2 years of funding for all children to attend a kindergarten program before they enter school. All children accessing the 3 or 4 year old kinder program at Wingate Avenue are accessing a state funded kindergarten program.

All children have the right to access a funded preschool kinder program for a minimum of 15 hours each week (or 6 hours for the 3-year-old program). If your child accesses their funded hours at a separate kindergarten, Wingate Avenue may be required to negotiate the days your child attends or provide your booking to another child unable to access kinder elsewhere.

If you know that your child (though eligible) will not be attending school the following year, it is essential for you to inform us immediately. A second year of kindergarten cannot be guaranteed for your child, unless they have been assessed as not ready for school.

For more information about the kindergarten funding, please see your Centre Director or Educational Leader.

Family Participation

Children's Programs

To increase the relevance of the program to you and your child, we encourage parents or a special person to provide suggestions for the program and give

feedback through use of our online portal. Your comments are valued and appreciated and are used to further develop the children's programs and build a stronger understanding of each individual and their wider family.

It is important that you notify staff of any changes to routines and home life that may affect your child such as; separation, death, birth, illness, visitors toileting, sleeping or likes and dislikes. This will ensure that we continue to offer and provide the best possible care in changing circumstances.

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative extends an invitation to all families and friends to share their skills with their child's class and get involved in the learning process. Skills that have been shared so far include

- Joining the Management Committee
- Sharing any skills you have with the children (cooking, woodwork, music, dance)
- Helping out on working bees
- Being involved in the National Quality Standards, policy development etc.
- Sharing your family's culture with the children

Please see a staff member if you would like to participate in the centre in any way.

Family Committee - Working Groups

Our centre has a Family Committee which is made up of family members who volunteer their time to support the centre. The Family Committee aids in organising fund raising events for the centre's chosen charity as well as social events and policy review.

If you would like more information on the Family Committee or would like to participate, please express your interest via an email or see your Centre Director.

The National Quality Framework (NQF)

In December 2009, all Australian governments established a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care ('National Quality Framework').

The goal of the National Quality Framework is to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in education and care services through:

- The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
- The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care ('National Quality Standard')
- A national quality rating and assessment process
- A national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments—the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)—to oversee the new system.

The National Quality Standard (NQS)

The *National Quality Standard* sets the national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. The NQS is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework. It brings together the seven key quality areas:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical Environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative actively participates in the National Quality Standards and is committed to the 7 quality areas and reaching a standard of excellence.

Quality Improvement Plan

Wingate Avenue has developed a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which outlines areas within the framework to develop and further explore.

The QIP is an ever-evolving document which is vital to ensuring our service meets the needs of our community and the requirements laid out in the National Quality Framework.

The QIP is available at all times for families within the entrance.

Staffing Arrangements

Wingate Avenue is committed to employing quality early childhood educators and to their ongoing professional development.

As per the Education and Care National Regulations 2011, we will ensure correct staffing arrangements are met at all times, with several of our classrooms providing additional support and higher ratios where possible.

Age of children	Number of staff members
Under 3 years	1 for every 4 children or fraction of that number
3 years or more	1 for every 11 children or fraction of that number

Consistency of Educators is an important aspect in meeting the needs and building relationships with children and you will notice a regular group of casual educators who are employed within the centre, covering the RDO's, Planning time and Annual Leave of permanent educators.

Code of Conduct

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative has a commitment to provide a safe and inclusive environment. It is vital that educators, staff, volunteers and management role model practices and behaviours that reflect the professional principles and values of the Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics.

This Code of Conduct sets out the actions, behaviours and conduct expected of employees, volunteers, directors and others acting on behalf of Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative in any capacity at all times (including but not limited to, their dealings with children, families and care-givers, fellow employees, regulatory bodies, Government Department officials and suppliers.

The code of conduct also relates to how families are expected to interact while at the centre.

