

EARLY LEARNING AND CARE

FAMILY HANDBOOK

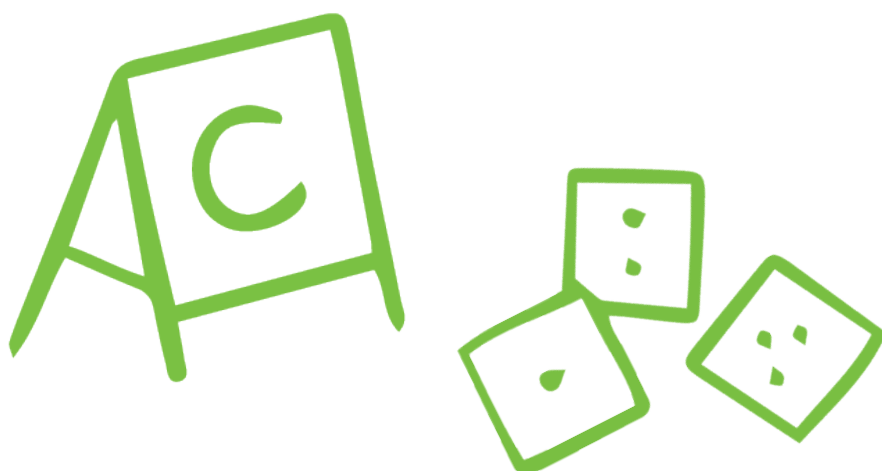
YMCA SOUTH AUSTRALIA
CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Providing safe happy places where children are strengthened through connection, learning, physical exercise and play.

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Welcome

YMCA ELC welcomes you and your child/ren to the service. This handbook provides an overview of YMCA Early Learning and Care.

At YMCA ELC we strive to offer high quality services for children and families that require care during the working day. Our Educators are friendly and work hard to ensure your children are cared for in a welcoming, supportive and stimulating environment. Educators make regular observations on your child and provide a range of culturally diverse and age appropriate activities to support their development. YMCA SA follows the National Quality Framework and adheres to all relevant industry and workplace legislation.

We value your input into the operating of our services, so please feel free to provide feedback or suggestions directly to our educators.



You'll love how they grow!

Child Safe Environments

YMCA South Australia is committed to the fact that all children/young people have the right to develop and reach their potential in environments that are caring, nurturing and safe. We consider any form of abuse, inclusive of emotional, physical, sexual abuse or neglect as intolerable under any and all circumstances.

Our directors, executives, staff and volunteers have a duty of care to ensure that all who access our owned and operated facilities, programs and services are provided with a safe, open and honest environment that protects children/young people and those who work with them.

Our staff (including Educators) and volunteers are required to adhere to this policy at all times and are expected to be pro-active in identifying new opportunities to improve it. Related policies, workplace and program/service procedures and practices seek to eliminate and minimise the risk of harm of children/young people and vulnerable people in their care.

Our Safeguarding Children accreditation means that we are continually audited by the Australian Childhood Foundation on our adherence to the strictest practices to ensure the safest environment possible.



Our Philosophy

The YMCA is a not-for-profit community organisation that has served the South Australian community for over a 180 years.

We build healthier, happier communities through the provision of health and wellbeing programs that promote community connection, education and development. We adapt and shape our offering to be relevant and serve the needs of the local school community.

Building Capacity

YMCA has a role in building the capacity of those who lives we work with.

Developing the whole child

YMCA strives for the highest quality education and care, assisting each child to maximise their learning outcomes.

Providing high quality, evidence-informed practice

YMCA enables children to identify their own learning interests and needs and supports them as they develop and grow.

Strengthening Communities

Providing safe, happy place in which young people are strengthened through connections, learning, physical exercise, play and fun.

