



# FAMILY HANDBOOK

## Welcome to Stepping Stones Child Development Centre!

Our Family Handbook has been thoughtfully prepared to help you feel informed, confident and supported as your child begins their learning journey with us. Inside, you'll find key information about our philosophy, goals, values, and a summary of the policies and procedures that guide our daily practice.

At Stepping Stones, we are committed to building a joyful, kind community—one step at a time. We value strong partnerships with families and believe that children thrive when we work together with trust, respect and open communication.

We warmly invite you to take the time to read through this handbook and reach out to us with any questions. We have an open-door policy, and you and your family are always welcome to visit the Centre, connect with our team, and share in the joyful learning taking place each day.

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## Our Philosophy

We believe every child is a unique and cherished individual—full of potential and purpose. Learning begins within a caring community, through strong relationships built on kindness, compassion, and trust, and continues through meaningful experiences that inspire curiosity, creativity, and resilience.

We see learning as holistic, interwoven through all aspects of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, creative, cognitive, and linguistic. We recognise the vital role of families as children's first teachers and are deeply grateful for the trust they place in us. We value the partnerships that support each child's learning, wellbeing, and sense of belonging.

We are committed to creating environments where:

- Kindness, compassion, and trust form the foundation for growth
- Joy is found in everyday moments and meaningful learning experiences
- Every child feels seen, heard, and celebrated
- Children are empowered to explore, take risks, and make sense of their world

Together with families, we lay strong foundations for learning and life—building a joyful, kind community where every step is supported and celebrated.

## Our Practice

As educators, we are co-learners and intentional guides. We design open-ended, hands-on experiences that reflect each child's stage of development, interests, and strengths. Our learning environments foster wonder, connection, and a strong sense of belonging.

Daily rhythms offer security and comfort, while making room for spontaneity, exploration, and joyful discovery. We support each child in the present moment while preparing them for a future of confidence, compassion, and continued growth. We walk alongside families with deep gratitude—for their trust, partnership, and shared role in each child's journey. Through these relationships, we continue to grow as a community where joy, kindness, and gratitude flourish—one step at a time.

## Our Mission

We partner with families to build a joyful, kind community—one step at a time. Anchored in kindness, compassion, and trust, we create a nurturing environment where every child feels seen, heard, and celebrated. Through meaningful play, strong relationships, and shared gratitude, we support children to grow with confidence and curiosity—empowered to explore, take risks, and make sense of their world.

## Our Vision

We envision a community where joy, kindness, and gratitude grow—a trusted, inclusive space where children and families feel deeply connected and supported. At Stepping Stones, joy is found in everyday moments, and learning is embraced as a lifelong journey. Each child is encouraged to flourish in their own time and in their own way, surrounded by a community that walks beside them—growing together, one step at a time.

## Our Core Values

Our values of **Community, Kindness, Joy, Growth, and Gratitude** serve as our guiding light, inspiring everything we do and shaping the way we support and nurture each other.

## Service Information

Our Service caters for children aged from 2-6 years. We are open from 7.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks of the year. The Service will be closed on WA public holidays and for 2 weeks over Christmas/New Year. Notice will be communicated when closures occur.

Stepping Stones Child Development Centre is a registered not-for-profit organisation that was established by the East Fremantle Baptist Church in 2010. The service is managed by a Board of professionals (Approved Provider) in partnership with the Centre Director. The Director is also the Nominated Supervisor of the service (person responsible for meeting childcare regulations) and in the Director's absence a person/staff member to act in place as the supervisor will be appointed. This information is also displayed in the foyer of the centre.

## Contact Information

**Phone:** (08) 9319 8034

**Mobile:** 0431 848 034

**Address:** 6 Fortescue Street East Fremantle WA 6158

**Director email:** director@steppingstonescdc.com.au

**Accounts email:** finance@steppingstonescdc.com.au

**Administration email:** admin@steppingstonescdc.com.au

**Approved Provider email:** chairperson@steppingstonescdc.com.au

**Website:** [www.steppingstonescdc.com.au](http://www.steppingstonescdc.com.au)

## Our Team



Amanda Saunders  
Centre Director



Rebecca Rosindale  
Administrative  
Assistant



Jessica Speciale  
Lead Educator



Elizabeth Meagher  
Early Childhood Teacher



Amalia Stipanicev  
Assistant Educator



Anupma Daniels  
Assistant Educator



Roberta Truda  
Diploma Educator



Holly Young  
Trainee Early  
Childhood Teacher



Cindy Poulter  
Casual Educator



Fiona Daniels  
Casual Educator



Leilani Bell  
Casual Educator

## Our Educators and Staff

Our service is made up of a team of high-quality professionals who are deeply committed to our Vision, Mission and Values. Guided by our shared purpose of building a joyful, kind community—one step at a time, we work together to create an environment where every child, family and educator feels welcomed, supported and valued.

At Stepping Stones Child Development Centre, we honour the rights, safety and wellbeing of every child, recognising and celebrating the diverse backgrounds, strengths and needs that each child and family brings to our community. We intentionally foster environments that promote children's active participation and nurture a strong sense of belonging, cultural safety and inclusion.

Our educators thoughtfully and continually reflect on how our curriculum supports each child's learning, development and emotional wellbeing. Anchored in joy, kindness and growth, we use evidence-informed, play-based approaches to create meaningful learning opportunities. Our Centre Director and Educational Leader provide values-driven guidance that supports educators to deliver high-quality, research-based programs aligned with our vision for children to grow with confidence, curiosity and a strong sense of identity.

In planning and implementing learning experiences, our educators consider each child's learning style, abilities, interests, cultural and linguistic identity, and family circumstances. We deeply respect and acknowledge the histories, cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, embedding practices that strengthen every child's connection, understanding and belonging.