Our code of conduct can be found on display in the reception area, as well as in each room.

Recruiting appropriate educators

When recruiting new educators, Wingate Avenue seeks knowledgeable and passionate early childhood educators who share our values and philosophy.

We will endeavor to ensure the cultures of the staff team reflect the cultures of the community.

It can be an unfortunate time when educators and staff leave the centre. However we are committed to ensuring that consistency of standards and continuity of care for the children remain our highest priority.

Our room transitions

At the beginning of each year, children are grouped based on their age and where the program and resources best suit their development and learning.

Our aim is to ensure children are with the group of children who they will/may eventually move off to School with.

Throughout the year there may be opportunities for children to move rooms. This will only be done after the Centre Director has consulted with both the child's educator and family. Aspects that will be considered include:

- Educator assessments of a child's readiness and development
- Family approval
- Place availability

Any children moving rooms during the year will experience an orientation period. This will allow the children to become familiar with the new room's environment and educators.

For more information regarding the grouping of children, please refer to the Room Transitions and Orientations policy.

Children with Additional Needs

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative is committed to an inclusive program for all children with additional needs. The centre is able to access a number of external services to support children and families.

If your child has any special requirements or additional needs we can accommodate whilst your child is in care please pass on the information to us.

This can include:

- speech programs you have from your speech therapist,
- motor movements for physical development or
- anything else which is relevant to meeting your child's needs.

Student Placements

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative is committed to educating early childhood education students who share a passion for the early years, interest-based play programs and the environment.

It is expected, at all times, that students who are required to undertake a placement at the centre as part of their early childhood qualification, have the capacity to behave appropriately, without endangering themselves or others or having a detrimental impact on the centre, the children or their families.

Students will be required to provide a working with children check prior to commencement to ensure their ability to work with young children. Written information about a student on placement will be displayed on the relevant room door.

Sustainability

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative is committed to promoting environmental education by engaging the children, families, educators and the wider community. Every day we are working towards ensuring our daily practices meet our environmental policy.

- Encourage children to actively participate in the herb and vegetable gardens
- Allow children to help maintain compost bins and worm farms through the use of fruit and vegetable waste from the Centre
- Avoid the use of single use plastic bags
- Encourage families to bring a bag for dirty clothes
- Reduce water use by using the centre's water tank for children's play
- Empty water activities into garden beds
- Water gardens only on odd or even days (as directed by the State Government)
- Soak children's art equipment before washing and wash in buckets rather than using running water
- Use recycled materials and paper for children's art activities and office notices
- The office will reduce paper by using email, Story Park or the centre's web page to post newsletters and notices to parents
- Reduce the use of plastics goods within the Centre where ever possible
- Reduce the use of chemicals within the Centre
- Continue education of children, families, educators and the community of our sustainable values

Reducing the use of Chemicals

Wingate Avenue limits the amount and type of chemicals used in the centre while the children are being educated. As the children's safety and hygiene is always the highest priority, we will carefully research the products and procedures used and

liaise with organisations such as the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH), the Department of Education.

To aid in the reduction of chemicals used in the children's rooms, the educators will use microfiber cleaning cloths. These cloths contain hundreds of thousands of microfibre "hooks" per square inch which grab, lift, and hold dust, grime and oily films. To avoid cross contamination, the following colour code is observed by all educators:

- Blue – General Cleaning & Food Areas
- Green – Floors
- Pink – Bathrooms
- Yellow – Art Clean Up

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative also contracts professional cleaners to visit the centre each night after closing. These cleaners will use stronger chemicals to ensure the children's bathrooms are disinfected daily.

Enrolling for care

The process of applying and starting your child at Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative

1. Waiting List

Families are able to place their name on our waiting list either via our website, by contacting the centre or by speaking to the Centre Director.

