



Bourke and District Children's Services



Parent and Carer
Handbook



WELCOME!

Bourke and District Children's Services (BDCS) works with families and children in the Bourke community and surrounding villages.

Our services include:

Preschool: Providing early childhood programs for children aged 3-5 years.
(children can attend for 2 days per week, term time only)

Childcare: Providing care and education through play-based learning for children aged 6 weeks-6 years.
(children can attend all year round)

Mobile Playgroup: Supported playgroup sessions suitable for all children and families who reside in the town of Bourke and surrounding villages.

Toy Library: Available to children and families who are interested in borrowing toys and resources to support play-based learning at home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

At Preschool and Childcare, each morning begins with all children taking part in an Acknowledgement to Country in the Ngiyampaa/Ngemba language.

**I wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this beautiful land
where we meet today.**

Being respectful of Elders past, present and future.

**Continuing to learn and care on Country, With the little hands and feet here
today.**

Yaama Ngurrampaa

Hello Country

Yaama Mayi-Kalkaa

Hello People

Yaama Pungku Thuni

Hello Many Days





PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy reflects the beliefs and values of BDCS and guides all aspects of our operations and practices.

BDCS Philosophy

BDCS delivers quality, inclusive and impactful early childhood education ensuring every child is supported to reach their full potential through continuous improvement, integrated reconciliation practices and connected services.



Art by Emma Alice Stenhouse



CONTACTS

PRESCHOOL

9a Gorrell Avenue
Phone: 02 68 701 240
Email: preschool@bdcs.org.au

CHILDCARE

9b Gorrell Avenue
Phone : 02 68 701 117
Email : childcare@bdcs.org.au

MOBILE PLAYGROUP AND TOY LIBRARY

Phone: 0448 875 518
Email: mobile@bdcs.org.au

ADMINISTRATION

48c Oxley Street
PO Box 12, Bourke, NSW, 2840
Phone: 02 6872 3140
Email: admin@bdcs.org.au

CONNECTED BEGGININGS

Phone: 0408 151 177
Email: connectedbeginnings@bdcs.org.au

GENERAL MANAGER

Prue Ritchie
Phone: 0418 472 156
Email: gm@bdcs.org.au

WEBSITE: www.bdcs.org.au

FACEBOOK: Bourke and District Children's Services





THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK (NQF)

The NQF was the result of an agreement between all Australian governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children. The NQF aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

- [National Law and National Regulations](#)
- [National Quality Standard](#)
- [Assessment and quality rating process](#)
- [National learning frameworks](#)

Benefits of the NQF for children and families

- Research shows quality education and care early in life leads to better health, education and employment outcomes later in life.
- The early years are critical for establishing self-esteem, resilience, healthy growth and capacity to learn.
- Quality education and care shapes every child's future and lays the foundation for development and learning.

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework

This is a national curriculum framework which ensures quality and consistency in the delivery of early childhood education programs across all early childhood settings. It covers birth to five years and supports transition to formal schooling.

We focus on the 5 Learning Outcome areas and consider these when programming for children:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

National Quality Standard (NQS)

All Education and care services are assessed and rated by their state and territory regulatory authority. The National Quality Standard sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. Services are assessed and rated against each of the seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations and will then be given an overall rating.

Our NQS rated services are:

Preschool: Meeting ✓

Childcare: Meeting ✓

More information regarding the NQF can be found at www.acecqa.gov.au





EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

At BDCS, we are dedicated to offering a rich, inclusive educational program, underpinned by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), that celebrates diversity and nurtures each child's development.

We incorporate Aboriginal perspectives to honour the traditional custodians of the land and foster respect for Indigenous culture and heritage. By engaging with local Aboriginal Elders and community members, we provide children with meaningful opportunities to learn about and connect with the stories, values, and practices of Aboriginal culture.

Our play-based curriculum emphasises sensory play, supporting children's unique sensory needs, and includes nurturing and inclusive practices that make every child feel valued. Risky play activities encourage exploration and resilience in safe, supervised environments, fostering confidence and independence.

To ensure each child receives the support they need, we work closely with a multidisciplinary team, including those with specialised skills in supporting children with additional needs.

We also prioritise building connections within our community, helping children and families feel a sense of belonging. By promoting respect, inclusivity, and collaboration, we create a caring and supportive environment that celebrates each child's individuality and builds lifelong connections within our community.