We are committed to ongoing professional growth as a community. All staff are supported to pursue meaningful professional learning that strengthens their knowledge, practice and alignment with our values. Every staff member also holds a valid Working with Children Clearance and current ACECQA-approved First Aid, Emergency Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualification, ensuring a safe, responsive and high-quality environment for all children in our care.

## Our Commitment to Child Safety

At Stepping Stones, the safety, rights and wellbeing of every child are at the heart of everything we do. Guided by our Vision, Mission and Values, we strive to build a joyful, kind community where children feel safe, valued and empowered to grow with confidence and curiosity.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a child-safe organisation that actively prevents harm, responds to concerns, and upholds the highest standards of ethical practice. Our policies and procedures align with:

- *The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*
- *The National Model Code for Protecting Children and Young People*
- *The Reportable Conduct Scheme*
- *Mandatory reporting requirements under the Children and Community Services Act 2004*

Together, these frameworks guide our daily practice, decision-making, leadership and culture, ensuring that child safety is known, understood and championed by every staff member.

## Embedding the National Model Code

Our team is committed to upholding the expectations and conduct standards outlined in the National Model Code for Protecting Children and Young People, which ensures:

- Children are treated with dignity, kindness and respect at all times.
- Adults maintain appropriate professional boundaries and never engage in conduct—physical, verbal, emotional or online—that could place a child at risk.
- Any behaviour that may cause harm, discomfort or concern is addressed immediately and transparently.
- Interactions with children support their safety, agency, participation and sense of belonging.
- Staff use safe, positive and developmentally appropriate behaviour guidance practices.
- All physical contact is appropriate to the learning experience and responsive to the child's comfort, needs and preferences.

The National Model Code is embedded in our recruitment, induction, ongoing supervision and daily practice. All staff review, understand and commit to the Code as a condition of employment.

## Mandatory Reporting & Child Protection Responsibilities

All educators and staff understand and fulfil their legal responsibilities as mandatory reporters under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

This includes:

- Identifying concerns relating to abuse, harm or neglect
- Acting promptly and following reporting procedures
- Maintaining up-to-date knowledge through ongoing training
- Documenting and escalating concerns appropriately

We take all allegations or suspicions of harm seriously and respond immediately through clear, lawful and transparent processes.

## Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments

In line with updated child-safe legislation, Stepping Stones upholds strict standards for the ethical, safe and responsible use of digital technologies. We ensure:

- Children are protected from exposure to unsafe or inappropriate online environments.
- Digital devices are only used for educational, administrative or safety purposes.
- Staff follow procedures that prioritise children's privacy, dignity and protection.
- All digital images, videos and information are collected, used and stored securely on Service issued devices in accordance with privacy law and child-safe best practice.
- Online platforms are assessed for safety, data security and appropriateness.
- Families provide informed consent for all digital documentation involving their child.
- Staff model safe and respectful digital behaviour in line with the National Model Code.

## Recruitment, Screening and Professional Conduct

To maintain a child-safe culture, all staff:

- Undergo comprehensive recruitment and screening
- Hold a validated Working with Children Check
- Complete reference checks that assess values and suitability
- Participate in child safety, mandatory reporting and digital-safety training
- Commit to always upholding the National Model Code

We foster a culture of ongoing reflection, growth and learning to strengthen child-safe practice throughout our community.

## Zero Tolerance for Harm

Stepping Stones has zero tolerance for any behaviour that compromises a child's safety or breaches child protection law. Any concerns, allegations or disclosures are treated with urgency, compassion and procedural fairness.

Families are encouraged to contact our Centre Director if they ever have a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing.

In accordance with the Education and Care National Law and Regulations, our Centre is also a tobacco-free, vape-free, drug-free and alcohol-free environment. Smoking or vaping is not permitted anywhere in or around the service.

## Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour expected of all employees, students and volunteers at Stepping Stones. It reflects our commitment to creating a safe, respectful and values-driven community for children, families and colleagues. All team members uphold the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals as set out in Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics.

Our work is grounded in the Stepping Stones values of Community, Kindness, Joy, Growth and Gratitude, which guide the way we build relationships, make decisions and support children's learning and wellbeing. These values are supported by the professional qualities of integrity, responsibility and respect, ensuring high standards of conduct in all interactions. Through these shared commitments, we create an environment where every child experiences safety, belonging and the freedom to learn and thrive.

## Regulatory Authority

Our Service is regulated by the national body for early education and care – the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as well as the state licensing department in WA. To contact our Regulatory Authority, please refer to the contact details below:

### The Education and Care Regulatory Unit

WA Department of Communities

Phone: (08) 6277 3889 or 1800 199 383 (Freecall)

Mailing Address: Locked Bag 5000, Fremantle WA 6959

Operating Address: Boorloo Campus, Level 7, 130 Stirling Street, Perth WA 6000

Email: [ECRU@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:ECRU@communities.wa.gov.au)

## National Quality Framework

Our Service complies with the Australian Government's National Quality Framework (NQF), which includes the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and the national Assessment and Rating system.

We regularly self-assess our practices against the National Quality Standard and strive for continuous improvement. Our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) helps us celebrate what we are doing well while guiding the development of thoughtful, future-focused goals that enhance the quality of education and care we provide.

We warmly welcome and encourage families to share feedback and suggestions at any time. Your insights strengthen our program, deepen our partnerships and support our ongoing commitment to high-quality early childhood education. You can provide feedback by sending an email to [director@steppingstonescdc.com.au](mailto:director@steppingstonescdc.com.au)

## Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 (EYLF) guides early childhood educators, early childhood teachers and approved providers to inform educational programs and practices that emphasise play-based learning and extend and enrich children's learning and wellbeing from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school.