When a child care place is available, the following information is taken into consideration;

- Siblings who are already attending the centre
- Age group - Date of Birth of Child
- Preferred commencement date
- Date of waitlist application
- Preferred days to attend
- Priority of access guidelines, as outlined by the Department of Education
- Priority of access as per the centre requirements – a family from the local housing estate

2. Accepting a Place

A formal letter of offer will be sent out with an enrolment pack.

To confirm your position, we require this in writing.

3. Enrolment Process

An **Enrolment Form** must be completed for each child. The Enrolment Form contains information about you and your child, including contact details, medical details, routine information and any special requirements your child might have.

Children are unable to commence care, including the orientation process, without a completed enrolment form.

If your child has a medical action plan, please provide this, completed and signed by a doctor, with your enrolment form so copies can be made for the rooms. If you require a form, please speak to the Centre Director who will be able to provide you with one.

It is beneficial to the orientation process to submit the enrolment form prior to orientation, to allow Wingate Avenue Children's Co-operative to prepare for your child.

Privacy Statement/ Confidentiality

Wingate Avenue uses the enrolment form to collect personal information for the purpose of program enrolment and statistical recording. The information may be shared with administrators for operational purposes only. The information will not be disclosed to any other party except as where required by law. You are able to amend or correct information on request by contacting the centre. These records are stored securely.

4. Orientation

Orientation dates are booked once a place has been accepted.

Orientation is extremely important for children, parents and educators as it allows for a positive and smooth transition into the long day care setting. Much information is shared during these visits, and they allow educators to gain an insight into the child as an individual. Orientation enables children and families to begin to form trusting relationships with educators so that when the time comes for a parent to first leave their child, they feel comfortable in the environment.

The first orientation visit is a short visit where the child and family are able to familiarise themselves with the child's classroom, the room routine and most importantly the educators.

The rest of the orientation process is made up of 2 x ½ day orientations where your child will be able to complete more routine activities eg; feeding/eating , nappy change or placing the child to sleep. Families are invited to stay with their child throughout the settling in process. To aid the settling in process families will be able to leave their child for short periods during this time to begin the bonding process between child and educator.

Orientation Charges are;

1 st Orientation (1 hour with parent)	Free
2 x ½ day orientation without parent (less than 4 hours)	½ day charge

For planning purposes, we recommend you allow 1 to 2 weeks for orientation (3 sessions). Each child however is an individual and therefore the amount of orientation required may be shorter or longer.

Only under extenuating circumstances will a child be give permission to commence without orientation. For more information please contact the Director.

5. Commence regular care

Your child is now ready to commence care at Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative.

Please Note: If your child suffers any ongoing medical conditions such as anaphylaxis, epilepsy, diabetes, etc, please ensure that you have provided the centre with the appropriate action plans / management plans and discussed your child's health needs with the centre's Director and room educators *prior* to commencement. Children cannot attend the service without needed action plans and medications

Bring a photo

It is important that the child feels that you are always with them. We encourage you to bring a photo of your family (the special people in your child's life) to allow the child to always be able to hold you and have you with them.

Daily Sign In / Sign Out

An accurate record of attendances is essential so that educators know how many children are attending the centre and who these children are. These factors have a direct relationship with child / educator ratios, the safety of children, management of emergencies and the provision of children's programs.

Signing in and out each day is required under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*. Accurate attendance records are also required to enable families to claim the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Signing your child in and out each time they attend verifies that your child actually attended the centre on the days claimed, or was absent for one of the allowable absences, eg: sick days or holidays.

The Daily Sign In / Sign Out Process

A tablet is located at each of our classroom entrances and all families will be set up with a digital sign in code upon enrolment. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian dropping off or collecting their child to make sure that they are signed in and out each time they attend the service.

Upon commencement of orientation your child's Room Leader will explain the sign in/out process. As stated above this is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

Unregistered person collecting your child

If you or the authorised persons on the child's enrolment form are unable to collect your child the parents/legal guardians must inform the centre in writing, preferably via email.