NINGANAH NO MORE

The Ninganah No More (NNM) Aboriginal language program aims to increase the level of Aboriginal languages being taught in early childhood services across NSW. Preschool incorporates the Ninganah No More program, which has five core objectives:

- Embed Aboriginal language and culture into ECEC programs.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal children learning an Aboriginal language.
- Ensure Aboriginal children remain connected to culture and grow their cultural identity through language.
- Develop stronger links between ECEC services and their local Aboriginal communities.
- Create inclusive learning environments and encourage all children to learn an Aboriginal language.



HEGGERTY'S

The Heggerty's program is delivered to all children at Preschool, to develop their phonemic (the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words) and phonological (the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of words, including syllables, onset-rime, and phonemes) awareness in preparation for learning to read once at school.



ENROLMENT

To be able to attend Childcare or Preschool, all parents/carers must complete an enrolment form for their child which is available from either of our services.

It is a requirement of your child's enrolment that their enrolment form and any mandatory documents as listed below are provided to the service, before your child's place can be confirmed.

- Proof of identity such as a Birth certificate or passport.
- A current immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).
- Medical management plans (if relevant) completed by the child's general practitioner.
- Details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans (if relevant).

If any information within your child's enrolment form changes throughout the year, we ask that you update us as soon as possible so that we can maintain accurate records.

ORIENTATION

All children settle into a new environment in their own unique way, some may do so with great confidence and others may be more reserved. Orientation is a time when strong relationships between families and educators can develop, which can lay the foundation for helping children to transition into their new environment.

There are a few things that you can do to help make the transition positive and successful:

- Talk to your child in a positive way about the service, the educators and the activities that they will be doing.
- Visit the service at least once prior to your child's first day, so you and your child can become familiar with our friendly team and nurturing environment.
- Guided tours can be organised at both services. In addition, Preschool provides an Orientation Day for children and their families each year and settling in sessions can be organised at Childcare.
- We encourage you to stay for as long as you feel necessary to help settle your child in. We have an open-door policy meaning you can visit at any time and contact us throughout the day to check on your child.





IMMUNISATION

All children attending an Early Childhood Education and Care Service must fit into one of the below categories and provide the relevant evidence:

- Are fully immunised for their age as per [NSW Immunisation Schedule](#) ([AIR Immunisation History Statement](#) will evidence this).
- Have a medical reason not to be vaccinated ([AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form](#) will evidence this).
- Are on a recognised catch-up schedule ([AIR Immunisation History Form](#) will evidence this).

POLICIES

All of our policies can be found on our website. To ensure children's safety and that the National Law and Regulations are abided by, we expect all staff and families to adhere to our policies at all times. Our policies are reviewed annually, and families are encouraged to provide their feedback on each policy, which will be taken into account during the review process.



SIGNING IN AND OUT

For compliance and safety purposes, all children must be signed in on arrival and out on departure. We ask that families do this as soon as they arrive to avoid forgetting. No child can be signed out of our service with someone who is not stated on the enrolment form unless prior arrangements have been made with the service.

WHAT TO WEAR

We encourage all families to send their children to the service with the below clothing and footwear:

- Sun protective clothing (a sun safe hat is provided by the service unless your child would rather wear their own).
- Clothing that is comfortable, does not restrict movement and doesn't cause any safety concerns.
- Clothing that can be easily removed for nappy changing and toileting (e.g. clothes that are easy to pull down rather than clothes with belts or buttons).
- Clothing and footwear to facilitate self-help (e.g. velcro straps on shoes rather than laces if these are easier for the child to do themselves).
- Clothing which can be worn during messy play activities.
- Appropriate clothing for the weather conditions (we encourage warmer/cooler clothing options to be kept available in the child's bag in case of a change in weather conditions).
- Safe, sturdy, enclosed footwear for play experiences.



FOOD

Our team of cooks prepare nutritious meals and snacks for all children that meet the requirements for children according to the Australian Dietary Guidelines and Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

Our weekly menu is available for families to view and is regularly updated. We always have a variety of foods available to suit different preferences and request that families refrain from bringing in food for their children from home.



BREASTFEEDING

All of our services are breastfeeding friendly and we respect and support mothers who wish to continue to breastfeed their child while they are at our services. Parents/carers can choose to breastfeed their child at the service or pack expressed breast milk which can then be given to their child by an educator. Breast milk that has been expressed should be brought to the service in a clean sterile container or bottle, labelled with the date of expression (and date frozen and thawed if applicable) and the child's name.

