

ANNIE DENNIS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

PARENTS HANDBOOK 2011

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Preamble

This Parents Handbook provides a general introduction to the Annie Dennis Children's Centre (ADCC), its aims and the way it operates. The information provided derives from the requirements of the Victorian *Children's Services Regulations 2009*, and the policy and philosophies of ADCC.

By reading it we hope you will gain an understanding of how ADCC operates and will encourage you to become actively involved in ADCC. As a community-based centre, the input of parents is invaluable to the future wellbeing of the service.

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ABOUT ADCC

Objectives and Values of ADCC

To provide:

- warm, caring and nurturing environments that are stimulating for the growth of all children and,
- learning environments that are child focused which allow children and adults the opportunity to contribute to the educational program.

To ensure:

- the emotional and physical safety of each child and,
- the rights of all children are upheld, irrespective of gender, race or ability.

We value:

- family relationships and partnerships and,
- community partnerships.

History

ADCC is an amalgamation of the former Annie Dennis Kindergarten and the Oldis Avenue Childcare Centre.

The Kindergarten established in 1936 was one of the first in Melbourne and is named after a prominent local citizen and advocate.

The two-storey building on Bastings Street was originally a family home. Northcote Day Nursery was established as a children's centre in 1928 to serve the needs of the children in the Northcote area. The building underwent extensive renovations in 1984 and again from 2001 through to 2005.

The property is presently owned and maintained by the City of Darebin. In 1985 the Council handed over the management of the Centre to a parent committee and, in 1994, capital works were carried out to physically link the two buildings.

Children's Services Regulations 2009

A copy of the *Children's Services Regulations* and the *Children's Services Act* are available in the front foyer at ADCC, or may be requested from the Director. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development administers the *Children's Services Regulations 2009*.

These regulations determine the minimum requirements for all children's services in Victoria. ADCC is bound by these regulations. The Regulations specify the information that must be made available to parents, the records that must be kept by ADCC and various requirements for the safe care of children.

Licensee

Under the regulations all children's services must be licensed. The licensee is Annie Dennis Children's Centre Inc. The President and Vice President of the Committee are the representatives of the Licensee. The Director (and Assistant Director in the absence of the Director) is the Primary nominee.

As a community-based childcare centre, the license is issued to Annie Dennis Children's Centre Committee of Management Inc.

Hours of Operation

ADCC operates between 7.30am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday.

ADCC is closed on weekends and public holidays.

The Centre can close for up to 3 weeks per year over the Christmas period. The dates are determined by the Committee of Management and may vary slightly each year.

Public holidays that fall during the days of operation are:

- Australia Day
- Labour Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- ANZAC Day (TBC each year)
- Queens Birthday
- Melbourne Cup

EQUITY & INCLUSION

ADCC aims to ensure that all children and their families, irrespective of gender or ability, have the opportunity to participate fully and to have equal access to all services and activities offered.

The use of non-sexist language and behaviour will be encouraged in children and early childhood educators through modelling appropriate behaviours and direct teaching strategies. Early childhood educators will be provided with development programs and educational resources around issues of sexism and education.

Additional Needs/Inclusion

Children whose development, in one or more of the following areas, require specialist support: mobility, expressive and /or receptive communication, social behaviour, safe behaviours, fine motor skills, vision, hearing, self care, cognitive skills and medical needs are defined as having 'additional needs'. 'Inclusion' refers to the incorporation of children with additional needs into ADCC to ensure that they have equal opportunities to achieve their maximum potential.

ADCC will provide opportunities for all eligible children with additional needs to participate in the childcare and/or kindergarten program. The early childhood educators, in consultation with parents and additional resource services will

support the families to enable their child to participate in all aspects of the program where additional needs exist.

Enrolment Procedure

Specific information is important to assist the early childhood educators in planning for children with additional needs. Enrolment information will be given to parents when their child first enrolls.

Additional Resources

To determine what additional resources the early childhood educators may require; the early childhood educators will consult with parents/guardians, and other professionals and/or agencies. Assistance may be sought through the City of Darebin's Children's Services Support Program. More information about additional resources can be obtained from the office.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

ADCC embraces and advocates a positive understanding of the language, cultural, ethnic and racial diversity of the community. ADCC aims to be aware of the backgrounds and particular needs of the children/families by drawing on the skills, talents, knowledge and expertise of the families attending ADCC and encouraging parent/family involvement. ADCC acknowledges and supports the wide range of family structures that exist in our community today.

Children are encouraged to use home languages/phrases at ADCC and the early childhood educators aim to provide positive experiences that promote positive attitudes in children about ethnicity, race, skin colour and gender.

PHILOSOPHY OF ADCC

Children and Families

We believe:

- that the emotional and physical safety of each child is fundamental to security whilst at the centre
- children's self-esteem and sense of belonging are vital to their continuing growth and development
- children feel secure in an environment which is consistent, flexible, and respects their individual needs
- it is healthy for children to freely express and experience their emotions
- children have a right to be involved in decision making, they need time and opportunities to develop their own ideas, and form their own opinions
- children need opportunities to develop positive relationships with adults and peers
- children are intrinsically motivated to learn through play and exploration
- children need to know that cultural diversity is valued, respected, encouraged and celebrated, and
- the connection between the child and home is vital in creating positive relationships with all families.