The centre will require the name of the person who will be collecting your child.

The person collecting your child will be asked to show **photo identification**. If photo identification can not be shown, under no circumstances will a child be allowed to leave the centre.

Late Pick Up Fee

Families who are late in the collection of their child (after the centre closure time) are required to pay \$20 for the first 15 minutes (or part of) after our closing time. After this an additional \$1 per minute will be charged.

We ask that parents respect our opening and closing times to allow our educators to go home to their own families. If a child is left after our closing time, 2 educators are required to stay with the child.

General Information

Types of Long Day Care Available

Full Time

Full Time care is when the child attends the centre 5 days per week on a permanent basis.

Part Time

Part Time Care is when the child attends between 1 and 4 days per week on a permanent basis.

Casual Days

There are times when parents require extra days above the permanent days booked. Days are available subject to availability.

Booked Hours of Care

Booked hours of care relate to the hours that you select at the time of enrolment and at the end of each year for your child(ren) to attend Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative. This assists in the rostering of educators and we rely on parents to notify us of any changes.

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have strict guidelines about the number of educators required to care for children. If parents increase

their hours without notification we may find that there are inadequate educators to care for the number of children left at the centre, particularly at the beginning and the end of each day. This places children and educators at risk of not having their needs met, and alters the program quality and safety immensely and may also result in the loss of Wingate Avenue's license.

Please ring the centre directly if you are running late to collect your child so we are aware that ratios could change.

If you wish to alter your booked hours of care from those selected by yourself at enrolment, notice needs to be given to the Director.

Absences

Once your child is settled into our program we ask that if your child is absent for the day the centre is notified as soon as possible. This allows educators and management enough time to notify parents who may be requiring extra care days or make up days. Fees are payable for all absences.

Sick days

Full fees are still payable when your child is absent due to illness.

Absences and Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Families who are eligible for CCS are allocated 42 allowable absence days, which include public holidays, per child each financial year. These absence days can be for any reason and do not require proof of absence.

Once a child has used their initial 42 allowable absence days, they may still be absent from the centre. However, for CCS to be applied, only these additional absence will be considered:

- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner or another person with whom the child lives is ill and the service has been given a medical certificate by a medical practitioner
- the child is attending preschool
- alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day
- the child has not been immunised against an infectious disease, the absence occurs during an immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner has certified that exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child
- the absence is because the child is spending time with a person other than the individual who is their usual carer as required by a court order or a

- parenting plan, and the service has a copy of the relevant court order or parenting plan for the child
- the service is closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency
 - the child cannot attend because of a local emergency (for example, because they are unable to travel to the service), during the period of the emergency or up to 28 days afterwards
 - the individual who cares for the child has decided the child should not attend the service for up to seven days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency.

There is no limit to the amount of additional absences used, but you may be required to provide documentation to support the absence

To help families keep track of their child(ren)'s absences, the number of days absent is available on the family account statement.

Public Holidays

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative is closed for all gazetted Public Holidays.

- January 26th
- Labour Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Anzac Day
- Queen's Birthday
- Grand Final Day
- Melbourne Cup Day (Melbourne Metro area only)
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Years Day

Families are required to pay for public holidays. In lieu of this payment the centre will offer a make up day for each public holiday. Families will need to contact the centre to redeem this day.

The day is only redeemable within a 3 month period, and is subject to availability.

Public Holidays and Full Time Children

Fees will apply as normal for children attending full time.

Cancellation or Alteration of Care Requirements

If a parent wishes to cancel a child's place or reduce a child's days, **2 weeks notice** must be given in writing, preferably via email, to the admin staff at the centre. This is to provide adequate opportunity for the position to be filled by other children in need.

Written notice is required if you wish to alter your days of care.

Please note that if you request a reduction in days, it cannot be assumed that you can choose which days to drop or keep. This will be done in consultation with the Director for operational reasons.