TOYS

Toys brought from home can cause conflict between children at the service. Children often want to share or show other children or educators their special items from home, however, they may be inadvertently broken or lost. To save the upset and heartache, parents/carers are requested to encourage children to leave their toys at home, unless they are essential to their child's emotional wellbeing and/or sense of belonging (security items – such as a teddy to sleep with).



ILLNESS

If your child becomes unwell while at our service, you will be notified and be required to collect them from the service as soon as possible.

If your child is unwell, please refrain from bringing them to the service. Our service will not accept a child into care if they:

- Have a contagious illness or infectious disease.
- Are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities.
- Have been vomiting or have had diarrhoea in the last 24 hours.
- Have started a course of antibiotics in the last 24 hours.
- Have a temperature reading 38C or higher or has been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the service



MEDICATION

If necessary, educators may administer medications to your child, provided you have discussed and had this approved by the service in advance and have completed the Administration of Medication form. All medication must:

- Be handed to an educator on arrival to ensure that it can be safely stored.
- Be in its original container.
- Not be past its expiry or use by date.
- Have a chemist label attached stating the child's name, date of birth and details of administration including time, dosage and method.

INJURIES

We understand that children have the innate desire to explore and test their growing capabilities and we put measures in place to provide a safe environment to allow them to do this however we acknowledge that despite this, injuries can occur.

Parents/carers will be notified of their child's injury and all information will be recorded on the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness record which a parent/carer will be required to sign to acknowledge that they have been informed of their child's injury.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

At least one First Aid staff member is always at the service or on an excursion and is trained to administer basic first aid. However, in the event of a serious injury or illness an ambulance may be called to provide urgent medical attention for your child. If an ambulance is called for your child, you will be notified as soon as possible. Please be aware that the cost of the ambulance service will be the responsibility of the parent/carer.



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency procedures are in place across the services and staff are trained to deal with emergency situations. Staff and children practice emergency procedures on an ongoing basis through evacuation and lockdown drills and through discussions regarding how to react in the event of an emergency.

In the event of an evacuation, the children will assemble at the designated meeting point and return to the building once the roll is marked. In the event of a real emergency, you will be notified as soon as possible which is why it is essential you keep us updated of current mobile phone numbers.



ASTHMA & ALLERGIES

Children diagnosed with Asthma or Allergies (including anaphylaxis) will need to inform the service upon enrolment or at the time of diagnosis and will be required to provide a current Asthma or Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) Management Plan for their condition.

If the Management Plan for your child's medical condition includes the use of medication or equipment (for example an asthma puffer and spacer or EpiPen, you will be required to provide one for storing at the service, in the event that this needs to be administered). The medication must be in date and clearly marked with a pharmacy or prescription label with the child's name.

In conjunction with the service that your child attends, you will be required to complete a Risk Minimisation and Communication plan. This helps the service to best understand your child's triggers, plan an appropriate response including communication with you and manage changes that occur in relation to the condition. You must update the service as soon as you are aware of any changes to your child's asthma or allergy.



SUN PROTECTION

To ensure that children can play outside safely, SPF50+ broad spectrum sunscreen will be applied to all children twenty minutes prior to outdoor play and reapplied every two hours. Please ensure you apply sunscreen to your child prior to their arrival at the service each morning to allow your child the opportunity to take part in outside play as soon as they arrive.

Each service provides their own sunscreen however, if you would prefer your child to use a specific brand, perhaps due to allergies or skin sensitivities, you can provide your own sunscreen (labelled with your child's name) for storing at the service to be used on your child.

All children are provided with their own SunSmart hat to protect their face, neck and ears and are required to wear it outdoors (children may bring their own if they prefer - labelled with their name). All children are required to wear SunSmart clothing that covers as much of their skin (including the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible. Children without SunSmart clothing are provided with spare clothing or are encouraged to play in an area protected from the sun.



COMMUNICATION

We actively work on developing secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships between children and families as we believe learning outcomes are best met when Early Childhood Educators work in partnership with families. We recognise that parents/carers are a child's first and most influential teachers and encourage you to engage with the full range of communication methods to enhance your child's learning experience, including:

- Xplor App
- The Story Park App (Preschool only)
- BDCS Facebook page
- Face to face feedback at drop off and pick-up time
- Telephone calls
- Email
- Newsletters
- Notice board in each service



Please note that extended conversations with BDCS Educators and Directors require a scheduled meeting as during drop off and pick up times at each service, there may not be sufficient time to discuss issues or concerns. Please call or email the relevant service to book a meeting.

