



Quality care for our children and families

# EARLY YEARS HANDBOOK

# 2025



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# PROGRAM & ORIENTATION

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## Hours of Operation

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday

9:00am–2:00pm

Please note as an occasional care service children can attend a maximum of 5 hours per day/15 hours per week.

We are closed for all recognised Victorian Public Holidays as well as Monday Cup Day Eve. Japara also closes over the Christmas/New Year period for around 3 weeks.

## The Children's Program

Our program is child lead, we follow the children's interests and requests to create exciting and engaging experiences. Activities are planned based around observations of the children being educated along with current community events. At present we operate our sessions out of two classrooms with groups being separated by individual children's ages and abilities into a Baby/Toddler classroom and a Kinder classroom.

### Flexible Daily Routine:

9:00am- Independent learning(Indoor / Outdoor)

10:00am- Structured group time then Morning snack

10:45am- Indoor / Outdoor learning

12:00pm- Structured group time

12:15pm- Lunch followed by relaxation/quiet play

1:00pm- Independent Play (Indoor / Outdoor)

2:00pm- End of session

If children require a sleep during the session, we ask parents to please bring the child's comfort toy, dummy, bottle, and other items their child needs for their sleep routine.

## Orientation

Before commencing at Japara Early Years, you will be introduced to the educators. We recommend that parents come for two organised visits before your child's commencement.

First visit: Parent and Child visit and the parent stays in the learning space with their child for the entire visit (This may occur when the family tours the service).

Second visit: Parent and Child visit, Once the child is settled the parent can move out of sight of the child (perhaps to the kitchenette) for a small period of time (around half an hour).

Orientation gives the parent and the child time together with the educators, allowing them to develop a relationship. Orientation sessions are based on the individual needs of each child/family and we may recommend more sessions in some circumstances.

# FEES & POLICIES

## Fees

Childcare payments can be made by signing onto Debit Success in your Xplor Parent app, by Direct Deposit or pin payments (details can be found on the bottom of your account statement) or with the EFTPOS facility in Japara's Main Office. Each child booked into a session is charged at a rate of \$15.00 per hour, prior to any eligible Government Subsidies being applied to the account.

Accounts are to be settled within 7 days of the child's attendance.



## Cancellation

Japara Early Years uses a cancellation fee to cover losses incurred where children do not attend a booked session as per below.

- Cancellations of a child's booked day will incur the usual charges.
- With sufficient notice (at least 7 days) of an intended absence a child's regular booked day can be marked as a holiday and no fee charged. Note there are limitations on the period of time a child can hold there position using the holiday booking.
- Where a child has an illness on the Early Childhood education and care excludable diseases list and provides a medical certificate no fees will apply

## Late Payment fees and debt recovery

Japara's Director Early Years and Bookkeeper will be responsible for outstanding fees directly with families. Any discussions regarding fee payments should be addressed to Japara's Early Years Director in the first instance.

## Late Collection Fee

If for any reason you are unable to collect your child at the time their booking ends please contact the service immediately. Where parents are late at the end of the child's bookings, for periods of more than 5 minutes, they will be charged an additional \$10.00 per 15 minutes or part thereof.

## Allowable Absences

Under the Child Care Subsidy families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year. These 42 allowable absences can be taken for any reason, including public holidays and when children are sick, without the need for families to provide documentation.

Child care providers must keep records of each absence for the child. Families can see their year-to-date absence count through their Centrelink online account via myGov.

## Enrolment Policy

Under our current operational and licensing terms children can be booked in for a minimum of 2 hours and a maximum of 5 hours per day, with a maximum of 15 hours per child per week. Enrolment forms and relevant supporting documentation must be completed and returned to Japara before a child can commence. It is the responsibility of the families to communicate any changes to the details on these forms with Early Years educators or via the Xplor app. Enrolment details are required to remain current and therefore parents will be given links to check and update them on an annual basis.

## Immunisation, Illness, Medication

Japara Early Years, aim to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children in our care. We are obligated under the government regulations to follow the No Jab- No play policies. All families are requested to provide an up-to-date Medicare immunisation record upon enrolment and whenever a child receives further immunisations.