Cancellation of Care and CCS

As stated above, 2 weeks notice is required to cancel a child's place at Wingate Avenue. It is important to note centrelink will only pay your CCS for the days attended during this notice period.

If your child does not attend their regular days, cessation of care must be applied by the centre and a full fee will be incurred.

Complaints and Compliments

We aim to provide a service where parents can feel comfortable and happy in dealing with any issues that may arise and know that they will be dealt with efficiently and outcomes are mutually agreeable to both the parent and the Centre.

If you have a concern about the care of your child please contact the Room educators or the Centre Director. We would appreciate it if complaints could be provided in writing, preferably via email, for our records.

We ask the same with compliments, please provide them in writing so we are able to share them with the staff and educators and let them know when they are doing a great job.

For more information please refer to the Complaints and Compliments Policy.

What you will need to bring for care

What does Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative supply?

The centre will be supplying the following;

- Nappies & Wipes
- Sunscreen
- Children's bedding
- Breakfast program (from centre open to 8am)

- Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon tea & a late snack

What to bring?

In order to support children to build responsibility and ownership, we encourage each child to bring their own clearly labelled bag. This bag will be placed in the child's locker throughout the day and can be accessed easily.

The following items will need to be brought in the bag each day:

- Bottle formula prepared for babies or dispenser/ container provided
- Security/comfort items
- A reusable water bottle filled with water only.
- A complete change of clothes (if toilet training - 3 sets of clothes, inc shoes)
- As part of the Sun Smart policy children are required to wear hats when playing outside, which protect the face, neck and ears, i.e. legionnaire, from the start of September to the end of April. (Please note: Baseball caps do not offer enough protection and are therefore not recommended.)
- A warm jumper, woolly hat and coat for cooler weather
- Nappy Cream

What to wear?

We respect your family's choice of clothing and cultural traditions.

Please inform the educators if you have particular preferences regarding privacy and modesty when children are having their clothes changed or are dressing themselves.

We encourage families to dress children in comfortable, nonrestrictive clothes that support their play and learning. A variety of messy activities are provided for the children and although protective smocks may be provided, we recommend that you provide a multiple spare sets of clothing for your child.

Soiled clothing will be placed in a bag for parents to take home.

Please provide appropriate footwear for your child - Thongs, slip-ons and clogs are **not suitable** footwear for play and do not provide appropriate grip for many play activities.

Because children are given the opportunity to go outside on a daily basis, we encourage you to dress your child in clothing that is appropriate for the temperature and weather.

During the months of September through to April, please remember to bring a hat (legionnaires, bucket or broad brim only) for your child to protect the face, neck. Children are also encouraged to wear sun protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible during this period of time. Singlet tops are not appropriate to be worn outside during this period and will need to be covered by a t-shirt. Comfortable clothing that goes on and comes off easily is recommended to enable children to develop self-help skills and manage independently (especially at the

toilet) e.g. trousers with loose elastic waists; tops with large necks, cardigans, jackets; slip on shoes/shoes with Velcro; bigger buttons/toggles etc.

For hygienic purposes, toilet-trained children (no matter what their age) will be encouraged to wear underpants at all times.

We ask that all clothing be labeled with your child's name.

Every care is taken, but no liability can be accepted for the loss or damage of clothes.

How to prepare your child for their first day

At Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative, we understand that the initial settling in process can be a stressful time for both families and children. There are some small things you can do to prepare your child for long day care:

- Take advantage of the orientation process. If your child is showing signs of comfort in the new environment, allow them to spend short periods of time with their new educators.
- If your child is breast feeding, introduce them to the bottle prior to commencing care, this will make it more likely for them to accept a feed from their educators.
- Start talking to your child about Wingate Avenue, maybe even drive by and refer to the teachers by their names in the lead up.
- If possible, start care before returning to work or study and try to allow your child to have shorter days initially, gradually increase the time spent in care.