CHILD PROTECTION

Our service is committed to providing a child safe environment where children's safety and wellbeing is supported and children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Our service embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and promotes a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

We ensure all staff members, students and volunteers understand the meaning, importance and benefits of providing a child safe environment and critically, understand their obligations and requirements as Mandatory Reporters.

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

BDCS values the feedback of children, staff, families and the wider community. We aim to be open and responsive in relation to complaints and feedback. You may raise concerns directly with your child's educator or Director and where practicable, they will be dealt with immediately. Alternatively, you may submit complaints and feedback in writing to General Manager Prue Ritchie:

Email

gm@bdcs.org.au



Post

PO Box 12
Bourke, NSW 2840





PRESCHOOL

9a Gorrell Avenue, Bourke, NSW 2840

Phone: 02 68 701240

Mobile: 04 488 73412

Email: preschool@bdcs.org.au

8:30am-5:00pm Term time only

(children will be in the Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday group)

Our Preschool delivers a free Early Childhood program for children aged 3-5 years for two days per week. You can request a place for your child in a specific group however, we will make the final decision based on multiple different factors.

Preschool provides:

- Sunscreen (can provide your own)
- Insect repellent (can provide your own)
- Wipes (can provide your own)
- Sun hat (can provide your own)
- Morning Tea
- Lunch
- Afternoon tea
- Late afternoon snack
- Beds and bedding for rest time



What to bring:

(ensure all items are clearly labelled)

- A backpack to store belongings
- A full water bottle (we can refill with water only throughout the day)
- 2 sets of clothing and socks
- 4 sets of underwear or pull ups
- Comforter for rest time if required

PRESCHOOL BUS

Preschool provides a free bus services for all children residing in the town of Bourke and Alice Edwards Village (North Bourke is not included). All relevant documentation including a permission form must be completed and approved, prior to your child using the bus.

Morning bus pick ups are between 8:30-9:30am and afternoon drop offs are between 3:00pm-4:00pm. We are unable to guarantee individual pick up and drop off times and if parents/carers have specific time constraints, it is recommended that your child is dropped off and collected from Preschool.

If plans change and your child doesn't require a morning pick up or afternoon drop off, we request that you call, text or email Preschool, preferably prior to 8:15am or 2:45pm.





CHILDCARE

9b Gorrell Avenue, Bourke, NSW 2840

Phone: 02 68 701 117

Mobile: 04 919 01035

Email: childcare@bdcs.org.au

7:30am-6:00pm Monday-Friday

½ day morning: 7:30am-12:30pm

½ day afternoon: 1:30pm-6pm

Our Childcare provides care and education for children age 6 weeks-6 years (prior to commencing primary school).

Childcare provides:

- Sunscreen (can provide your own)
- Insect repellent (can provide your own)
- Wipes (can provide your own)
- Sun hat (can provide your own)
- Morning Tea
- Lunch
- Afternoon tea
- Late afternoon snack
- Cots/beds and bedding for rest time

What to bring:

(ensure all items are clearly labelled)

- A backpack to store belongings
- A full water bottle (we can refill with water only throughout the day)
- 2 sets of clothing and socks
- Comforter for rest time if required
- Bottles if required (these must be sterilised and there must be enough for the amount needed that day)
- Formula if required (pre-measured in measured container)
- Breast milk if required (must clearly state child's name, date the milk was expressed or thawed)
- 6 nappies/pull ups if not toilet trained
- 4 sets of underwear if toilet trained





MOBILE PLAYGROUP AND TOY LIBRARY

Mobile: 04 488 75518

Email: mobile@bdcs.org.au

Mobile

Our BDCS Mobile playgroup operates in the Bourke Shire and we run sessions in town, in surrounding villages and at the homes of very remote families. Mobile is suitable for all families with children aged 0 and up.

What happens at Mobile Playgroup?

It is a great opportunity for families and their children to play, have a chat with our educators, meet other families with young children and participate in fun activities.

Some of our activities include:

- Creative experiences: Painting, collage and playdough
- Sensory experiences: Water, sand and natural materials
- Dramatic play: Dinosaurs, jungle animals, farm barns and animals, space exploration, tress houses and dress ups
- Language and literacy: Picture books, stories, puppets and puzzles
- Cognitive development: Counting, shapes, colours, number recognition, letter recognition and writing
- Physical activities; Balls, obstacle courses and bikes
- Group time: Singing, dancing and story time

Follow us on Facebook or visit the BDCS website calendar, to seek our weekly timetable of sessions.

Toy Library

Toy library is a BDCS store of toys and resources available to families within the Bourke Shire to support play-based learning and educational activities within the home or family environment. It is free to become a toy library member, visit bourkemobiletoylibrary.setls.com.au to become a member and to view our catalogue of toys and resources.