**The vision of the EYLF is:**

All children engage in learning that promotes confident and creative individuals and successful lifelong learners. All children are active and informed members of their communities with knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. (EYLF, V2.0, p.6)

Fundamental to the EYLF is a view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging, being and becoming*. From before birth children are connected to family, community, culture and place. Their earliest development and learning take place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.

The EYLF is made up of learning outcomes, principles and practices which educators use in their documentation of children's learning and in their reflection and planning.

**Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity**

**Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world**

**Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing**

**Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners**

**Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators**

## **Belonging**

At Stepping Stones, we believe that a strong sense of belonging is the foundation for every child's learning and wellbeing. Belonging means knowing where and with whom you feel safe, valued and connected. Children belong to diverse families, neighbourhoods, cultures and communities, and they bring these rich experiences into our service. Guided by our values of *Community* and *Gratitude*, we create warm, trusting relationships where every child is welcomed, seen and celebrated. We honour each family's identity, culture, language and ways of being, recognising that these relationships shape who children are and who they are becoming. Belonging gives children the confidence to explore, participate and make meaning of their world.

## Being

Being recognises the importance of the present moment in children's lives. Childhood is a time to play, explore, wonder and experience joy. It is a time to build relationships, express feelings, embrace challenges and learn about oneself.

At Stepping Stones, we value *Joy and Kindness* in daily interactions, creating an environment where children can be themselves—curious, expressive, capable and engaged. Being honours children as active participants in their own learning, not just preparing for what comes next, but experiencing meaningful, connected moments in the here and now.

## Becoming

Becoming reflects the incredible growth and transformation that occurs in the early years. Children's identities, skills, understandings and relationships evolve rapidly as they encounter new ideas, experiences and opportunities.

Anchored in our value of *Growth*, we work in partnership with families and children to support this ongoing development. We acknowledge each child's capabilities, celebrate their achievements and provide experiences that nurture confidence, curiosity and resilience. Through collaboration, reflection and gratitude, we help children build the foundations they need to participate as active, capable citizens now and into the future.

## Our Commitment

The diversity of family and community life means that children experience belonging, being and becoming in unique and meaningful ways. At Stepping Stones, we honour these diverse ways of knowing, being and doing. Guided by our values of *Community, Kindness, Joy, Growth and Gratitude*, educators respectfully work with each child's strengths, culture, language and identity to support their learning journey. This commitment reflects the principles of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0, ensuring every child is recognised as capable, connected and full of potential.

## Educational Program

We are committed to providing a high-quality educational program that responds to each child's individual needs, abilities and interests. Our curriculum is delivered through an intentional, play-based pedagogy aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0 and the WA Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines, ensuring strong continuity between early childhood education and the early years of school.

Our planning is grounded in the Stepping Stones values of **Community, Kindness, Joy, Growth and Gratitude**. Educators build warm, trusting relationships with children and families and use this knowledge to shape learning experiences that reflect each child's ideas, culture, strengths and interests. Children are encouraged to take an active role in their learning through choice, exploration and meaningful participation in daily routines and project work.

We use conversations, play and shared experiences as the basis for teaching, ensuring children are partners in learning. Educators foster independence, support self-help skills and provide environments that challenge, nurture and extend children's development through strong, intentional teaching practices.

If we have concerns about a child's development, we communicate openly with families, share observations and (where appropriate) recommend additional supports. We understand the sensitivity of these conversations and value collaboration with parents and allied health professionals. We are always available to discuss any aspect of your child's learning and development.

Guided by our curriculum frameworks and values, our program provides intentional, meaningful and connected learning experiences that prepare children for kindergarten and beyond - giving them a strong foundation for future learning success.

## Goals for your child at Stepping Stones

Educators' practices and the relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children's involvement and success in learning. Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support their learning. Children's early learning experiences have a significant influence on their future.

We will observe and document a range of short and long-term goals for your child that will guide our program decisions and will be based on the outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework. These include:

- mutual respect and empathy
- concern and responsibility for self and others
- a sense of self worth
- social awareness
- respect for diversity
- importance of sustainability
- self-discipline and self-regulation
- habits of initiative and persistence
- creative intelligence and imagination
- self-confidence as an independent learner
- a love of learning.

We strongly encourage open communication between families and educators to ensure continuity for your child. We acknowledge that the role of the educator is to work in partnership with families, children's first, and most influential teachers.

## Documentation of Learning & Communication

At Stepping Stones Child Development Centre, we use the XPLOR app to communicate with parents and caregivers throughout the day. Educators record observations and learning achievements through the app. The XPLOR app is a place where you can manage bookings and payments as well as access learning and health updates for your child. It is also used to sign your child in and out on the days they attend.

At Stepping Stones Child Development Centre, we work in partnership with you and your family. We support and encourage open communication with centre staff

about your child's unique needs and their general enjoyment of their day at our service. Our friendly and understanding team would love to discuss your child and how we can best support them at a time that is convenient for you. Whether that be morning, afternoon, in person, via email or over the phone. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

## Enrolment Information

The first steps in our enrolment process are simple and designed to help us get to know your child and family. Before your child starts at Stepping Stones, we invite you to tour our facilities and get a 'feel' for who we are. We'll then ask you to complete a waitlist application, enrolment form, provide a few important documents, and pay a \$50 registration fee. If you need assistance at any stage, our Centre Director or Admin team are always happy to help.

As part of the enrolment process, we'll need:

- a copy of your child's birth certificate or identity documents
- your child's GP and contact details
- your child's Medicare number (if available)
- any certified court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans (if applicable)
- an up-to-date Immunisation History Statement (less than 2 months old) from the Australian Immunisation Register
- any medical management plans for allergies, asthma, anaphylaxis or other medical needs

These details help us keep your child safe, supported and ready for a great start at Stepping Stones. Let us know any time if you have questions—we're here for you.

