

Family Handbook



BRINGING LEARNING TO LIFE.





WELCOME TO NIDO EARLY SCHOOL

Welcome to both you and your child, to what we trust will be an extension of your home. We understand that selecting the right Early School for your child is an incredibly important decision and know how much consideration is given to finding a safe, comfortable, nurturing and peaceful environment. Please let us know if you would like to receive this information in your preferred language.



THE WORD 'NIDO' IS ITALIAN FOR 'NEST' (PRONOUNCED NEE-DOH) AND WAS INSPIRED BY THE ITALIAN PRINCIPLES OF 'REGGIO EMILIA', THE WORLD CLASS EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY UPON WHICH OUR SCHOOLS ARE FOUNDED.

At Nido, we offer exceptional education and care for children, from six weeks of age through to school age.

At all Nido Early Schools, the Reggio Emilia philosophy is combined with the Australian Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standard, to provide the very best standard of education and care.

Regardless of whether you work full time or choose our Nido Early Schools purely for the benefits of education and socialisation, we aim to address the ever-changing needs of the modern family.

UNDERSTANDING REGGIO EMILIA

The Reggio Emilia approach is internationally recognised for the value it places on education and the care of children. A key principle of the Reggio approach is understanding that each child is capable and competent. Our role is to provide the materials, the environment and the educational support that will enable each child to both consolidate and to develop further skills.

It fosters a belief that the child, parent, community and natural environment are all essential to the learning process. The Reggio Emilia approach has strong roots within nature and focuses on a learning environment enriched with creative and sensory experiences.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

We have taken the Reggio Emilia philosophies and adapted them to suit the Australian climate and culture. Our Early Schools are warm environments, utilising premium finishes, with every space feeling light and featuring natural tones and textures, providing a calm environment for learning.

During the day, your child will have the choice to move between indoor and outdoor learning environments including vegetable patches, relaxation spaces and music areas. Most of our Early Schools also have an Atelier, a dedicated arts workshop, where children have the freedom to engage in self-expression, curiosity and creativity.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe:

- Every child should feel a strong sense of well-being
- The environment should reflect our love of nature and our views on sustainability
- The environment is the 'third teacher', therefore it is essential that we set up the environment in a manner that encourages engagement and exploration
- In building relationships with families and encouraging a high degree of involvement and participation
- The early years are the foundation years and by providing meaningful learning experiences, we can nurture a love of learning
- Learning is ongoing, and we constantly seek to develop our own knowledge and thereby offer richer experiences to the children in our care.

OUR NIDO TEAM

Every parent understands how difficult it is to entrust the care of your child to others and that why Nido employs the best in the sector.

The Executive Service Manager (ESM) is responsible for ensuring the smooth day to day running of the school and ensures that we are meeting and exceeding the standards, regulations and laws outlined in the National Quality Framework. All ESMs hold a minimum Diploma level qualification and are the Early School Nominated Supervisor.

The Curriculum Leader (CL) is responsible for ensuring all children are provided with high quality education incorporating the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Reggio Emilia approach. The CL is involved in researching best practice in early years education, ensuring ongoing and valuable improvements within the school. All CLs hold either a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care or a Bachelor of Education.

The Leading Educator supports families to foster a passion for learning in all children. They also create and implement an educational program which demonstrates a superior understanding of the National Quality Framework, whilst actively ensuring professional standards from all staff are maintained and company procedures are adhered to. All Leading Educators are Diploma trained (or equivalent).

All our Educators are dedicated to providing exceptional care and education. They assist the Leading Educator, and all hold a minimum Certificate 3 in Early Education and Care (or are working towards completing) plus first aid/ asthma and anaphylactic training. Every Educator is focused on continually researching best practice in early education and is supported with professional learning and mentoring.

The Service Administrator (SA) is responsible for providing exceptional customer service. The SA assists the ESM with administrative tasks and liaises with families in a professional, friendly and efficient manner.

The smell of cooking from the Cucina (kitchen) and seeing children huddled around getting involved, very much reflects that a passion for food is at the heart of Nido. Each of our cooks has attained a Certificate in menu planning and food safety.