Our Locations



Aldinga Payinthe College

150 Quinliven Road, Aldinga, SA 5173
Opening hours: 6:30am - 6:30pm



Riverbanks College B-12

1 Harvest Boulevard, Angle Vale, SA 5117
Opening hours: 6:30am - 6:30pm



YMCA Strathalbyn ELC

1A Burkett Drive, Strathalbyn, SA, 5255
Opening hours: 6:30am - 6:30pm

Programs

Programs and activities are developed for each service in accordance with the Early Years Learning Framework. They are written plans with sound preparation, organisation and co-ordination.

We encourage the families, carers/guardians and children to be involved in the planning of these programs to ensure that their children's needs (e.g. age, cultural diversity, developmental stages and interests) are being met.

Programs are developed regularly and displayed in a prominent position. Information regarding the programs is available to families and carers/guardians.

A range of equipment is provided to meet the early years developmental needs of the children.

The equipment and other materials will be suitable, safe and well maintained.

Our aim is to encompass activities and play which are expected to be part of the life of children in their important early years. Since some children spend a substantial time at ELC these activities encompass a range of recreational, educational and creative experiences.

Family Assistance

YMCA South Australia is a Centrelink registered childcare provider. To register for Family Assistance and Childcare Subsidy (CCS) visit www.servicesaustralia.gov.au or please phone 13 61 50.

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) is also available.

All families wishing to use our ELC service must register beforehand.



Inclusions

The YMCA will provide nappies, sunscreen, all meals (breakfast, lunch and snacks) and cows milk when age appropriate.

The YMCA will also provide a hat for all children in our services. We will keep them on site at the centre to ensure the children have them at all times when needed.

Parents are to bring formula / breast milk, a change of clothes and sunscreen for sensitive skin if required.

Fees and Charges

YMCA South Australia set the fees on an annual basis. Please find updated fees on our website and at the ELC site. Our fees are charged one week in advance and you will be able to access a rolling statement through your Xplor Home App.

For simple and safe payments of your account YMCA South Australia accounts are payable by direct debit from credit card or bank accounts. YMCA South Australia has partnered with Debit Success to provide you with this service.

Fees are not payable on public holidays or when the centre is closed over the Christmas / New Year period. Fees will still be charged on scheduled days if there is a non-attendance due to sickness.

Other Fees

LATE FEE

YMCA South Australia ELC programs close strictly at the end of their operating hours.

The late fee for collecting a child after the specified closing time has been set at \$15 per 15 minute increments per child to provide sufficient funds to pay for the wages for the staff for additional time worked. This fee is not covered by CCS.

CANCELLATION POLICY

If you wish to withdraw your child from the service (including casual days) you must provide two weeks written notice or pay full fees in lieu of this notice. If you wish to reduce the days booked at the centre you are also asked to give two weeks' notice.

HOLIDAY FEE

We provide a 20% reduction in fees during holiday periods. The reductions is available for four weeks per calendar year, and two weeks notice must be provided.

To avoid a late fee, please organise for your child to be collected before closing time. If for some reason, you are unable to do so, then please contact the staff at your child's service by phone and organise for your child to be collected before closing time by an Authorised Emergency Contact.

If you do not pick up your child within 30 minutes and have not contacted the service, we will be obliged to call the police to collect your child.

CHANGES TO BOOKINGS

Two weeks written notice must be provided to make changes to permanent bookings. This will be confirmed by the ELC Support Team and is subject to availability.

These changes can be made through the support team or via the Xplor Home app / website.

ABSENCES FROM THE SERVICE

Please contact the service if your child will not be attending care on any given day via phone or email. Fees will still be payable for absences.

Families eligible for CCS will have 42 absences available per year. These absences are available for any given child over all forms of approved care. These absences can be for any reason and do not require supporting documentation. Should a child use more than 42 days per year, full child care fees will be charged as no CCS will be paid.

Overdue Accounts

YMCA South Australia understands that some families may be experiencing genuine financial hardship and may have difficulty in meeting their obligations in paying the fees.

When a family has an direct debit dishonoured payment or has not adhered to a payment plan, they will be contacted by the ELC Support Team via either telephone, email or in person within 7 days from the date the rejection notification is received.