Early Childhood Educators

We believe:

- teaching children to uphold their rights
- demonstrating warmth and empathy towards all children
- in being advocates for young children and families, early childhood services and our profession
- in being positive role models for the children and each other
- learning is a shared active process between children, families and early childhood educators
- that ongoing professional development is vital to implement quality practices
- in order for the children to reach their full potential we need to work in partnership with children and families ,and
- by acknowledging each others diversity and uniqueness we create a positive learning environment.

Environment and Community

We believe:

- children are spontaneous and learn through flexible educational programs
- the educational environment is a teacher...and should be cared for and respected

- natural resources give children an understanding and respect for the environment
- children need hands-on experiences to connect with and build an awareness of their environment and the world around them
- children learn best when offered open-ended materials, ample time and the opportunity to investigate, imagine, dream, hypothesise, problem solve, transform and invent
- children's day-to-day learning is enhanced through the active involvement in caring for centre pets
- in enhancing a positive connection and working collaboratively with diverse organisations, and
- in sharing the responsibility towards environmentally sustainable practices and learning experiences.

CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

We view children as creative, curious, responsible, resilient, capable and resourceful individuals. This holistic view of the child encompasses a commitment to provide a warm, caring, safe, respectful and stimulating learning environment for all children in our diverse society. All the early childhood educators aim to support children's learning through play. Learning experiences, daily routines and resources are based on the children's strengths and interests, and through following their interests the children are able to extend their own learning through inquisitive investigation and creativity. As a result of using educational programs that allow children's interests to be explored they will be continually engaged and challenged. All the educational programs encourage the children's physical, language, social and emotional development. Their creative development is encouraged by using various forms of art medium and free exploration of the environment. Music and movement is incorporated into the educational program through an abundance of various music styles and sounds.

All early childhood educators employed at ADCC are expected to participate and have input into the provision and evaluation of the programs offered. The resources, materials and experiences used by the early childhood educators and children reflect a respect for the natural environment and cultivate awareness in the children about the world they live in.

The natural environment is seen as having an important role in children's learning. The educational programs allow children to independently choose from play experiences within the indoor and outdoor environments; each is seen as an equally rich source of learning. Outdoor programs are encouraged all year round (weather permitting) in all the children's educational programs.

The programming process recognises that children mature at different rates and have individual preferred styles of learning; therefore the progress of each child is monitored closely. The early childhood educators maintain individual children files and/or individual portfolios.

Portfolios

Portfolios are used as a record of children's process of learning:

- what the child has learned and how they have gone about learning
- how they think, question, analyse, synthesise, produce, create, and
- how they interact- intellectually, emotionally and socially with others.

Portfolios enable children to participate in their own work and for the early childhood educators to keep track of each child's progress, following children's strengths, skills, abilities, unique interests and ideas. The portfolio can include children's work samples, records of observations, photos, children's voices and an evaluation of the child.

Families are encouraged to follow their children's progress by reviewing children's drawings, photographs, writings and contribute their own thoughts, ideas and family stories (family voice). It promotes a shared approach in making decisions, allowing early childhood educators to focus on each child and develop an intimate and enduring relationship with them.

The children are involved in choosing items to preserve so that they can analyse their work themselves. Children are able to discuss their ideas, look over their experiences i.e photos, talk about/respond to portfolio entries of personal experiences and develop self awareness of their ideas, where these have come from, and how they have developed through various experiences.

Children are observed when they are playing alone, in small groups, in large groups and at various times of the day.

All entries in children's portfolios are clearly linked to **The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the Centre's philosophy.**

Reflection Diary

The reflections are an overview of the weekly events, individual learning and group projects and are often used by children to reflect their own learning.

The early childhood educators meet with families at least two times per year or at the end of each term. We also see parents, families and friends as being an integral part of our learning community and encourage all to be involved in our educational programs.

VICTORIAN EARLY YEARS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (VEYLDF)

In 2009 both the State and Federal Governments released "frameworks" for early childhood educators to 'assist educators to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning' (VEYLDF)

Both frameworks have a specific emphasis on play-based learning and recognise the importance of communication, language, social and emotional development.

The learning outcomes for both Frameworks acknowledge that children learn in a variety of ways and vary in their capabilities and pace of learning.

The learning outcomes are:

- identity
- community
- wellbeing
- learning
- communication

Our early childhood educators plan with each child and the outcomes in mind; in a combination of individual portfolios, permanent learning areas and reflection diaries.

Further information can be found on both Frameworks located in each room and the office.

USE OF DIGITAL EQUIPMENT

All educational programs are provided with a digital camera, LCD frames and notebooks. These types of media are used to record the children's experiences for their individual files/portfolios, program planning, daily reflection diary and/or to present a slide show to families. The digital cameras, LCD frames and computer notebooks are the property of ADCC and cannot be removed from the premises without prior consent from the Director. Due to confidentiality reasons all photos must remain on the premises.

(Refer to the Information Privacy Policy)

LONG DAY CARE

There are currently 65 long day care places offered as follows:

Room	Number of places	Age of children	Number of staff per day
Possum	10	From 6 months	3
Joeys	10	From 16 months	2
Panda	10	From 2 years	2
Grasshopper	15	From 3 years	2
Rainbow	20	From 4 years	2

KINDERGARTEN

ADCC offers Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten. The kindergarten program is offered separately to the long day care educational programs.

Group A – Childcare & Kindergarten Group

This kindergarten program is offered to the children who attend the long day care centre. The kindergarten sessions are offered Monday to Friday. The minimum requirement for a funded kindergarten place is 10 hrs 45 min per week; children are enrolled in a minimum of 3 sessions a week.