2025 FEE AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

CHILDCARE

Childcare Bond: \$200 per child
This must be paid at the time of enrolment

Childcare 0-3 Years

Full Day: Permanent \$160 or casual \$165

Half Day: Permanent \$85 or casual \$90
(Morning: 7:30am- 12:30pm or Afternoon: 1:00pm-6:00pm)

Childcare 3-5 Years

Full Day: Permanent \$150 or casual \$155

Half Day: Permanent \$80 or casual \$85
(Morning: 7:30am- 12:30pm or Afternoon: 1:00pm-6:00pm)



PRESCHOOL

Our Preschool is fully funded by the NSW State Government to be fee free however, a late collection fee applies (see more information below).

LATE COLLECTION FEES

Late Fee: \$50 every 15 minutes

Please ensure you arrive in time to discuss your child's day prior to the service closing. If a child has not been collected from the service prior to the closing time, the late collection fee will apply (Preschool after 5pm and Childcare after 6pm).

MOBILE PLAYGROUP AND TOY LIBRARY

It is free to attend Mobile Playgroup and to join and borrow resources from the Toy Library.

OVERDUE FEES

Parents/carers with overdue fees are encouraged to speak with the service Director about any difficulties they may have in making payments and negotiate suitable arrangements to pay, including the option of a payment plan.

If this is not done, or the agreed arrangements are not kept, the matter will be referred to a debt collector and will result in cancellation of the child's enrolment until all debts with BDCS are cleared.



CHILDCARE CARE SUBSIDY (CCS) FOR CHILDREN AT CHILDCARE

What is CCS?

Depending on your personal circumstances, you might be eligible for CCS. If eligible, Centrelink will pay a percentage of your child's fees directly to the service. It is your responsibility to complete the online Childcare Subsidy Assessment via the MyGov app prior to starting at the service. Your eligibility and level of CCS will then be determined.

Families not entitled to CCS or who fail to contact Centrelink to assess their eligibility for CCS will be required to pay the full Childcare fee.

It is your responsibility to maintain accurate records with Centrelink and raise any discrepancies with them as BDCS is unable to do this on your behalf.

What can affect CCS?

The subsidy that you receive, and any applicable cap will depend upon your own personal circumstances and is subject to your:

- Combined family income
- Hours of recognised activity.
- Childcare details.

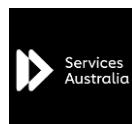
Even if you are currently receiving the Child Care Benefit or Child Care Rebate, you will need to update your details through your Centrelink account on MyGov.

Some things that can affect the amount of subsidy you receive include:

- Centrelink debts.
- Tax returns (even if not yet submitted for the previous year).
- Your activity test (Centrelink).
- If your or your partners activity level change.
- If your or your partners income change.
- Your relationship status changes.
- There are any other changes to your or your partners circumstances.

Where do I go for help?

We recommend you go into the local Centrelink office for assistance to apply for CCS, if you are having trouble applying through the MyGov app. Alternatively, visit the Services Australia website for further information on CCS or call Centrelink on the Families line (136 150) between 8am-8pm Monday – Friday.



Apply for CCS in MyGov

You need to make a claim for CCS via your MyGov account which is linked to Centrelink. Do this as soon as you know you might be sending your child into care so that it is all set up and ready to go for your child's first day. (It can take up to 6 weeks to set up and if its not set up before starting at Childcare, you may have to pay the full fee).



How to apply in MyGov:



1. Sign in to MyGov and go to Centrelink.
2. Select 'Payment and Claims' from the menu, then 'Claims,' then 'Make a Claim'.
3. Under 'Families', select 'Get Started'.
4. Answer all questions. Each screen has information to help you complete the claim, this includes how to submit your supporting documents.
5. Submit your claim.
6. You can track the progress of your claim online, every step of the way.

How do I claim CCS at BDCS Childcare?

The enrolment process we follow is a requirement under Family Assistance Law for all children who attend Childcare (or have an arrangement for care) regardless of eligibility for CCS. You must therefore complete the BDCS enrolment process and pay the \$200 per child bond.

Complying Written Agreement (CWA)

We will then enter into an agreement for the care of your child, this is called a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) which you will be required to sign. Once this is completed we will submit your child's enrolment notice.

Confirm your enrolment

Finally, you will need to go into your MyGov app to confirm that the details of your child's enrolment are correct.

Your child is now ready to start at Childcare!