To reduce the risk of spreading infection, children will not be accepted or will be sent home if they display any of the following;

- A higher-than-normal temperature within the last 24 hours
- Unidentified rashes
- Have had an occurrence of diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Have had an occurrence of vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Have been prescribed antibiotics within the last 24 hours

Children must stay at home if they have any of the infectious diseases listed on the Staying Healthy in Childcare excludable diseases list.

Educators will contact the parents/ guardian of a child displaying any likely symptoms of illness and ask that the child be collected from the service.

In the event that your child should require medication at the service the Educators will follow the Medication Administration policy. Educators will only administer prescription medication provided by a doctor or medication required under a health action plan. Note all medications must be clearly labelled with the child's full name and manufacturers expiry date.

## Delivery / Collection of Children Policy- Signing in and out

All children must be signed in at their arrival at the centre and signed out at their collection from the centre, this is done using the Xplor platform, should you be unable to sign your child in/out please speak to a staff member who will assist.

## Child Safe Policy - Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting

Please be aware that all educators are legally bound to record and report any suspicions of abuse of a child. Further information can be found in the services Child Protection Policy. Japara Early Years is committed to child safety and we want all children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children's rights and therefore have a zero tolerance of child abuse. Any disclosure to staff or act witnessed that raises safety concerns will be treated very seriously and investigated or reported where necessary.

## Sun Protection / Weather Smart Policy

Japara Early Years follows the Cancer Councils Sun Smart Policy; children are required to bring a named broad brimmed / legionnaire style hat to enable them to play outside during periods of UV levels above 3. Japara branded broad brimmed hats are available to purchase at the Japara Early Years Office for \$20.00

- Children will not be allowed to play outside without a hat (a cap is not considered to meet requirements to provide appropriate protection).
- Please ensure you apply sunscreen before arrival at the centre to ensure it has been absorbed before going outside.
- Play spaces will be set up in the shade where possible.
- Educators will reapply sunscreen at intervals throughout the day (approximately every 2 hours).

## Clothing Policy

Children should wear clothing that is comfortable so they can freely move about and participate in all activities, and this clothing should reflect the weather conditions.

Under the Sun Smart policy all children's back, front and shoulders should be covered (No shoestring straps, tanks tops or singlets -these are not considered to meet requirements to provide appropriate sun protection).

For child safety, no thongs, open toe shoes or shoes without backs are to be worn at the service. In support of children's development children will be permitted to play without shoes (both indoors and outdoors), though children will be required to wear shoes when riding bikes or scooters for safety reasons.

We encourage all families to pack at least two changes of clothing for their child for any toileting accidents and as children will at times participate in messy play and water activities.

## Things you will need to bring to the Centre

- A bag that is clearly labelled. In the bag should be *at least* one complete change of clothing and shoes (more if your child is toilet training).
- If necessary a blanket, comfort toy or dummy used for sleep/rest periods or comfort when upset.
- A sun hat during warmer months or coat and beanie in cooler months.
- If your child wears nappies, please bring at least 4 nappies daily.
- Your child will need to bring their morning tea and lunch in an airtight container.
- A filled drink bottle (only water can be offered whilst at childcare).

Please ensure all items your child brings to the centre are clearly labelled with their name.

Please ensure your child does not bring special toys to the service.

Japara Early Years does not take any responsibility for lost items or broken items.

# FOODS & ALLERGIES



## Morning Tea, Lunch time

Japara Early Years wishes to focus on ensuring the children are learning about sustainability and the impact their actions have on the environment. Therefore, we request that as much as possible, packet food and refined foods should be left at home. Mealtimes should provide learning opportunities for healthy lifestyles and cultural differences. Morning Tea: Please provide a healthy snack for your child. Cut fruit, vegetable sticks and dips, homemade biscuits and slices, dried fruits, cheese and crackers.

Lunch: Please provide a healthy wholesome lunch. Sandwiches, sushi, crackers with spread, fruits, vegetables, dinner leftovers, yoghurt etc.

\*Please keep sweet treats for home.