Group B – Kindergarten only Group (sessional)

This kindergarten program is generally offered to children that are not enrolled in the long day care program. Currently the kindergarten sessions are offered Monday to Friday. The minimum requirement for a funded kindergarten place is 10 hours 45 minutes per week; children are enrolled in a minimum of three sessions a week.

After-care program is currently available on Monday and Wednesday afternoon from 12.30 to 4.30pm. Bookings can be made from Friday morning outside the kindergarten room. This program is offered on a casual basis to families, if families require permanent care; please see the office for the availability of ongoing child care. The aftercare program operates during kinder term only. Limited places are available.

Pre-Kindergarten

The Pre-Kindergarten program is a non-subsidised program. Currently one 3-hour session is offered per week on a Thursday morning in the long day care room.

The Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten programs operate during term only.

WAITING LISTS

Kindergarten Waiting Lists

All kindergarten places are allocated by the City of Darebin's Kindergarten Centralised Waiting List office.

For information regarding registration contact:

Kindergarten Centralised Waiting List Office

City of Darebin

8A Newcastle St

Thornbury VIC 3071

Ph: 8470 8105

Siblings Waiting List

The sibling waiting list is currently managed by ADCC. Currently enrolled families can register their child at any time including prior to birth, families must notify the office of the child's details after the birth. Sibling Wait List forms are available from our office.

Children on the sibling waiting list will be offered childcare day/s when currently enrolled families decline an offer for extra days for their child. Offers are made in order of date of application. Families that are offered days but decline the offer may stay on the waiting list and not lose their place.

The sibling wait list is only for current users of the centre. Placing your child on the sibling wait list does not guarantee a childcare place.

Families are required to also register their child on the City of Darebin Central Wait List.

External Waiting List

The external waiting list is managed by the City of Darebin through the Central Waiting List Office. The Central Wait List system operates on behalf of the community based childcare services within the municipality to facilitate the placement of the children into these services.

Children can be enrolled for child care at any time including prior to birth, families must notify the Centralised Waiting List office of the child's details after the birth.

Children's names can be added to the database in order of receipt of application. Allocations are made in date if receipt order and according to the Priority of Access guidelines. Registering on the waiting list does not guarantee child care.

For information regarding registration contact:

Childcare Centralised Waiting List Office

City of Darebin

8A Newcastle St

Thornbury VIC 3071

Ph: 8470 8105

Applications received at the Central Waiting List Office will be sent a letter of confirmation within four weeks of receipt of their application.

Allocation of external childcare places are made by the Central Wait list office after services have indicated the number of vacancies available, this usually occurs between October/November of each year.

Request for Extra Childcare Days

Once enrolled in the Centre families are able to request extra days for their child. Families can do this by completing a 'request of days' application form available from the office. This process does not guarantee the availability of extra days for the current year or subsequent year.

When/if extra childcare days become available, families will be offered these days in order of date of application.

The following procedure applies when allocating days:

- Letters of requests/exchange of days must be made in writing and dated
- Places will be allocated according to date of application on the 'request of days' application form or on the letter of request.

PRIORITY OF ACCESS

Priorities of access guidelines are:

- First Priority – Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Second Priority – Workforce participants where a single parent or both parents are employed, seeking employment or studying/training for future employment
- Third Priority – any other child

Within these main categories priority will be given to the following:

- Children in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families
- Children in families that include a disabled person
- Children in families that include an individual whose taxable income under clause 7 of Schedule 2 of the Family Assistant Act is 100 percent
- Children in families with a non-English speaking background
- Children in socially isolated families
- Children of single parents

If a parent's situation changes so as to reduce the need for care then their place may be open to review.

ENROLMENT

Once places have been offered by the centralised waiting list office, families will receive a letter to confirm their child's place at ADCC; this letter guarantees the place. The Centre sends an enrolment package to each family. All paperwork must be returned to the centre before a child can commence long day care or kindergarten.

A full 2-week non-refundable fee or non-refundable kindergarten deposit is required to secure your child's place. Upon enrolment families will receive an enrolment package and an orientation program will be discussed between the family and the Centre Director.

During the enrolment process, the Director will consult families about whether the service requires additional means to support their child's participation in the program for example, staff training, equipment, and assistance with medical needs, information, and specialist assistance. If support is required, the service may suggest the formation of a support group; referral to external support/resource networks; and/or seek parental permission to consult with other professionals to support the child's access and participation in the program.

Information and enrolment forms are available in other languages to assist families who are from non- English speaking backgrounds. Where necessary, additional support staff will be made available for children to assist them to settle in.

Orientation Program

Just as adults are often anxious about meeting new people or starting in a new job, commencing child care can be an anxious experience for you and your child. Let us reassure you that this is completely normal. Our early childhood educators are experienced and can help you and your child settle into ADCC. Parental involvement is highly recommended at ADCC so please feel free to phone ADCC throughout the course of the day. Although it may be hard to believe at first, generally most children settle very quickly after parents leave!

Parents of children commencing at ADCC are encouraged to attend an orientation program at the commencement of their enrolment to aid the child's and parents' settling into childcare. Participation in the program is highly

recommended and ensures the settling in process is a positive experience for all. This is also a valuable time to exchange information about your child with their educators.