Food

The early years are a time when food habits are being developed, many of which will be retained throughout life. Good nutrition is therefore essential to encourage healthy growth and prevent disease. Eating, drinking and mealtimes are linked with the development of children's physical, social and behavioural skills.

A wide variety of nutritious food that is low in sugar, salt and additives will be provided in a safe and hygienic manner. An emphasis on non-processed, fresh and natural ingredients will be part of the menu planning process, as will the recommended daily dietary intake for children.

At Wingate Avenue, the children are provided with breakfast, morning and afternoon tea, a cooked lunch (on most days) and a late snack.

Families will be consulted to ensure cultural relevance, special dietary requirements and eating practices are considered. Children are encouraged to actively engage in the menu and meal times, and the staff encourage and support children to assist themselves during these routines in order to help them develop self-help skills.

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative caters for children with allergies and special dietary restrictions by not including pork or pork products in the menus and by encouraging an egg and nut free environment.

Our fully qualified centre chef prepares all meals on site each day and caters to a range of dietary requirements, including but not limited to: Vegetarian, Vegan, Celiac or Gluten free, Dairy free and similar.

Please note: We ask that **NO FOOD** is brought into the centre.

Allergies

Many children who attend Wingate Avenue have food allergies, some of which may be fatal.

It is very important that **food is never brought into the centre**. As we will endeavor to cater for your child's dietary requirements, there is no need to bring food into the centre.

If your child does have a food allergy, the centre must be notified during the enrolment process. If your child develops any sensitivity to foods during their enrolment, an update form can be collected from the Director. If the allergy is of a serious nature, an Action Plan must be prepared by your child's doctor.

Please note: Children will not be allowed to attend the centre without their Action Plan and/or Epi Pen.

To ensure our records are up to date, we ask that families provide any changes to a child's diet to us in writing, preferably via email. This information will be used to inform your child's educators as well as the kitchen staff.

All staff at Wingate Avenue have undergone Anaphylaxis training to ensure the safety of children with severe allergies.

For more information about allergies, please contact the Director or refer to the centre's Anaphylaxis Policy.

Birthday Celebrations

Due to the amount of allergies within the centre, birthday cakes must not be brought into the centre.

To celebrate birthdays, children will assist in cooking a birthday cake and decorating this with their peers on the morning of.

An afternoon tea will be celebrated and we encourage families to come along and join in.

All birthday cakes made on site are allergy friendly and suitable for majority of children.

Rest and Sleep

Wingate Avenue and its Educators understand their duty of care to ensure that all children in the centre are able to rest and sleep safely. All children have the right to

rest and sleep in a comfortable, secure childcare environment and individual rest/sleep time needs will be met.

Educators will always ensure the following safe resting and sleeping practices are implemented for the children in care,

- All infant children will be placed on their back to rest when first being settled for a rest
 - If a child turns onto their side or stomach during sleep, then they shall be allowed to find their own sleeping position
- All children will rest with their face uncovered
- The rest environment, although darkened, will provide enough light to ensure both staff and children can negotiate the room without the hazard of tripping or falling
- Cots will be distanced apart to ensure that Educators can easily access all cots at all times and to prevent children from reaching into other cots
- Educators will monitor resting children at regular intervals and supervise the rest environment, there will always be 1 Educator available to supervise the resting children

Please note: the children's preferences to sleep and rest will always be met regardless of their age. Therefore if a child asks for a rest or is falling asleep throughout the day, this need must be met by our educators at all times. We are unable to restrict sleep for children.

The centre practices precautionary methods in an effort to prevent SIDS. For more information, please see the Rest and Sleep Policy and the SIDS Policy.

Health and Hygienic Care

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative will provide an environment which is safe, healthy, hygienic and comfortable for all children to play.

The centre is committed to our Environment Policy and as a result we will be using micro fiber cloths for cleaning. As many children suffer from allergies and asthma, the centre will endeavor to reduce the chemicals used within the centre or find an alternative 'green' product. The centre has a professional cleaner to clean the centre each day.