## Family law and access

Stepping Stones Child Development Centre follows all legal responsibilities around Family Law, custody and access. As part of your child's enrolment, we ask that you provide copies of any current court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans. If anything changes, please let us know and share the updated documents as soon as possible.

We can only follow the directions set out in official court documents. Without a court order, we are unable to prevent a parent from collecting their child.

Children will only be released to people authorised in writing by the custodial parent or guardian.

All custody and access documents are treated with strict confidentiality and are stored securely in line with our Record Keeping and Retention Policy. Personal information is only shared with written consent, which can be withdrawn at any time before information is disclosed. [ Reg. 177 (4, 4A, 4B, 4C) ]

## Inclusion of all children

At Stepping Stones, we are committed to creating an inclusive environment where every child can participate fully and confidently in our program. If your child has diverse abilities or additional needs, we encourage you to speak with our Centre Director before enrolment so we can plan together and make sure your child feels supported from their very first day.

We value open conversations with families about how we can best support your child's learning, development and wellbeing. If your child receives support through the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)*, we may ask for your permission to speak with their therapists or support team. This helps us understand their learning goals and ensure continuity of support while they are with us. Where needed, our service may also be able to apply for additional assistance through the *Inclusion Support Program (ISP)* to help your child access the program and participate meaningfully each day.

## Authorised Nominees

As part of your child's enrolment, you'll be asked to list authorised nominees—people (other than you) who have your permission to support your child in specific situations. These authorised nominees may:

- collect your child from the Service
- give consent for medical treatment from a doctor, hospital or ambulance
- give consent for your child to be transported by ambulance
- approve your child attending an excursion

It's very important that this information is always up to date, especially in case of an emergency.

Please let the Centre Director or Admin team know in writing if any details change, including:

- your address
- your child's health needs

- contact phone numbers or details for parents or authorised nominees
- family changes, such as updated parenting or court orders

## Photographs, Social Media & Promotion

As part of our enrolment process, we will ask for your permission to take photos and videos of your child during their attendance at Stepping Stones. These images help us document children's learning, share moments with families and support our planning. With your consent, photos may be shared with our parent community through the secure platform of the XPLOR app.

We may also ask for separate permission to use images for Service promotion, marketing or community communication. If you prefer that your child's image is not used for promotional purposes, please let us know on enrolment.

In line with the National Model Code for Protecting Children and Young People and child safety laws, we ask families to support a safe and respectful environment by:

- not taking photos or videos of children while at the Service
- not sharing images of other children from the XPLOR app or any other platform
- respecting that staff cannot share information about other children, families or staff members
- refraining from sending friend requests or following educators on personal social media accounts

These expectations help protect children's privacy and safety and ensure we are meeting our responsibilities as a child-safe organisation.

If you have any questions about photo permissions, how images are used, or our child safety requirements, please speak with our Centre Director.

## Fees & Payments

### Registration Fee

- \$50 non-refundable fee
- Payable when the waitlist form is submitted

### Bond

- Equivalent to two weeks of fees
- Processed in the week preceding commencement of care
- Refunded upon ceasing care, subject to all fees being paid and notice requirements being met

### Daily Fees (before CCS is applied)

- \$165 per day — children aged 2-3 years
- \$155 per day — children aged 3 years and over

### Payment of fees

- Fees must be paid two weeks in advance via Direct Debit
- Fees are payable for public holidays and absences
- Fees are subject to change with a minimum of four weeks' written notice (14-day minimum notice requirement under Regulation 172)

### Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- CCS is applied once confirmation is received from Services Australia
- Full fees apply until CCS approval is received by the Service

### Dishonour & Late Collection Fees

- A \$2.75 (inc. GST) fee applies to each unsuccessful direct debit transaction
- A fee of \$15 per 10-minute block (or part thereof) after 5.30pm will be charged if a child is collected late from the Service.

### Family Notice Requirements

- Families are required to provide a minimum of two weeks' written notice to amend or cancel bookings

## Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) offers assistance to families to help with the cost of child care for children aged 0-13 years. Families who wish to receive CCS as reduced fees must apply through the [MyGov](#) website. CCS is paid directly to our Service to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families will contribute to their fees and pay the difference between the fee charged by our Service and the subsidy amount received. This is called the 'gap fee'.

On enrolment we will need the Customer Reference Number (CRN) of the Primary Account holder, along with the child's CRN so we can confirm the attendance and ensure that you are receiving the appropriate subsidy. A CWA (complying written agreement) must be acknowledged via the XPLOR app by the claiming parent for Stepping Stones to be able to receive government funding on your behalf.

## Family Accounts

Up-to-date account balances and transaction histories can be viewed at any time through the XPLOR app by the Primary Account Holder. Through the app, families can:

- View current balances and payment history
- Access invoices and account information
- Update contact and payment details
- Receive important service notifications

For privacy and child-safety reasons, access to financial and account information is restricted to the Primary Account Holder.

## Keeping Information up-to-date

To ensure accurate billing and Child Care Subsidy processing, families are asked to promptly advise the Service of any changes to:

- CCS details or CRN information
- Contact details or Primary Account Holder status
- Direct debit details

Any discrepancies or questions regarding Statements of Entitlement or account balances should be raised with the Nominated Supervisor or Finance Manager as soon as possible.

## Statements of Entitlement

A Statement of Entitlement will be issued fortnightly via email to the Primary Account Holder, after care has occurred. This statement provides an overview of:

- Your child's attendance for the relevant period
- Applicable daily fees and charges
- Child Care Subsidy (CCS) information, as advised by Services Australia
- Any gap fees payable by the family
- Payments received and any outstanding amounts

Statements reflect attendance data and information submitted to Services Australia. Families are encouraged to review each statement carefully to ensure details remain accurate.