We suggest that you spend some time with your child at ADCC to allow you both to become familiar with the early childhood educators, the children and the program. Once you have commenced care we also suggest that you start with only half days until your child is settled. The Early childhood educators will be happy to spend some time with you to discuss your child's needs and interests.

Please speak to the Director if you and your child require additional support to settle into ADCC. The policy of ADCC is to support the diverse needs of all families within the community in all aspects of its operation, and within the children's program. Your input is therefore valued and encouraged.

Enrolment Details

It is essential that enrolment information be kept up to date. This is required to meet the regulations (it is particularly important that information is current in case your child is involved in an accident/they are unwell/or if we need to evacuate the building).

FEES

ADCC operates on a break-even budget. Childcare fees are set by the Committee of Management and subject to change depending on the budget. The current fee is on display in the foyer and available from the Director.

Fee Payment

Fees are payable **fortnightly** in advance for children attending the long day care programs. For families enrolled in kindergarten fees are payable at **the beginning of each term**. Childcare and kindergarten fees are payable when children are absent due to illness/ holidays and for public holidays.

Childcare fees are payable from when the centre re opens at the beginning of each year whether or not families decide to send their child from this date. New families who decide to commence care after this date will be charged full fee for their booked days for this period until their child commences care. The FAO Act does not permit CCB to be paid for these days nor can the centre report these days as absences. CCB can only be attributed to days on which care would otherwise been provided. Therefore, families will not be able to claim CCB as reduced fees or as a lump sum for that period.

Invoices are issued twice per month.

The centre currently closes for approximately 2 weeks over Christmas and fees are not charged for that period. If children do not attend from the first week of ADCC re-opening in the New Year, or if children finish early before Christmas, families will be charged the normal fee in order for the child's place to be held.

ADCC has a **no cash** policy. The preferred payment methods are:

- automatic direct debit
- internet transfer
- cheque
- money order.

In order to verify fee payments ensure that your name/or child's name is included on the direct debit/internet transfer so that we can identify who made the payment. Unidentified payments cannot be processed. If your payment does not appear on your invoice it may not have been processed, please contact the office.

Please make cheques/money orders payable to **Annie Dennis Children's Centre** and place them in the fee box outside the office door. If there is an overpayment of fees, this will be offset against further fees.

Please speak to the office staff to make arrangements for paying by direct debit or internet transfer. If you anticipate any difficulty with making payments please see the office staff.

ADCC does not have large cash reserves and relies on your fees for its operational costs. Please remember that it is your responsibility to remain up-to-date with your fees. Do not wait for an invoice.

(Refer to the Fees Policy)

Fee Arrears

If payment of fees falls into arrears the debt recovery procedure is as follows:

If fees are two weeks overdue (effectively four weeks when including two weeks in advance) you will receive a Notice of Intention in which you will be asked to pay the outstanding amount within seven days or make arrangements with the Director to follow a payment plan.

Following the Notice of Intention, if fees remain unpaid and arrangements have not been made with the Director you will receive a second letter stating that the Committee of Management will be withdrawing your child/children's place if the outstanding amount is not paid immediately. A debt recovery agency will be used.

Failure to pay overdue fees will result in your child's place being withdrawn.

(Refer to the Fees Policy)

Child Care Benefit

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is a payment made by the Australian Government to families to assist with the cost of child care.

All families prior to commencing childcare are encouraged to contact the Family Assistance Office (FAO) to determine their eligibility to claim CCB. Eligibility is determined by completing a Child Care Benefit claim form in order for the Child Care Benefit claim to proceed.

Once a family is assessed to receive CCB and the FAO has processed the family's claim for reduced fees or recorded their intent to claim CCB by lump sum they will send a letter to the family with their CRN and CCB assessment Customer Reference Numbers (CRNs) identify the child/ren and one parent (the parent making the claim) with the FAO.

Once ADCC submits attendances for children in long day care to DEEWR on a weekly basis, attendances are processed and sent back to ADCC electronically. CCB is automatically included according to each family's entitlement.

More information can be obtained by ringing the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

Multiple Child Care Benefit

If you have other children attending an approved childcare service e.g. After School Hours care, Family Day Care or other children's centre in the same week, you are entitled to receive the multiple rate of childcare benefit (CCB). This means that your fees will be further reduced. It is each family's responsibility to notify the office if you have other children attending another approved childcare service.

Claiming CCB as a Lump Sum Payment

Families intending to claim CCB as a lump sum after the end of the financial year can contact the Family Assistance Office (FAO). One parent and each child are allocated Customer Reference Numbers (CRNs). ADCC submits attendance records to Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to provide details of care provided. These records are then sent to the FAO to support the family's claim. After the end of the financial year, the family lodges their claim with the FAO.

50% Child Care Rebate

The Child Care Rebate entitlement is calculated as 50 per cent of the out-of-pocket child care expenses for approved child care up to an annual cap. From July 2010, the Child Care Rebate (CCR) annual cap will be \$7500 per child.

To be eligible for the CCR, families must:

- have used approved childcare and
- be eligible for Child Care Benefit (CCB) and
- have met the work, training, study test (for the purposes of the CCR).

For more information you can contact the ATO on 13 28 61

Invoices & Receipts

To comply with Commonwealth Government requirements, ADCC must provide you with a statement displaying all care used, fees charged, Child Care Benefit calculations, and payments, and absences, which your child has taken in the financial year. This information is included on your fortnightly statement.

Absences

Each child is eligible to receive CCB for an initial **42** days of absences per financial year which can be used for any reason and without proof of circumstances. Once the initial **42** days have been exhausted, additional absences may be claimed in certain circumstances.