All staff members have successfully passed a Working with Children check and also receive professional development training on a regular basis.



LEARNING

The Early Years Learning Framework guides the Educator's curriculum decision making to ensure quality learning and teaching, with play based learning being fundamental to all experiences at Nido Early Schools. Each child's learning is documented through a cycle of planning and your child's learning journey is captured via our digital platform which you can access at any time.

Nursery (Babies from 6 Weeks to 2 Years)

We understand the trust that families place in us by bringing their baby to our Nido Early School. All our nursery Educators are carefully chosen, not just for their qualifications, but because of their nurturing personalities. Our program is carefully developed to centre around your baby's unique patterns of play, feeding and sleeping. We use this as a guide to introduce daily experiences that will spark their interest, support healthy brain development and promote social skills.

Toddlers (2 to 3 Years of Age)

Our toddlers are encouraged to develop friendships so that they gain confidence, as well as learn co-operation and sharing. We observe each child's interests and develop a program to promote key learning areas. These areas include language, maths, investigation, creative pursuits, fine and gross motor skills, sensory experiences, cultural experiences and environmental understanding.

CONSTANT COMMUNICATION IS MAINTAINED AND
NURTURED WITH PARENTS AT ALL TIMES DURING
THIS VERY IMPORTANT TIME IN YOUR FAMILY
AND CHILD'S LIFE.

Kindergarten (Children from 3 to 5 Years of Age)

Our kindergarten helps prepare your child as a lifelong learner. Your child will be empowered to use their own unique learning style to explore language, maths, investigation, creative pursuits, fine and gross motor skills, sensory experiences, their cultural identity and the environment. Our Kindergarten Educators provide positive learning experiences so that children develop a healthy relationship with learning that extends beyond their school life.

School Aged Children (5 Years of Age and Above)

Some Nido Early Schools provide before and after school care and vacation care for full time school children who attend primary school (please see the Executive Service Manager to see if this is available). This service gives siblings the opportunity to see each other during the day and encourages them to grow and learn from each other. Children are provided with an educational program appropriate for their age in accordance with the Framework for School Age Care. This may include homework time, indoor and outdoor play, games, art/crafts and more. Nido Early Schools offer a school drop-off and collection service when possible. If this service needs to be suspended or withdrawn for any reason, parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance.

Please note rooms and ages may differ according to the Early Schools.





EACH NIDO EARLY SCHOOL
HAS A DEDICATED ART STUDIO
AS ART AND ENCOURAGING
SELF-EXPRESSION ARE
PARAMOUNT AT NIDO.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Communication is very important at all Nido Early Schools. We use a range of real-time communication tools to keep our families well-informed at all times. Your Service Administrator will provide details of which communication platforms are used.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

At Nido Early Schools, families take an active role in the education of every child. Participation from parents/carers is always encouraged and sends strong messages to your child that you support them. There are many ways to participate and your Nido Early School will accommodate your availability wherever they can. Family information evenings, held throughout the year, are a wonderful opportunity to find out what's happening at your Nido Early School and also provide the chance to hear how your child is getting on. Opportunities include:

- Participating in excursions
- Assisting with fund raising
- Attending special activities and functions at the school
- Volunteering
- Offering suggestions for programs
- Providing feedback to us about our services to you.

Nido Early Schools operate with an 'open door policy' - parents are always welcome at our schools at all times.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Before enrolling your child at a Nido Early School, it is important to discuss any special individual needs your child might have and how they can be met, including any cultural requirements for your child.

Planning for children with special rights requires careful thought and often the assistance of specialists. It is important to know how your child's specific needs may affect learning and participation in activities. This information will help us to meet the needs of your child and seek assistance from specialist and support workers if or as required.

ENROLMENT AND PRIVACY

We understand time is precious for families and to make the process as simple and convenient for you as possible, you can either enrol online or in person at your preferred school.