If payment or contact with the ELC Support Team is not made within 14 days, future bookings will be cancelled and care will not be provided until payment is made.

Where a genuine financial hardship is occurring the YMCA will endeavour to assist the family with every possible means and request that an open communication to be maintained to ensure both service to the family and YMCA obligations are met.

Enrolment Procedures

To ensure staff are able to provide the best possible care for children who attend our programs, all documentation relating to your child must be provided to the service along with your fully completed enrolment forms.

All children and families will be invited to a tour of the site prior to commencement.

Enrolments will be approved pending all information is completed on the enrolment form and documentation such as behaviour management forms, health care plans and medication forms are provided to the service. Other documentation may be required to ensure your child is able to receive the best possible care. In some cases it may necessary for the ELC Directors to request a meeting with families and carers and other agencies before the commencement of the enrolment may take place.

Online enrolments and bookings you can be made by registering through our website sa.ymca.org.au/ELC. Please go to your specific service and follow the links.

Sign In and Sign Out

Families and carers need to sign their children in and out of the service at the time of arrival and departure through Xplor Home (full instructions on our website). This procedure is a legal requirement of the funding body as it is linked to your childcare subsidy payments. Your co-operation in this matter is appreciated.

Any additional caregivers picking up children need to be documented on the enrolment form. Any changes to general routine of this process must be discussed with the Service Director prior to access.

Medication

YMCA staff understand that from time to time children in their care may require medication. In order for staff to administer medication in a safe and appropriate manner staff will adhere to the YMCA South Australia Medication Policy. A copy of which can be found in the Service's Policy Manual.



The Policy outlines the requirements of the families and carers and the practices of staff. Families and carers need to be aware that non prescription medication such as Panadol can not be administered to children whilst in the care of the YMCA staff, unless accompanied by a medical authorisation. The exception to this is teething gels or nappy creams. These can be administered when clearly clearly labelled from a Pharmacist.

Immunisations

After changes to the South Australian Public Health Act 2011 (the Act), from 7 August 2020, children will not be able to enrol in or attend early childhood services unless all immunisation requirements are met (No Jab, No Play).

HOW TO GET YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNISATION STATEMENT

Parents or carers can access an immunisation history statement via:

- Medicare online account through myGov
- Express Plus Medicare mobile app (through an existing MyGov account)
- Contacting the Australian Immunisation Register general enquiries line on 1800 653 809 and requesting a statement be mailed out.

WHEN TO SUPPLY IMMUNISATION RECORDS

A current approved immunisation record needs to be supplied:

- at the time of the child's enrolment
- after the child turns 7 months of age but before the child turns 9 months of age
- after the child turns 13 months of age but before the child turns 15 months of age
- after the child turns 19 months of age but before the child turns 21 months of age
- after the child turns 4 years and 2 months of age but before the child turns 4 years and 8 months of age.

Records must be given at these times to show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations. The specified times reflect the childhood immunisation schedule points.

If a child is enrolling in or attending the service for the first time and is aged outside of the specified times when records must be given, the record should be downloaded no earlier than 1 month before. The record must indicate the child is up to date for their age.

Australian Government Priority of Access

There are no requirements for filling vacancies. Providers can set their own rules for deciding who receives a place.

Providers are asked to (but are not legally obliged to) prioritise children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

This meets the Australian Government's aims of helping families who are most in need and supporting the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.

Information from the Child Care Provider Handbook September 2024 edition.



Inclusion Support Subsidy

Our program may be eligible to receive an Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) which can assist with the inclusion of children with additional needs. For further information concerning ISS please contact your ELC Director. This process can take considerable time to complete. We suggest children with additional needs have a trial period at the ELC to ensure the safety and suitability of the service and correct support is put in place.

Community Diversity

We adopt an attitude of respect for all families and staff regardless of background, physical capability or cultural diversity. This is encouraged by fostering high self-esteem and a positive self-concept in children by exploring similarities rather than differences.