After the initial **42** absence days have been paid for a financial year only absences which meet the additional absence criteria will attract CCB.

Additional Absence reasons are:

- an illness (with a medical certificate)
- an outbreak of infectious disease, when the child is not immunised

- any other absences due to sickness of the child, a parent or sibling, supported by medical certificates
- a parent being on a rotating shift or rostered day off
- a temporary closure of a school or a pupil free day
- shared custody arrangements due to a court order, consent order or parenting order
- attendance at preschool
- exceptional circumstances

The initial **42** absence days must be exhausted before additional absences can be claimed.

ATTENDANCE

Children may not be left before opening 7.30am and must be collected before closing time at 6.00pm.

Attendance Book

All children must be signed in and out of the centre and kindergarten programs. Parent /Guardians are required to sign the child into the sign in/out book on arrival and sign the child out on departure. It is absolutely vital that children are signed in and out. Attendance books are used to account for all the children in case of an emergency.

No child/children will be allowed to leave ADCC unless accompanied by an authorised adult or parent/guardian. Your consent is required for other people to collect your child from the centre on your behalf as stated on your child's enrolment form.

Families are required to inform the office of any changes regarding the collection of their child. If the authorised person collecting your child has not been to the centre before they are:

- required to bring a form of identification to verify their identity.
- required to ring the door bell so that staff member can show them to the child's room.

Children may be collected only by a person over the age of sixteen who has been nominated by the parents.

Late Pick-up from Long Day Care and Kindergarten

Parents and guardians whose children are enrolled in long day care are required to collect their child/children by **5.45pm** and leave the centre by **6.00pm**.

Parents/Guardians whose children are enrolled in kindergarten sessions only are required to collect their child/children by **12pm, 12.30pm or 4.45pm** on the day of their kindergarten session.

We understand that on some occasions parents/guardians are late due to factors out of their control eg train cancellation etc. If possible parents/guardians should notify the Centre where a late pick-up is likely.

The following procedure will apply to the parent/guardian upon their arrival:

1. On the first occasion the parent/guardian will be:

- cautioned regarding their late arrival and notified of the late fee, and
- requested to complete late arrival details in the 'late book' and sign the entry.

Where another person is authorised by the parent or guardian to collect a child/children and they are late, the following procedure will apply to the person collecting the child:

- cautioned regarding their late arrival and notified of the late fee, and
- requested to complete details of their late arrival in the 'late book' and sign the entry.

The parent or guardian will be:

- requested to co-sign the entry in the 'late book' the next time they are at the Centre.

For any subsequent infringement, the parents will be levied a fine payable at the rate of **\$10.00 every five minutes or part thereof. (\$2.00 per minute)**

Where a late fee is payable, the parent will be:

- requested to complete details in and sign the 'late book' and sign the entry and,
- hand delivered a letter from the director with the following information:
 - date of the infringement
 - date of caution
 - number of minutes for which the late fee will apply
 - total amount owed in the late fee, and
 - notified of the date the late fine will be included to the next invoice.

2. The parent will not avoid the effect of the above penalties simply because they notified the Centre in advance of a late pick-up.
3. The parent will be requested to attend an interview with the President, Secretary and Director if three fineable infringements occur within a six-month period. The aim of the interview will be to find a suitable resolution of the recurring late pick-up. If no resolution can be achieved, the President, Secretary and Director shall be empowered to withdraw the Centre's services from the parent or guardian.

Time In Lieu (Public Holidays)

Parents whose child attends ADCC on a part-time basis and on a day on which a public holiday falls are able to take advantage of the day-in-lieu of Public Holidays. This allows parents to access an extra day of care, at no extra charge for each Public Holiday they incur in the current year.

Planned absence sheets are located in each room. Families are encouraged to fill out the dates or inform staff of their child's absence, eligible families will then be able to book for days- in- lieu.

The following guidelines will apply for taking time-in-lieu days:

- priority will be given to families who have Time-in-lieu days owing to them
- time-in- lieu days do not carry over to the following year
- at the beginning of each month the absence sheet for the current month will be placed on display for bookings, and
- parents are requested to let room staff know if they are planning to take advantage of the Time-in Lieu of Public Holiday arrangements.

Families whose childcare days fall on a public holiday will be given priority for childcare days when absences occur in the room.

TERMINATION OF A CHILDCARE PLACE

Parents wishing to relinquish part of or all of their enrolled hours during the year are required to give a **MINIMUM OF THREE WEEKS NOTICE IN WRITING. If families leave the centre before the three week notice period has expired, CCB will not be paid for the remaining childcare days during the notice period and families will be responsible for the FULL FEE during the notice period regardless of attendance at the service.** During this notice period, the Director will endeavour to find families to take up the vacant hours of care.

FAMILIES AND STAFF COMMUNICATION

It is important that each day when you bring your child to ADCC, you find the time to talk to the early childhood educators. We invite all parents to be actively involved in all aspects of ADCC. Through your involvement, your child will develop a sense of continuity between home and ADCC, which will in turn facilitate his or her adjustment to ADCC.

This will enable you to report any significant changes or events happening at home that may affect your child's day. There are many ways that the early childhood educators will communicate with you, for example a quick chat at drop-off and pick-up times.

A communication plan is a way to clarify the levels and methods of communication between you and your child's carers. The communication plan encourages parents to meet with the early childhood educators to discuss their child's progress and together set goals and objectives for their child.