## Absences

Fees are payable for all absences, including those due to illness or family holidays. Swap days are not permitted, as fees are based on your child's booked enrolment days. Families who are eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) may receive subsidy support for up to 42 allowable absence days per child, per financial year, in line with Services Australia guidelines. In certain circumstances, additional absence days beyond 42 may be approved (for example, for illness or other specific reasons). For further information about allowable absences and CCS eligibility, families are encouraged to contact Services Australia (Centrelink) directly.

## Cancellation or Amendment of Placement

Children will remain enrolled and keep their place unless their parent/guardian notifies the centre in writing that they wish to cancel or amend their enrolment booking with a minimum of 2 weeks written notice required.

## Arrival and Departure

Each day, you must sign your child in upon arrival and sign out upon departure using the XPLOR app. We are required by legislation to always maintain our attendance record. This record may be used in the event of an emergency situation at the Service. Failure to record attendances or absences may result in a loss of Centrelink benefits.

Our staff have a duty of care to your child and will only allow your child to be released into the care of either a parent, guardian or an authorised nominee as listed on your child's enrolment record. If your child needs to be collected by another person for some reason, authority to collect must be provided in writing to the Centre Director, and the individual will be required to confirm their identity using photographic ID documents before the child will be released into their care.

Please also note our centre hours are 7.30am – 5.30pm. For licencing and insurance reasons, please collect your child by 5:30pm. Late pick up's will be charged at \$15 per 10-minute block or part thereof after closing time until the child is collected.

## Your child's first day

The first day in a new service is a big step for you and your child. Please don't be alarmed if your child experiences some separation anxiety. This is normal and our experienced educators will assist you and your child through this transition period. Try to establish a familiar care routine from the orientation process to support your child in this transition. Being well organised and avoiding a rush can also help ensure a calm start to the day. Sometimes this experience is more upsetting for the family, than the child. We understand this and offer support through phone calls during the day, photos and open communication.

## What you need to bring

Each child is required to bring the following items:

- Backpack or tote bag
- 2 changes of weather appropriate clothes (include nappies/pull ups if used)
- 1 waterproof bag for wet/soiled clothing (provided at orientation)
- 1 wide brimmed sun hat (provided at orientation)
- 1 water bottle (no juice or cordial please)
- Safe, comfortable footwear (no slippers, thongs or heeled shoes please)
- Packed lunch in lunch box. We recommend a simple, balanced lunch with finger foods, i.e. sandwich or wrap, a piece of fruit, cheese, crackers etc.

Please remember no nuts are permitted.

Please ensure to clearly label all your child's belongings with their name.

Toys and special items that may be lost or broken are to be kept at home.

However, should your child require a comfort toy for a specific need (i.e. rest time) these will be welcomed. Occasionally items from home may be requested to enhance your child's learning experience. Toys that represent violence or war such as guns are not permitted in Stepping Stones.

## Rest and Sleep

The children will have an opportunity for a short quiet time after lunch.

Depending on children's needs this may include quiet play activities or a sleep.

We provide clean mattresses and bedding for your child's rest/sleep needs.

## Daily Rhythm

Our daily rhythm intentionally balances play, learning, rest, relationships and responsibility. Each part of the day reflects our shared values of Community, Kindness, Joy, Growth and Gratitude

### 7:30AM – 9:30AM - Arrival and Outdoor Play Community and Belonging

Shared Yard – K1 & K2 Together

- Outdoor yard open from service opening (weather permitting)
- Children are welcomed into a shared play space that nurtures connection, friendships and a sense of belonging
- Educators support gentle transitions with kindness and reassurance

- Indoor spaces remain available for quiet settling, fine motor table activities and individual connection

### 9:30AM – 10:00AM- Mat Time & Morning Tea

#### *Gratitude and Connection*

- Gathering together for songs, stories, prayer, Acknowledgement of Country and shared conversation
- Children practise gratitude, listening and respectful participation
- Morning tea enjoyed in a calm, social environment
- Outdoor yard reset as needed

### 10:00AM -11:00AM - Outdoor Play (K1) & Indoor Learning (K2)

#### *Growth through Safe Exploration & Purposeful Learning*

##### K1 – Outdoor Yard (Exclusive):

- Gentle gross motor exploration, sensory discovery and confidence building
- Educators scaffold risk-taking with care and encouragement

##### K2 – Indoor Learning:

- Intentional teaching experiences led by educators
- Table-based learning activities supporting early literacy, numeracy and fine motor growth
- Learning centres and provocations that encourage curiosity, thinking and persistence

### 11:00AM – 12:00PM Outdoor Play (K2). Indoor Learning (K1)

#### *Growing Independence, Capability & Confidence*

##### K2 – Outdoor Yard (Exclusive):

- Physical challenge, cooperative play and leadership opportunities
- Building resilience, teamwork and perseverance

##### K1 – Indoor Learning:

- Intentional small-group teaching moments
- Hands-on table activities supporting emerging skills and independence
- Learning centres that promote language, imagination and joyful exploration.

11.30AM – 12:00 PM K1 Lunch.

12:00PM – 12:30PM - K2 Lunch.

K1 and K2 Children wash their hands, collect their lunch boxes and water bottles, and enjoy their meal together. This communal time supports independence and good mealtime habits.