To ensure a safe and hygienic environment, it is necessary to use some dangerous chemicals. These are primarily used in the kitchen and laundry. All dangerous products are stored in areas inaccessible to children or in cupboards with child proof locks installed.

For more information on the storage and procedures for preventing child access please refer to the centre's Dangerous Products Policy

All educators are trained in effective infectious control measures. Studies show that regular hand washing is one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of

many infectious illness. Educators model appropriate hand washing techniques with children and guide children in developing good personal hygiene practices.

The educators at Wingate Avenue will ensure that children's equipment and bedding is washed regularly and when soiled.

For more information of hygiene and infection control, please refer to the centre's Hygiene and Infection Policy.

Accidents

Even in the safest of environments accidents do occur. Wingate Avenue Childrens' Co-Operative complies with the Education and Care Services National Regulations under the Education and Care Services National Law by having the appropriate number of educators with current First Aid training. In an event of an accident the educators will record the information in our accident and illness records. The educators will give parents a courtesy call to inform you of the accident if they deem it necessary.

If further medical treatment is required, the appropriate medical service will be contacted and parents notified. Any medical or ambulance expense incurred will be the responsibility of the parents.

Medication

A Medication Authorisation Form must be completed in the event educators are required to administer medication to your child, this includes both prescription and over the counter medications.

Once the form has been completed, it is important that an educator check over the form and sign that it has been completed correctly. If the form has not been completed correctly, educators may not be able to administer the medication.

In compliance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Medication cannot be administered if:

- The medication has expired
- The child's name is not on any prescribed medicine
- The medication is not in its original container.
- A parent has not signed for authorisation

Please see the end of this handbook for a copy of a **medication form**. This may be filled out prior to attending care, but it must be checked by an educator before the child is left at the centre

Naturopathic Medications

Naturopathic medications will be administered under the same guidelines as conventional medications.

It is understood that not all naturopathic/homeopathic medications are supplied with expiry dates etc. To aid in assuring compliance, families who provide such medications must ensure the medication includes:

- List of ingredients
- Clear instructions
- Name of naturopath
- Date to be discarded

Nappy Rash Creams

If you would like nappy rash cream applied to your child's bottom, the Children's Cream Authority form must be completed. This form is available from your child's room.

If the nappy rash cream has been prescribed by a doctor, a Medication Authorisation Form must be completed.

Ongoing Medical Conditions

Where medication for treatment of a long term medical condition(s), such as asthma, epilepsy, ADHD, diabetes, allergies, relevant medical condition or a diagnosis that a child is at risk of anaphylaxis is required, the centre will require an action plan or a letter from the child's medical practitioner or specialist outlining a medical management plan. This plan must include

- The name of all medications required to manage the child's specific health need or medical condition
- The accurate dosage required for each medication
- How each medication is to be administered, for example: by mouth, injection, nasal etc
- What may trigger an incident relating to the child's medical condition or specific health need
- Procedures to be followed by educators and staff in the event of an incident or emergency regarding the child's specific health need or medical condition
- Signature of the medical practitioner completing the management plan

In these cases, a risk management plan will be developed in consultation with the child's parents.

Illness

When children first start childcare, they are more susceptible to picking up illnesses as they are exposed to a range of infections that they are not yet immune to. Therefore, it is common for children attending group care for the first time to become ill during their first year.

The wellbeing of all children accessing the centre is of utmost importance. For the health of all children and educators you must not bring your child to the centre if you suspect your child may be ill or have an infectious disease.

If your child shows any of the following symptoms while at the centre, or is viewed by educators to be ill, the educator will record the symptoms on the illness record and you will be contacted and asked to collect your child within an hour.

On arrival, educators will inform you in more detail about your child's illness and require you to sign the illness record.