These meetings are scheduled to up to 2 times per year for the children in childcare, the approximate times are: April and September.

Remember to pass on any information you think will help us make your child's day a happy one. In particular, we seek input from parents in instances where they, or their child, have special needs that may affect access to the educational program. This information will assist staff to provide for individual needs, and ensure that participation in the educational program is enhanced. Where specific strategies are required, these shall be discussed with parents, particularly in the case of engaging external assistance and advice where parental consent shall be sought.

You are welcome to visit ADCC to see the children at play, to observe and discuss their various routines and the educational programs provided.

The best program for ADCC can only be achieved if parents and the early childhood educators work together as a team.

ADCC Website

Our website creates a profile for ADCC outside the Centre; it has many resources for parents. Please log in to www.anniedennis.org.au and have a look, even better subscribe and you will be emailed with notices for upcoming events, rather than receiving printed notices in your child's pocket.

Information for Families

ADCC has a newsletter that is distributed to parents every three months. Parent contributions and suggestions are welcome, and can be emailed to the Director at aden@alphlink.com.au.

Parents are also welcome to borrow any of the resources from our staff/parent library. Borrowing times are for **two weeks**; please let office staff know which book/s you are borrowing.

The names and photos of Committee members are displayed in the foyer.

Information about other sources of family support can be sought from the parent resource area. Other information about upcoming events is also displayed regularly in the foyer.

Working Bees

The ADCC building is owned and maintained by the City of Darebin. Council contractors carry out any major maintenance work. However, the environment sub committee organises four working bees per year (one per term) to do the odd jobs around the centre e.g. gardening, pruning, equipment maintenance etc. They are held on weekends for 3 hours.

Parents are encouraged to participate at these working bees or alternatively if you can assist in other ways e.g. sewing, or take things home to repair let the staff know.

STAFF at ADCC

Staff List 2011

Staff member	Role	Qualification
Lara	Director	Advanced Diploma in Children's Services
Anna	Assistant Director	Advanced Diploma in Children's Services
Renee	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Danielle	Early Childhood Educator	Certificate III In Children's Services, currently studying Diploma of Children's Services
Helen A	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma in Children's Services
Bia	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma in Children's Services
Sarah	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services; currently studying Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
Kay	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Effie	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Jasmine	Early Childhood Educator	Cert III in Children's Services
Ariel	Early Childhood Educator	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood); currently studying Masters degree
Melinda	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Fiona	Early Childhood Educator	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
Simone	Early Childhood Educator	Cert III in Children's Services
Helen D	Early Childhood Educator	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
Jane	Early Childhood Educator	Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies
Patricia	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Maria	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Rosalinda	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Catherine	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Rachel	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Nicole	Early Childhood Educator/Admin	Diploma of Children's Services
Bernadette	Early Childhood Educator	Currently studying Cert III in Children's Services
Dolores	Centre Chef	Food Safety Supervisor

Casual staff		
Christine	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma of Children's Services
Katherine	Early Childhood Educator	Currently studying Diploma of Children's Services
Staff On maternity leave		
Doreen	Early Childhood Educator	Cert III in Children's Services
Hanadi	Early Childhood Educator	Diploma in Children's Services

Early Childhood Educators

ADCC is an equal opportunity employer: ADCC and its Committee of Management does not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, religion or disability. ADCC values bilingual and bicultural skills.

ADCC will ensure that adequate measures are adopted to enable the early childhood educators to effectively meet the diverse needs of children and their families.

Our early childhood educators shall ensure that at all times the dignity and rights of children and their families are respected and that the safety and security of all children are maintained.

Qualified Early Childhood Educators

ADCC is committed to ensure that qualified early childhood educators are employed within the correct ratios to meet the required regulations.

For an early childhood educator to be employed as qualified, their qualification must meet the requirements of Regulation 60 in the *Children's Services Regulations 2009*.

The qualified staff to child ratio at ADCC is according to the *Children's Services Regulations 2009*. At all times ADCC is open, qualified early childhood educators are on duty in the prescribed ratios.

No. of Children Present	Age of Children	Numbers of Staff Members	Number of Total Staff Members Who Must be Qualified Staff Members
15 or less	Under 3	1 for every 5 children or fraction of that number	1
	3 or More	1	
16 or more	Under 3	1 for every 5 children or fraction of that number	1 for every 15 children or fraction of that number
	3 or More	1 for every 15 children or fraction of that number	1 for every 30 children or fraction of that number

This table regarding staff/child ratios are extracted from the *Children's Services Regulations 2009*, regulation 53.

Relief Staff

The centre employs additional Diploma trained early childhood educators to be utilised for staff absences due to sick leave and annual leave. This ensures continuity and consistency of care for the children and the room staff. Casual and Agency staff are also employed from agencies, when this occurs we do try to ensure the casual staff are familiar with the centre and the children.

Complaints

ADCC is committed to hearing parents' feedback and concerns regarding the care of their children and running of ADCC. ADCC aims to address and resolve any issues of concern directly, with confidentiality and respect, in a positive and supportive environment for all concerned.

(Refer to Complaints Policy)

ADMINISTRATION

Committee of Management

The Committee of Management is made up of an Executive and general members. The Executive is made up of the office-bearing roles of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, who meet separately with the Director, when required.