**12:00PM – 1:00PM - Rest Time.**

*Wellbeing & Balance*

After lunch, children unwind with a quiet rest period. This time offers the children:

- Calm rest and relaxation spaces
- Individual needs respected with compassion and flexibility
- Quiet reflection and emotional regulation supported

**1:00PM – 2:30PM- Indoor Learning & Small Groups.**

*Growth, Curiosity & Joy*

- Table-based experiences building focus, skill development and confidence
- Learning centres and provocations that invite creativity, inquiry and collaboration
- Educators nurture meaningful relationships and celebrate individual progress
- Intentional teaching embedded across the program

**2:30PM – 3:00PM - Afternoon Tea & Outdoor Play.**

*Community & Gratitude*

Shared Yard – K1 & K2 Together

- Afternoon tea enjoyed outdoors, strengthening connection and wellbeing
- Children practise gratitude, conversation and shared responsibility
- Relaxed transition back into outdoor play

**3:00pm – 5:30pm - Outdoor Play & Departures.**

*Joy, Connection & Belonging*

Shared Yard – K1 & K2 Together

- Open-ended outdoor play supports joy, imagination and friendships
- Educators intentionally guide social learning, emotional regulation and inclusion
- Families are welcomed into warm end-of-day connections and shared gratitude

## Sustainability

At Stepping Stones, sustainability is part of our everyday life. Guided by our values of kindness, growth, and gratitude, we support children to care for the environment and understand that even small actions can make a difference. Children learn about sustainability through hands-on experiences, including caring for our gardens and worm farms, participating in recycling and Containers for Change, exploring loose parts and recycled materials through play. Time spent connecting with the natural world helps children build respect for the environment and a sense of responsibility for caring for it.

We also support children to explore sustainability in a broader sense—through ideas of sharing, fairness, and community—helping them to grow as confident, caring contributors to a more sustainable future.

## Celebrations

We encourage families to share with educators the celebrations, traditions, and moments of significance that are meaningful within their family. These may include birthdays, remembrance days, and cultural or family observances such as Easter, Christmas, and other special occasions. At Stepping Stones, we seek to honour each child's sense of belonging by respectfully including these experiences within the educational program where appropriate.

As a Christian community, we celebrate key events such as Easter and Christmas as part of our shared life together, while also creating space for children to learn about and respect the diverse experiences of other community members in a spirit of kindness, care, and inclusion.

Families are also welcome to suggest events or celebrations for consideration in our annual calendar, supporting a program that reflects our community and the families within it.

To support the health and wellbeing of all children, particularly those with allergies and food intolerances, families are asked to discuss any proposed birthday treats or shared food items with educators in advance of their child's celebration. This helps ensure all celebrations are safe, inclusive, and joyful.

## Sun Safety

Stepping Stones is a SunSmart Service and follows the Cancer Council SunSmart Guidelines to protect children from harmful UV exposure. As part of our SunSmart practices, each child is provided with a wide-brimmed bucket hat at Orientation. Hats should be labelled with your child's name and are to be worn during all outdoor play. Children without a hat are required to play in shaded areas.

The Service supplies Cancer Council Kids SPF 50+ and Woolworths SPF 50+ sunscreen for children's use. Permission for sunscreen application is included in the enrolment process. Families requiring an alternative sunscreen are asked to advise the Service at enrolment and provide this each day their child attends. Families are also asked to ensure children attend wearing SunSmart clothing that is appropriate to weather conditions, including clothing that provides adequate sun protection to shoulders and torso. Through these shared responsibilities, we work in partnership with families to promote children's health, safety, and lifelong sun-safe habits. More information on SunSmart habits is available in our foyer.

## Toileting

Our Service welcomes children at varying stages of toileting independence. Children are not required to be fully toilet trained prior to commencing.

The Service provides designated nappy change facilities and disposable wipes to support children's hygiene and comfort. Families are asked to supply nappies and/or pull-ups for their child where required. A minimum of 2 changes of clothes are requested (more if your child is still learning) and a wet bag for storage of soiled clothing will be supplied at orientation.

Toilet learning is supported in partnership with families and occurs using agreed approaches, ensuring consistency between home and the Service. Educators encourage independence in a respectful, hygienic and developmentally appropriate way, while maintaining children's dignity, understanding that accidents are a normal part of learning. Children are supported with regular reminders to use the toilet as part of daily routines.

Information about nappy changes and toilet learning progress is recorded and shared with families through the XPLOR Home App.

## Parent Participation and Feedback

Stepping Stones has an Open-Door Policy and values strong, respectful partnerships with families. We actively encourage families to be involved in the life of the Service and welcome open communication at all times.

Families are invited to share feedback or raise any questions or concerns by speaking with their child's educator or by contacting the Centre Director in person, by phone, or via email.

We also warmly welcome parents and family members who wish to share their skills, interests, or talents with the children, helping to enrich the educational program and broaden learning experiences. If you are interested in participating or contributing in any way, please speak with your child's educator to discuss opportunities.

From time to time, families may be invited to provide feedback through surveys or questionnaires focused on specific areas of the Service. Families are also encouraged to contribute feedback during policy reviews, ensuring our policies remain current, responsive, and reflective of our community. All participation is voluntary, and we value the perspectives families choose to share.

## Pastoral Care

We recognise that families may experience challenges at different times, and Stepping Stones is committed to supporting our community with care and compassion. Through our connections with East Fremantle Baptist Church, families may access pastoral support, a listening ear, and practical assistance when needed.

Families are encouraged to speak confidentially with the Centre Director if they feel this additional support may be helpful. Accessing pastoral care is entirely optional, and all support is offered in a respectful and confidential manner.

Families are also warmly welcomed to attend church services and community events at East Fremantle Baptist Church should they wish to do so. Participation is always optional and offered as an invitation.

## Christian Values

Stepping Stones was established by the East Fremantle Baptist Church (EFBC) and is guided by a Christian ethos that aligns with our mission to build a joyful, kind community—one step at a time. Our faith foundation is expressed through our core values of **Community, Kindness, Joy, Growth, and Gratitude**, which shape the way we care for children, families, and one another each day.