The program will present positive experiences for the children which are based on gender equity. We aim to create an environment where all children feel comfortable, secure and happy.

Where families and carers are from non-english speaking backgrounds, they are invited and encouraged to contribute knowledge of their own culture to enhance the overall program.

Where a child has additional needs we will make every reasonable effort to overcome any barriers to provide access to care. We will engage the support of advisory agencies, visiting entertainers, members of the community and families and carers to support the program and enhance children's understanding of other cultures and people with additional needs.

We encourage any families and carers/ guardians/approved persons to participate in the program by utilising their talents, ideas and suggestions that will enhance the interactions and activities of the children at the Service.



Staffing

We recognise that the care of large groups of children for significant periods of times requires staff to have specialist knowledge and skills. The YMCA employs staff to meet the legislative requirements.

Qualifications in Early Learning and Care and / or Early Childhood Teaching are considered to be acceptable qualifications in ELC. Some transitional arrangements are made for staff that are in the process of qualifying. At least 50% of our Educators must be qualified or working towards the qualification and all other educators must hold or be actively working towards a Certificate III level education and care qualification.

Staff to child ratios will be adhered to at all times and are as follows:

- Children under the age of 2 will have a ratio of 1:4
- Children aged 2-3 years will have a ratio of 1:5
- Children aged 3-5 years will have a ratio of 1:11
- An Early Learning Teacher will be engaged full time in the service.

All staff are deemed to be fit and proper persons to provide a child care service. This evaluation is made through such things as police clearances, working with children checks, contacting referees, 100 point identification check, establishing the person's good character and assessing their capabilities to provide an adequate standard of care in the ELC setting.

Food and Nutrition

We offer a healthy nutritious menu based on the five food groups and staff use every opportunity to discuss food and nutrition in an educational environment. Our menu is reviewed by a dietitian to ensure it covers all nutritional requirements for the age groups covered.

Meals will be provided on site by a qualified cook. This will include breakfast, morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. Children will also be provided age appropriate opportunities to develop self-help skills through food preparation and service and food safety.

Staff aim to provide an eating environment that assists with the sharing of family and multicultural values. We will create an environment which is calm and incorporates the teaching of appropriate social skills.

Additional Dietary Requirements

YMCA staff will endeavour to provide assistance and support to any child with additional dietary requirements. Families and carers must inform staff upon enrolment about such requirements and provide all necessary information with the enrolment form.

Discussion regarding meals will be made in consultation with families, carers and staff. YMCA dietitian will assist staff and families to ensure all food requirements can be met by the service including strategies for meal times.

The YMCA will also endeavour to meet religious beliefs regarding food for individual families.

Please note that we are an "allergy aware" service provider.

Policies

YMCA ELC services are governed by a clear set of policies and procedures. A copy of which can be found in each service, which can be accessed at any time. These policies are reviewed annually or as necessary by management, staff, families and stake holders.

Health Policies

ILLNESS AND INFECTION

Children should not attend any of our programs if they are unwell. If a child becomes unwell while attending our services, caregivers will be notified and asked to collect the child. When any child or staff member is found to be showing signs of any infectious disease:

- Children's caregivers will be contacted immediately to collect their child and seek medical advice. Caregivers are expected to arrive in a timely manner. If this is not possible alternate arrangements must be made by the families and carers.
- For disease published as requiring a doctor's certificate to clear the child or staff member from the illness, this will be required before that person will be admitted to the program.
- Clear medical information such as signs or symptoms will be posted in the parent area.
- For information regarding exclusion periods please follow the link:
www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-guidelines/posters-information-sheet

HEAD LICE

Any child or adult can be infested with head lice. It is not a sign of a dirty or careless lifestyle, or a negative reflection on parenting ability.

Any child found at any of our services with live lice will not be automatically be excluded from a YMCA service. Staff will observe the infestation and notify all caregivers that it exists without identifying the source. They will also provide information about how all children can be inspected and/or treated for the infestation.