The absences required for common infectious diseases are:

Diarrhoea

Unable to return until free of watery loose stools for 24 hours

Vomiting

Child should not return until vomiting has stopped for 24 hours

Please Note: in the event of an outbreak of gastroenteritis, the exclusion for diarrhoea and vomiting may be upgraded to 48 hours

Fever/Temperature

If the child's temperature is over 38 degrees the child is required to be fever free for 24 hours

Head lice

Your child must have commenced treatment

Conjunctivitis

Child must see a doctor for prescribed medication and treatment must have commenced and discharge ceased

Cold Sores

Infected area must be covered and treatment commenced

Hand-Foot and Mouth Infection

All lesions must have disappeared

If you suspect your child has an infectious disease please see a doctor and contact the centre if diagnosis occurs. Wingate Avenue will ensure parents are informed of an occurrence of an infectious disease at the centre in accordance with the *Children's Services Regulations 2009*.

Once the centre has been notified of a confirmed case of an infectious illness a medical alert sign will be posted on the room door and an email will be sent to all families within the affected classroom.

For more information please refer to the centre's Illness Policy and the Immunisation and Exclusion Policy.

Immunisation

As a requirement to confirm your child's enrolment, you must provide proof that the immunisation status of your child is current.

You may provide any of the following:

- Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) OR
- Immunisation Status Certificate from a medical doctor or local council immunisation with the required information.

We are required by regulation to refuse enrolment if your child's immunisation is not current. Exceptions apply.

The health of your child also relies on the health of all the members of the family in your household. Adult vaccination is offered in Victoria under the National Immunisation Program to eligible adults.

Victoria also funds some specific vaccines for eligible adults who are at high risk for certain vaccine preventable diseases such as hepatitis B, rabies/lyssavirus, rubella, diphtheria and tetanus.

For full details of the Immunisation Policy, please refer to the Immunisation Policy and Procedures Manual.

For information on the necessary immunisation for your child and the appropriate age to receive it, please refer to the 9 Department of Health National Immunisation Program Schedule <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/> For information on adult vaccinations for yourself or other members of your family, please refer to the Victoria State Government's website at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au>

Toilet and Nappy Change Practices

At Wingate Avenue Childrens' Co-Operative, educators use toileting and nappy change times as an opportunity to engage in valuable 1:1 interactions with each child. Educators will talk with the children, or sing, to ensure that the experience is as pleasant as possible.

Toileting and nappy change procedures are seen as opportunities to further each child's self help and independence skills, as well as introducing the children to hygienic practices.

All children will be supported during the toilet training process. Under no circumstances will a child be made to feel incapable during this process, all "accidents" will be treated as learning opportunities.

At all times, educators will protect the rights of each child and treat them with dignity during these procedures. Educators will also ensure the safety of each child during this procedure.

Any families that have any specific requirements in regard to nappy changing or toileting please outline these requirements to your child's Educator or the Centre Director.

Emergency Procedures

There are different emergencies that can occur during a day at the centre, including:

- Fire, gas leaks and other emergencies that cause an evacuation of the premises,
- Atmospheric conditions, unauthorized entry that lead to invacuation, and
- Medical emergencies, for example serious injuries.

The centre staff regularly practice and prepare for such emergencies, and where appropriate will include the children.

Emergency evacuation information is available in the centre foyer and in each room. This information includes where the children will group if they are to evacuate the building, and where they will go if they are to evacuate the premises. In such an occurrence, room staff will phone families to inform them of the evacuation.

For more information regarding Emergency Procedures, please refer to the Emergency Evacuation Policy.

Centre Policies

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative has an extensive list of policies for families and educators. A folder is available in the centre foyer that contains these policies for families, educators and visitors to view.

Centre policies are regularly reviewed and we seek the input of both our families and educators during this process. If you would like to be involved in reviewing any of the centre policies, please speak to the Centre Director for more information.

Throughout this handbook, some of our important policies have been summarised.