\*Please note children's meals are not stored in a refrigerator or heated before serving, excluding milk bottles.

## Anaphylaxis / Food Allergies / Asphyxiation

Anaphylaxis and food allergies are extremely serious and can be life threatening.

Please ensure your child has previously consumed any food products you send with them to Japara Early Years and is not considered to have any sort of intolerance to these ingredients. We ask that all foods are age appropriate and where necessary items like grapes and large blueberries be cut in half to avoid risk of asphyxiation.

We are a **nut free** service which means we do not allow nut products of any kind; including spreads, whole nuts or nuts as an ingredient such as in muesli bars. We request you check all food products before packing them into your child's lunchbox. Educators will monitor lunchbox items, unsuitable items will be removed from your child's lunch box and given back at the end of the session.

## Birthdays / Birthday Cakes

If it is your child's birthday, we are happy to celebrate with them. We are unable to have a party for your child but happy to provide a list of who your child plays with at the service should you wish to invite their friends to your celebrations.

You are also welcome to bring in something special for your child to share with their classmates such as a small chocolate or lolly that will be distributed at the end of the session as children leave.

# MISSION & VISION



Japara Early Years is a registered provider of childcare, abiding to all standards and regulations set by Government. Our aim is to provide an exciting and engaging educational program that provides children with opportunities to develop their social, emotional, and physical skills. Whilst being flexible and affordable to allow all families the opportunity to access our services.

## Japara Early Years Philosophy

As a team at Japara Early Years we dedicate ourselves to providing a safe, caring, welcoming, supportive environment for all children, families and visitors.

We pride ourselves in providing all children with the opportunity to explore the environment, experiences, and their sense of self within an environment where they can enrich and enhance their skills through play.

We are a team that believes in empowering children to make their own decisions and therefore we respect children's choices and interests and encourage children to participate in experiences of their own choosing.

## Family Involvement

We like to encourage involvement, interactions and communication between parents/carers, families, educators, and children. Parents are welcome to spend time within our service to assist in further developing connections to the educators and share their skills or culture with the children within our classes.

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have regarding our program planning and love to incorporate the different ideals and interests of our families into our experiences.

Japara is a not-for-profit service; Therefore we may from time to time ask families to attend a working bee or participate in fundraisers to help purchase new equipment and resources for the children at Japara and in support of the wider community groups and charities.

# ACCIDENTS & GRIEVANCES



## Accidents and Emergency Care

If your child is injured whilst at care, the Educators of the session will document details of the incident along with any treatment provided within the Xplor app and parents will be required to sign the form when they collect their child to agree they are aware of the injury.

In the event of a serious injury where an ambulance is required, the Educator will firstly call 000 and follow the instructions of the operators before then contacting the parents.

## Emergency Evacuations and Procedures

Japara's Early Years children and Educators regularly participate in emergency evacuations throughout the year. This is to ensure that the children and Educators know what to do if the service had to be evacuated. In the unlikely event the Service is evacuated, Educators would escort the children to the evacuation meeting points. Families will then be contacted by phone to collect their child/ren. Collection procedures will still apply.

## Complaints / Grievances

If you have any concerns regarding the care of your child or Japara policies and procedures, please follow these guidelines:

1. You are welcome to directly speak to the staff member in the room
2. You are welcome to directly speak to the Director Early Years
3. You are welcome to write a letter of complaint to the Director Early Years
4. You are welcome to write a letter to the Board of Management
5. If you feel your concerns have not been adequately addressed, you can contact the Department of Education and Training on 1300 307 415

## Incursions/ Excursions

We have members of our community come to the Service throughout the year to help support our educational program. Your child's enrolment form will seek your approval for the participation in a general incursions throughout the year, which may utilise spaces and resources in Japara's other buildings such as the projectors or open space and mirrored wall in the main hall.

We may also plan an excursion away from the Centre to extend the children's learning such as walking over to Elizabeth Bridge and the surrounding reserve. During an excursion, Educators observe high Educator/ child ratios at all times, and families are provided with a general excursion form and detailing these events prior to their occurrence.