The Committee of Management consists of:

- President
- Vice president
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Director of the Centre
- Assistant Director
- A staff representative
- At least seven 'ordinary' members of whom at least three are to be parents from long day care and three parents from the kindergarten.

The Committee encourages input from parents, early childhood educators, children and the local community into the service, and in particular, into its delivery of a children's program.

Committee members are elected at ADCC's Annual General Meeting, held in November. Among the responsibilities and duties of the Committee of Management are the development of policies, planning of budgets, management of finances, setting of fees and appointment of staff.

Committee meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm at ADCC. All parents are welcome to attend meetings, and are encouraged to join the Committee or a subcommittee.

Centre Director

The Director is responsible to the Committee of Management for the overall administration of ADCC according to its Constitution and the policies contained

in the Parent/Staff Handbooks, for ensuring all applicable laws, regulations and directives are adhered to, and for promoting ADCC and its activities in the local community.

Subcommittees

The policy, staffing, social, environment and website subcommittees support the management committee by focusing on particular aspects of ADCC. These groups are made up of parents and staff and make recommendations to the management committee, as well as performing many of the tasks involved.

You do not need to be a member of the Committee of Management to belong to a subcommittee, come to Committee meetings or to make a contribution to ADCC.

SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CHILDREN

This is a matter of great importance to all early childhood educators, as well as to you as a parent/guardian. If you arrange for another person to bring or pick-up your child please make sure that the procedures are clearly understood.

- Each child must be brought into ADCC and accepted by an early childhood educator.
- No child will be given into the care of anyone other than the parent/guardian or lawfully authorised person to collect the child, as indicated on the enrolment form or, in an emergency.
- When collecting children parent/guardians must acknowledge with staff that they are leaving.
- Parent/guardians are required to sign the child into the attendance book on arrival and sign the child out on departure. It is absolutely vital that children are signed in and out in case of an emergency. Attendance books are used to account for all the children in case of an emergency. Please ensure that older siblings are supervised in the centre.

All current families are given the code to enter the building via the main entry from Oldis Ave. Parents are requested not to disclose this code to other persons. The code to enter the main building is changed yearly. Visitors to ADCC must ring the doorbell to be attended by a staff member.

Maintenance workers from the City of Darebin wear ID badges.

Custody and Access

If a parent is experiencing difficulties associated with custody and access then please discuss this with the Director. A copy of the current custody order is required for our files, and we will do our utmost to abide by this. If there is the likelihood of any problems arising when collecting your child, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the Director of any change to court orders.

PRIVACY

Confidentiality

ADCC respects the right of all families to confidentiality. To achieve this, all information regarding financial and personal situations will be treated

confidentially. Only those members of ADCC who have a need to know will have access to it.

Information about the special needs of any family or child will be treated as confidential by staff and stored securely.

Information regarding the additional needs of any child will be clearly documented and available to all early childhood educators within the bounds of confidentiality.

Parental permission must be given for outside services to have access to individual records and for the service to share information.

Information Privacy Policy

We believe your privacy is important. We have put in place a Information Privacy Policy which illustrates how we will collect, use, disclose, manage and transfer personal information including health information.

(Refer to the Information privacy Policy)

POLICIES

The Centre's policies are available from the website or in the Centre foyer

Children's Nappies

The Centre uses compostable nappies. Families whose children wear nappies are provided with information upon enrolment about the compostable nappies.

The compostable nappies are disposed of offsite for composting.

(Refer to Nappy Changing and Toileting Policy)

Children's Belongings

Some children like to bring along a special toy or blanket for rest time and a familiar 'friend' from home can provide a feeling of security for a new child. However, we do not encourage children to bring their own toys for playing with. Children will naturally become upset if their toys get broken or lost.

Children may be asked to put away their personal toys should these toys encourage aggressive play. Early childhood educators will adopt behaviour management strategies that are appropriate to each case involving aggressive play. We take as much care as possible in ensuring that clothing, toys, prams, car seats, etc. are returned to the correct family. The labelling of all items can help us achieve this. However, we must make it clear that ADCC is not responsible for damaged lost or stolen items. If families choose to leave prams and car seats in ADCC during the day it is completely at the family's own risk.

Sleep and Rest Time

Early childhood educators encourage children to rest during the day; usually between 12.45 and 2.30 p.m. Children's rest/sleep time in the babies' routines are individualised according to their needs. Children and babies' will be settled to sleep in accordance with SIDS guidelines.

A daily sleep is appropriate for the younger children, while a quiet time may be more appropriate in the 3 to 4 year old room. During this time the room will remain well lit and the children will be encouraged to play quietly.

In the 4-5 year old room when most of the children are showing signs of outgrowing the sleep/ rest period, early childhood educators will, in consultation with parents change this routine. When this occurs the children will have the opportunity for a short rest and then participate in quiet activities. The children who fall asleep will still be able to do so

(Refer to the Safe Sleeping Policy)

Food Preparation And Provision

ADCC stores, prepares and provides food in accordance with the requirements of the Food Act. A current Food Safety Program is maintained that meets the requirements of the Food Act and is approved by the Health Department of the City of Darebin.

Food Brought from Home

There are a number of children enrolled at ADCC that have severe life threatening food allergies. This means if any of these children are exposed to even small traces of foods or food products that they are allergic to, it can trigger an acute severe allergic reaction called **anaphylaxis**.

The most common foods children are allergic to are:

- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts
- Cow milk

We aim to as a far as practicable to maintain safe environments for all the children. We strongly ask families not to bring 'snacks' (store bought or home prepared) into the centre.