Our educational program may include age-appropriate opportunities such as:

- The intentional promotion of our values through relationships, play, and everyday interactions
- Daily moments of reflection, such as prayer, songs, or saying grace before meals, offered in a gentle and inclusive way
- Simple Bible stories shared at meaningful times, such as Easter and Christmas, in age-appropriate and respectful ways
- Access to pastoral care and family support, offered voluntarily
- A commitment to inclusion and respect, ensuring all children and families feel welcomed and valued

As part of our connection with EFBC, families may participate in shared community experiences, including the annual Christmas concert held at the church, our bi-annual Open Day events and connections with the church playgroup, strengthening children's sense of belonging.

All educators and staff are expected to live out our values of **Community, Kindness, Joy, Growth, and Gratitude** in their professional practice and relationships.

## Behaviour Guidance

We aim to support children to develop positive, respectful relationships within a caring community. Guided by our values of Kindness, Community, and Growth, educators encourage cooperative and pro-social behaviours, helping children learn how to express their feelings, manage emotions, and interact positively with others.

Children are supported to self-regulate during play and daily routines, building confidence, resilience, and a positive sense of self. Educators follow the Service's Behaviour Guidance Policy, ensuring clear, consistent, and fair expectations across all rooms.

We use a positive and strengths-based approach to behaviour guidance, supporting children to develop respect for themselves, for others, and for their environment. When challenges arise, educators provide calm reminders, clear guidance, and age-appropriate consequences that focus on learning and repairing relationships. Families are valued partners in this process. Where ongoing behavioural support is required, educators will work closely with parents to ensure a consistent and supportive approach. For further information about behaviour guidance or any Service policy, families are welcome to speak with their child's educator or contact the Centre Director.

## Health and Hygiene

Our Service is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for children, families, and educators. We have effective and systematic risk-management practices in place to identify and minimise potential hazards across our learning environments and daily routines.

Educators consistently model and promote healthy hygiene practices, including thorough handwashing and cough and sneeze etiquette. Children are supported to learn these skills in age-appropriate ways as part of everyday routines.

To help reduce the spread of illness, we ask that children, families, and visitors wash their hands or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser upon arrival. Educators also regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and shared equipment throughout the day. The Service employs contract cleaners 3 nights a week to ensure we maintain these high standards.

## Illness and Exclusion

Please monitor your child's health and keep them at home if they are unwell or have an infectious illness. We follow the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines for exclusion.

If your child becomes unwell while at the Service, we will contact you (or an authorised nominee) to collect your child as soon as possible - within 30 minutes where possible. If you are unable to attend, we will contact your child's emergency contact.

When your child is collected, you will be provided with an Injury, Incident, Trauma and Illness Record outlining your child's symptoms and any actions taken. Families are asked to review and sign this record.

### Exclusion Guidelines

Children should not attend the Service if:

- They have had paracetamol for a temperature within the past 24 hours
- They have started antibiotics within the last 24 hours
- They have experienced vomiting or diarrhoea within the past 48 hours

For some illnesses, a medical clearance certificate may be required before your child returns.

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, families will be notified as soon as possible. Families are asked to inform the Service immediately if someone in their household is diagnosed with an infectious illness. The Service is legally required to notify the Public Health Unit when certain illnesses occur.

### **Immunisations**

You must provide your child's current Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement which shows your child is 'up to date' with all the immunisations scheduled for their age. This statement must be no more than two months old. Children who are not up to date with immunisations are ineligible to enrol at Stepping Stones without an Authorised catch-up schedule.

### **Allergies, Asthma, Diabetes or Epilepsy**

Our Centre is an Allergy Aware centre. Nuts and products containing nuts are not permitted into Stepping Stones. This will be strictly followed by all members of our community.

It is vital that we are aware of any medical condition including diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, eczema, asthma, or risks of anaphylaxis for your child including any potential triggers. Families are required to indicate any allergy or asthma on the enrolment form.

Our Service requires a Medical Management Plan or ASCIA Asthma/Anaphylaxis Action Plan to be completed by your General Practitioner to assist in managing your child's needs. This needs to be provided prior to your child's commencement at the Service. In consultation with the Centre Director, you will be asked to develop a Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan to assist our educators

and staff. Any prescribed medication that your child may require must be provided each day they attend our Service.

## Medication

If your child requires medication whilst at our Service, you must complete an Administration of Medication Record to give your consent for an educator to administer prescribed medication to your child. Medication must be given directly to an educator for appropriate safe storage.

Educators can only administer medication that is:

- prescribed by a registered medical practitioner (with instructions attached to the medication or in written form from the medical practitioner)
- in its original packaging and have the original label clearly showing your child's name
- before the expiry/use by date.

Any child's prescribed medication such as asthma inhalers, adrenaline auto injectors (EpiPen) or Insulin (for diabetes), must accompany the child each day to our Service. Upon collection of your child at the end of the day, you or an authorised person will be requested to sign the Administration of Medication Form if medication has been administered.

## Incidents, Injury & First Aid

While we take all reasonable steps to minimise risks and keep children safe, accidents can sometimes occur as part of active play and learning.

There will always be an educator on duty during opening hours with current First Aid, CPR, emergency asthma, and anaphylaxis management qualifications.

For minor injuries, first aid will be provided as needed. An Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record will be completed, and families will be informed when collecting their child and asked to review and sign the record.

If your child experiences a head or facial injury, even a minor bump, you will be contacted. Educators will continue to monitor your child closely and advise if collection is required.