The Executive Service Manager will require a copy of your child's birth certificate and immunisation records at the time of enrolment. Any information provided as part of the enrolment process is strictly confidential and is never revealed to people or organisations outside of the Nido Early School framework without written parental permission. The only time an exception is made is if legal documentation is provided instructing us otherwise. Parents may request to view all records relating to their child at any time.

Please note an orientation will be offered before commencement so that we have the opportunity to meet all families and children prior to confirmation of a place and to gather any further documentation.



FEES & PAYMENTS

At the time you enrol your child at one of the Nido Early Schools, you will be required to pay one week in advance. All fees must be paid by direct debit. Please be aware that if you choose to use your credit card rather than a debit from your bank account, a surcharge will apply. If your direct debit declines, a fee will also occur. Accounts should always be paid (at least) one cycle in advance. If you fall behind in your payments, your child may risk losing their place at their Nido Early School.

Payments must be received by 4pm on Fridays and if this deadline is missed and you have fallen behind on your payments, your child may not be able to come to school until all outstanding payments have been made.

Two weeks written notice is required for any cancellation or changes to your booking. It's important to remember that any absences in that last two weeks of attendance (right up to the last day) will be charged at the full rate (no CCS may be claimed). Leaving early may also leave you with an outstanding account as mandated by government regulations.

Please refer to the School's fee policy (which may change from time to time) for more details.

Late Pickup Fees

- Parents and guardians are asked for co-operation in dropping off and collecting children within our operating hours
- If at any time you are going to be delayed, please contact the school as soon as possible. Educators and staff can then allay your child's concerns and make plans for their own commitments. A late fee of \$2.00 per minute, per child, may apply if your child is left at the Early School after closing time. The late fee is NOT subject to Child Care Subsidy and will be reflected on your fee statement.

Child Care Subsidy Eligibility

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child. These include:

- The age of the child (must be 13 or under and not attending secondary school)
- The child meeting immunisation requirements
- The individual, or their partner, meets the residency requirements
- Child must be signed in and out of the Early School.

In addition, to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy, the individual must be liable to pay for care provided, the care must be delivered in Australia by an approved childcare provider, and not be part of a compulsory education program.

All families are encouraged to contact Centrelink on **136 150** or go to **www.education.gov.au** to seek further information. Please speak to your Executive Service Manager for any other advice.



OTHER THINGS TO NOTE

ABSENCES

Under the Child Care Management Systems (CCMS) each child is eligible to receive CCS for an initial 42 days of absences, per financial year, which can be used for any reason and without proof of circumstances. Public holidays are included in the 42 days. All public holidays are payable and if eligible, your CCS will apply. Holidays taken throughout the year are charged as per gap amount and must be paid in full. Once the initial 42 absent days have been exhausted, additional absences may be claimed in certain circumstances. These are:

- Illness (with a medical certificate)
- An outbreak of infectious disease, when a child is not immunised
- Any other absences due to the sickness of the child, parent or sibling which is supported by a medical certificate
- 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 detailed in a court order, consent order or parenting order
- Attendance at preschool
- Exceptional circumstances.

A clearance letter from your child's doctor may be required if we have any doubt of your child's suitability to return to the school during times of illness.

Full payment is charged for non-attendance on days exceeding the allocated 42 days and the CCS may only be claimed if you are able to provide your Nido Early School with a medical certificate, court order or relevant documentation. Absences cannot be claimed if you have notified the Early School you are taking your child out of care on a set date and then change your mind and remove your child early. This will result in payment of full fees.

ATTENDANCE

We understand that choosing how often your child attends our Early School can be complex. We believe for the best interest of your child that they attend our service for a minimum of two days per week. This allows them the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with our Educators, together with building social relationships with their new friends. For more information, please speak with our Executive Service Manager.

BIRTHDAYS

Nido Early Schools enjoy sharing this occasion with your child but due to children's allergies, it is not possible for families to supply birthday cakes or other birthday food. Please speak with your ESM on ideas for how we can celebrate with your family.