No crackers, chocolate bars, muesli bars, fruit bars, cheese and cracker snacks, almonds, cashews, peanut butter, nutella.....

Foods that contain **traces of nuts/peanuts/seeds cannot be brought into the centre.**

Birthday Cakes

As a food safety registered organisation we follow strict guidelines according to our food safety plan and are responsible for ensuring that all foods consumed by all the children are prepared hygienically and stored safely. As most birthday cakes are prepared offsite in the homes of families and made to be consumed by group/s of children, we are responsible if a child becomes unwell.

Therefore, we will not accept any birthday cakes or any other types of foods brought into the centre for consumption by the children. This procedure will ensure that all foods consumed by the children are prepared in our kitchen according to our food safety guidelines and standards set in our food safety plan.

The centre will purchase store bought cake mixes which are 'nut, wheat, gluten, dairy and egg free' enabling children to share in the birthday celebration and cake.

Birthday cakes can be ordered through the kitchen or office.

The cost of the cake is \$10.00 and will be charged to families.

(Refer to the Food Safety Policy and Anaphylaxis Policy)

Food Safety Plan and Food Safety Audit

A food safety plan has been developed for ADCC. It includes such things as cleaning schedules and food preparation processes and procedures. A copy of the plan is available from the office for parents to view. ADCC undergoes a yearly audit by an independent food safety inspector.

Start Right Eat Right Award Program

Start Right Eat Right is an award program scheme, funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services, which recognises best practice in nutrition and food service in long day care centres. *Start Right Eat Right* encourages centres to provide healthy foods in a positive mealtime environment. Participating in the *Start Right Eat Right* Award Scheme puts centres at the forefront of making a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of children. ADCC is committed to participating in this process; the centre undergoes review every 2 years.

First Aid & Anaphylaxis

All early childhood educators employed at ADCC have a current Level 2 First Aid and Anaphylaxis Management training Certificates. Early childhood educators undergo CPR and Anaphylaxis refresher training annually.

(Refer to Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy)

Infectious Diseases

ADCC adheres to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development policy regarding infection control (Minimum period of exclusion table is on display in the foyer and in all the children's rooms). This includes procedures the early childhood educators must follow in relation to nappy changing, hand washing, cleanup of body fluids etc.

All parents will be notified of any case of infectious disease in ADCC. Written information about the specific disease will be made available.

If your child is diagnosed as having an infectious disease, or has been in contact with an infectious disease and is showing signs or symptoms, early childhood educators must inform the Director immediately. This allows for all early childhood educators and parents to be notified as soon as possible.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides strict guidelines regarding the exclusion of children affected by infectious disease. Please speak to the Director if you are in any doubt.

The following conditions are the most common:

Gastro-entiritis (Diarrhoea/Vomiting)

A child who has watery stools/vomiting should be kept home and not return to ADCC until he or she has been free of these symptoms for **48 hours**. Gastro is a communicable disease and must be notified to the Health Dept and strict guidelines must be followed. Micro-organisms that cause vomiting and diarrhoea are highly contagious and will spread quickly throughout ADCC.

If, however your child has an allergy or condition that regularly causes diarrhoea, please inform the early childhood educators at the time enrolment or diagnosis and provide a letter from the Doctor stating this is the case.

Contagious Conjunctivitis

This is an infection of the eyes, characterised by redness, a yellow discharge and watering. This condition requires specific medical treatment and children may not return to ADCC until after 24 hours on medication and the discharge has cleared.

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

The child needs to be excluded until treatment has commenced. Other members of the family should be checked.

School Sores (Impetigo)

This is a contagious skin infection characterised by crusted sores that usually appear on the face. The condition requires specific

medical treatment and the child should be kept at home until the sores have been healed or treatment has started and the sores are completely covered.

Cold Sores (Herpes Simplex)

These are painful sores usually around the mouth, and possibly accompanied by a fever. The condition requires medical attention if the infection is severe or the area becomes secondarily infected. The child should be excluded until sores have healed.

Hand-Foot-Mouth Infection

This is a highly contagious infection which consists of small lesions which tend to spread quickly on the side of the tongue or inside the mouth around the cheek region. Lesions may also appear on the hands and feet, and occasionally on the buttocks.

Emergencies

Fire Fighting Equipment

The City of Darebin is responsible for arranging for all units to be serviced annually.

Emergency Management Plan

Emergency management plans are displayed in all the rooms, the foyer and the director's office. All early childhood educators are familiar with evacuation procedures and participate in quarterly fire drills. All early childhood educators are familiar with the Emergency Procedures manual found in each room.

(Refer to Emergency Management Plan in each of the children's rooms)

Early Warning System

ADCC has been installed with an automated early warning system that detects smoke and extreme high temperatures in the building and roof cavity. The system is checked each month by a council appointed contactor specialising in monitoring early warning systems to ensure that it is operating properly. The system sounds an audible siren, which alerts all early childhood educators to

evacuate the children according to our evacuation procedures on display in all rooms to our designated evacuation points.

Safety Checks and Maintenance of the Building and Equipment

The City of Darebin conducts a yearly maintenance audit of the building and equipment. Fortnightly maintenance checks of the building, children's rooms and outdoor areas are conducted by a staff member appointed to this role. This information is checked by the Director prior to notifying the council. Issues of safety and maintenance are addressed as they arise.

(Refer to the Building, Environment and Equipment Safety Checks Policy)