In the event of a serious injury or medical emergency, the Nominated Supervisor will call an ambulance immediately and contact a parent/guardian or authorised nominee as soon as possible. If families are unable to meet the ambulance at the Service, an educator will accompany your child to provide care and reassurance. Please note that ambulance cover is the responsibility of families. Authorisations for this are obtained during Enrolment.

## Safety in our Service

**Emergency and evacuation procedures:** Our Service conducts ongoing risk assessments and maintains Emergency Management Plans to respond to a range of potential hazards and emergency situations.

In line with regulations, we complete emergency drills at least once every three months. Drills are carried out in a calm, well-organised, and age-appropriate manner, may occur at different times of the day or week, and include procedures such as evacuation, lockdown, and medical emergencies.

Families will be notified when an emergency drill has occurred, supporting opportunities for discussion and reassurance at home. These regular practices help build children's confidence and ensure our emergency procedures remain effective and well understood.

**Drop off and pick up time:** Early childhood education and care services are busy places especially during the morning drop off and afternoon pickup. We ask that parents be extremely mindful of danger when arriving and departing from our service.

- Please always hold your child's hand in the carpark area
- Be alert of reversing drivers in the car park
- Never leave a child or infant in the car unattended
- Never leave the front entry doors open or let a child exit unsupervised
- Never provide the entry code to another person
- Always advise an educator of your child's arrival or departure
- Always do a visual check around your vehicle before driving

**Workplace Health and Safety:** We are committed to providing an environment that is safe and healthy for every employee, volunteer, child, family and visitor. We have made every reasonable effort to minimise the risk of serious injury and request all persons who visit our service, adhere to our policies regarding Workplace Health and Safety. Each morning, our educators conduct daily safety checks of the indoor and outdoor environment looking for any potential risk or hazard and aim to rectify any issue before children use the equipment or area. If you see something that concerns you regarding safe work practices, the safety of building and equipment or general work health and safety issues, please contact the Centre Director immediately.

## Family Conduct & Respectful Communication

At Stepping Stones, we are committed to building a joyful, kind community where children, families, and educators feel safe, respected, and valued. Our Family Conduct Guidelines sit alongside our Enrolment Policy, Complaints Policy, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. By enrolling at the Service, families agree to work in partnership with us and uphold shared ethical responsibilities that support positive relationships and children's wellbeing.

### Respectful Relationships

Families and educators are expected to communicate openly, respectfully, and collaboratively, sharing relevant information to support each child's learning and development. We ask that all interactions reflect our values of Kindness and Gratitude, including honesty, inclusivity, and confidentiality.

For more detailed or sensitive discussions, families are encouraged to arrange a time away from the learning environment, allowing educators to give their full attention and respond thoughtfully.

### Behaviour Expectations

All members of our community are expected to:

- Treat educators, children, and other families with respect and courtesy
- Always model appropriate language and behaviour
- Understand that threatening or aggressive behaviour is not acceptable and may result in further action, including police involvement if required

Where there are ongoing breaches of the Family Conduct Guidelines, the Nominated Supervisor and/or Approved Provider will review the matter. In serious or repeated cases, a child's enrolment may be at risk.

### Raising Concerns or Complaints

If you have a concern or complaint, we encourage you to speak with your child's educator or contact the Centre Director to arrange a suitable time to talk.

All matters are managed respectfully and confidentially. Where required by law, notifiable incidents will be reported to the regulatory authority.

Concerns may also be submitted in writing via email:

[director@steppingstonescdc.com.au](mailto:director@steppingstonescdc.com.au).

If your concern requires communication with the Stepping Stones Board, please email: [chairperson@steppingstonescdc.com.au](mailto:chairperson@steppingstonescdc.com.au)

## Privacy and Confidentiality

We are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of children, families, and educators. Clear policies and procedures are in place to ensure personal information is handled respectfully, securely, and in line with legislation.

### Use and Sharing of Information

Personal information (such as names, addresses, phone numbers, and email details) is not shared with anyone without prior consent, unless required by law. Families are asked to respect the privacy of others and not share personal information relating to other children, families, or staff.

Families must not share or publish images or videos obtained through the Service, including content accessed via the Service app, Facebook page, or at special events. This includes sharing on social media or in any other format.

Educators and staff are also bound by strict confidentiality requirements and cannot share information about children, families, or colleagues without written consent. Families are asked not to connect with staff on personal social media accounts, except for the official Stepping Stones Facebook page.

### Collection of Information

Information is collected from families to support enrolment, care, and learning programs, and to work in partnership with families to meet each child's needs. Information is only shared with others with consent, unless required by law. Families may access their child's records at any time and request copies of information held in their child's file.

### Records & Security

The Service is required to keep certain records in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and Family Assistance Law. These records include enrolment details, attendance, medication records, incident and illness records, and assessment information. All records are stored securely and retained for the required timeframes as outlined in legislation. Detailed information about record storage and retention is available in our Record Keeping and Retention Policy.

### Privacy Compliance

Our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy outlines how we comply with the Australian Privacy Principles, the Privacy Act 1988, and the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme. Any privacy concerns or complaints are managed promptly and respectfully in line with our Dealing with Complaints Policy.

## **Thank You for Being Part of Our Community**

Thank you for choosing Stepping Stones Child Development Centre. We are deeply grateful for the privilege of walking alongside your family and supporting your child's learning, growth, and wellbeing during their pre-school years.

### **Staying Connected**

Centre Director: Amanda Saunders

Phone: 0431 848 034 (Business hours)

Email: [director@steppingstonescdc.com.au](mailto:director@steppingstonescdc.com.au)

Website: [www.steppingstonescdc.com.au](http://www.steppingstonescdc.com.au)

Follow us on Socials:

[www.facebook.com/steppingstonescdc](https://www.facebook.com/steppingstonescdc) @steppingstoneseastfreo

*"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

Matthew 19:14