CONTRACTIBLE ILLNESSES

Children with contagious or contractible illnesses which can be transferred to others must not be in attendance until they have been cleared by a doctor. If your child starts showing symptoms of an illness while they are at the school, they will need to be collected immediately. Nido Early Schools are not responsible for any illness contracted by your child whilst in attendance and if your child has recently suffered from a contagious or contractible illness, a medical clearance must be provided before your child returns to school. This clearance must state there is no further risk of spread of infection and your child is fit to return to a group care environment. **All Nido Early Schools follow Government advice in relation to COVID-19.**

COLLECTION

Nido Early Schools take the security and safety of your child very seriously. Anyone collecting a child for the first time (authorised person) will be asked to present photo ID. Educators or staff may request photo ID at any time. A child will not be released into the care of anyone under the age of 18 or anyone not listed on the enrolment form as an authorised person and/or emergency contact. If you wish to nominate an additional person as an authorised contact, please advise a member of staff.

HIGH TEMPERATURES

If your child unexpectedly develops a high temperature (38 degrees or higher), paracetamol may be administered if written consent has been given. We will attempt to contact you before any paracetamol is administered and you will be asked to collect your child. At the discretion of the Executive Service Manager, should you, or another emergency contact not be able to collect the child quickly, an ambulance will be called to ensure the well-being of your child. Parents will be responsible for all ambulance and medical costs incurred.

INCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

In the event of a minor incident, first aid will be administered and recorded by Educators. If a more serious incident occurs, parents will be contacted immediately. **Please ensure all provided emergency contacts are up to date. Changes to contact details for any given day will need to be communicated in writing to the school. In emergency situations, should the person in charge determine the injuries are serious enough, an ambulance will be called immediately. The parent will incur the cost of any medical services.**

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

At Nido Early Schools the interactions with children policy is centred around the importance of respect and dignity for the child, acknowledging and accepting children's feelings and encouraging these feelings to be expressed.

We will also ensure we support the children's behaviour by:

- Setting and maintaining appropriate limits of behaviour
- Explaining the appropriate uses of materials and equipment
- Reinforcing positive behaviour with acknowledgement and validation
- Explaining why a behaviour is inappropriate or unacceptable and providing acceptable options
- Offering children choices and encouraging decision making
- Setting realistic expectations which are age and stage appropriate
- Remembering that what works for one child does not always work for another
- Ensuring the Executive Service Manager is available to discuss and assist with any concern you may have about your child's behaviour or participation
- Seeking advice from an appropriate agency or professional by the Executive Service Manager together with the parent/guardian if the unacceptable behaviour persists.

MEDICATION

All medication must be clearly marked with your child's name, name of the medication and the dosage clearly stated on the pharmacist's dispensing label. No medication will be dispensed to your child if the medication has expired. **Please do not leave medication of any nature in your child's bag.** Instead, medication should be given to your child's Lead Educator or the Executive Service Manager upon arrival at the school.

A medication form needs to be filled out upon arrival by parent or authorised person noted on the child's enrolment form. If this is not done, medication cannot be administered. Over the counter medication will only be given for two consecutive days after which time a doctor's certificate will need to be provided. A non-prescription medication form also needs to be completed. Verbal permission over the phone or in person is not acceptable and the medication form must be completed in every instance. Long term medication forms are also required for children with ongoing medical considerations or long term medication needs (such as asthma or allergies). An action plan will also need to be completed. A medication form must also be completed for nappy pastes and teething gels.

NUTRITION AND CUCINAS

At Nido Early Schools we have taken culinary inspiration from the Italians (just as we have taken the Reggio Emilia approach to education) and our 'Cucinas' (Italian for 'kitchen') are inspired places where we create tasty and nutritious food each day, to nurture your child's development and meet all their important daily dietary requirements. We aim to instil in all children the importance of maintaining a lifelong respect for food with a particular focus on sustainability. It is important children understand where food comes from and each school uses fresh produce wherever possible. Each menu is also prepared in accordance with the nutrition checklist, 'Start Right Eat Right' and menus are reviewed twice a year, in conjunction with dietitians and nutritionists.

Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea is supplied to the children every day along with a late snack. Breakfast is supplied until 7.30am. The daily menu is displayed within the school for your reference and our Cucinas are always willing to accept menu ideas and suggestions to provide plenty of new and nutritional options to the children.

All meals are prepared in accordance with Food Safety and Nutrition standards plus dietary, cultural and medical needs are catered for. Each room has a copy of all dietary requirements and food allergies plus we encourage families to meet with the Cucina staff during orientation process to discuss your child's specific needs.

To ensure strict compliance with all nutrition guidelines, and due to children's allergies, we ask all families not to bring food into any of our schools.

RAISING CONCERNS

If you have any concerns, it is important they are answered or resolved as swiftly as possible, so please do not hesitate to speak with the appropriate member of staff, such as your Educator or ESM. All concerns are managed in a confidential and professional manner. If parents would like to contact the Service Support Office about any unresolved or sensitive issues, this contact information can be found in the Early School foyer, along with information about relevant state authorities, who may also be contacted if your concerns have not been satisfactorily resolved.

REST

All children are encouraged to have a special time to relax or rest during the day. Some children may not need sleep but will be encouraged to rest their bodies or sit and enjoy quiet activities. For children in the Nursery, we follow SIDS guidelines. More information around these guidelines is found in our "Safe Sleeping and Rest Policy and Procedure".

SIGN IN/SIGN OUT

Parents, guardians and authorised contacts should make certain the sign-in/sign-out system is followed at all times. This ensures that in the event of an emergency the school has a record of your child. If your child has been absent, it is important to sign them as 'absent' on the day they were unable to attend. This should be confirmed on the day your child returns to school following the absent day. If your child is not signed-in/signed-out correctly, you will not be able to receive the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) fee reduction and full fees will apply.

SUITABLE CLOTHING

Please send your child in play-appropriate clothing. Clothes that become dirty, enable uninhibited play and can be easily be managed by the child are most suitable. The school will provide art shirts when the child is involved in any messy play. Children should also be dressed accordingly to the climate at all times. In hotter months, please dress your child in light cotton clothing that will provide protection from the sun, and sandals (excluding thongs or strappy singlet tops). Please ensure shoulders are always covered. In cooler months, children should be dressed in warmer clothing layers that can be taken off as the day warms up, with enclosed shoes and socks.

Wide brim or legionnaire hats must be brought and worn throughout the year, regardless of the season and weather conditions. You may prefer to leave a hat at the Early School to ensure there is always one available for your child to wear. Children will be required to play indoors, in the shaded areas or under the veranda, if there are no available spare hats or they are not wearing appropriate covering clothing.

Please ensure every item brought to the school is clearly labelled/marked with your child's name. No responsibility will be taken by Nido Early Schools for any loss or damage to your child's belongings.

TOILET TRAINING

It is important your child wears clothing that will allow them to access the toilet quickly and comfortably. Elastic waisted pants are most suitable. Overalls and jeans are not recommended. Self-dressing is recommended to develop self-help skills. Clothing with zips, buttons, pull-strings, ties, and hoods are not recommended. If possible, please bring several changes of clothing in case your child has an accident.

TOYS AND TREASURES

At every Nido Early School, there is a wide range of developmentally appropriate equipment and toys for the children to play with. Parents are asked to explain to children that the toys at the school are for everyone to share and cannot be taken home. Children are also asked not to bring any toys from home, due to breakage and loss. Comforters are welcome - please ensure they are labelled with your child's name.

"INCREDIBLE PLACE. THEY HAVE GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND TO HELP MY SON'S PROGRESS, WHILST RESPECTING OUR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AS A FAMILY WHO HAVE NEVER USED CHILDCARE BEFORE - SO NEEDED A VERY SLOW START. STAFF HAVE BEEN WELCOMING, SUPPORTIVE AND PATIENT. WE FEEL VERY LUCKY TO HAVE THEIR SUPPORT"



WE LOOK FORWARD
TO WELCOMING YOU
TO THE NIDO FAMILY!



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