Children who are affected will not be stigmatised or excluded from activities, but staff will counsel the child privately to be careful about avoiding contact with other children until they have been checked and cleared of the infestation and will monitor their contact to limit the effect on other children.

Emergency Procedures

To ensure the safety of children, emergency procedures will be practiced on a regular basis and be consistent with other disaster plans used by the service. Procedures are also in place in case of harassment and/or threat to the children by persons known and unknown to the service.

Sun and Heat Protection

Outside play is a valuable component of all YMCA programs. A sun smart hat and appropriate clothes. Where possible this play will take place in a shaded area, however YMCA employs a 'no hat, play in the shade' policy.

Educating children about the importance of sun safety is an important part of our program and YMCA services will also use the UV index with the children to ascertain the need for sun protection when the index is above 3.

Each service has sunscreen available to apply prior to going outdoors. If your child has skin conditions, an allergy or sensitive skin please supply a suitable sunscreen for them to use.

A suitable sunscreen must be labeled clearly with your child's name, which will be applied by the children prior to outdoor activities. If you request no sunscreen to be applied, this will be carried out at your own risk.

Clothing

Families and carers are asked to send children to ELC in clothes that are appropriate for the activities that they will be participating in. YMCA staff will encourage children to take care whilst participating in activities. Paint smocks will be available and worn during messy play.

Simple play clothes and running shoes allow children to participate without limitations or worries that their clothes will get damaged. Shorts, t-shirts, jeans, jumpers and track suits with closed in shoes (no thongs) are recommended. For sun safe reasons families and carers are asked to not send children in singlet tops. A spare set of clothes should be sent in the children's bag.

Smoke Free Zone

Smoking is not allowed in the Service or its surrounding buildings, grounds or facilities.

Family and Carers Communication

Our services recognise the importance of parent involvement within the program. We realise for many working families and carers time is limited and therefore we aim to provide a variety of opportunities for families and carers to participate according to their availability. Some of the ways in which you become involved are by completing surveys, attending parent committee meetings, social functions, input into weekly programs/menus, policies and procedures and fundraising.

Families will be able to communicate with staff through out the day via the Xplor Home app. Photos, updates and messages will all be sent on a regular basis. You can also contact your service directly via email, phone, or SMS and of course in person.

Custody and Access – Court Orders

If a parent is experiencing problems associated with custody and access then please discuss this with the ELC Director.

A copy of a current Family Court Order is required on enrolment and we will do our utmost to abide by this. If there is any likelihood of problems associated with the collection of your child, it is the parent's responsibility to advise the staff and to provide information about any change to court orders.

Behaviour Guidance

These are formal expectations of the behaviour and conduct from children and young people and their parents/carers. Expectations of behaviour will be clearly expressed in positive terms and reinforced consistently in developmentally appropriate ways.

This procedure is aligned with the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy and in YMCA South Australia's general Code of Conduct.

Children in the program are expected to respect the rights of other children. Every effort will be made to encourage children to behave appropriately. If a child's behaviour is inappropriate the following strategies will be put into place by staff:

1. Educators will support the child to express themselves if they are feeling uncomfortable or upset.
2. Educators encourage children to make an appropriate choice of behaviour. Educators can redirect behaviour by making suggestions of realistic appropriate choices that reflect the child's interests.
3. The child will be requested to take reflection time with an educator away from other students and activities in order to discuss realistic choices. At this point the children will be reminded of the Children's Procedure and what comes next. Parents/Carers will be informed of the child's behaviour when they come to collect them.

4. If the child does not respond to the strategies implemented by educators of the YMCA or the school's guidelines then the parent/carer will be called by telephone and will be asked to collect the child within 30 minutes, if they are unable to do so they will need to organise a contact to collect the child.
5. At the discretion of the director and children's services manager in consultation with the school principal, suspension may occur and a re-entry meeting will be arranged with the family and a behaviour contract will be made and explained to the child.
6. Behaviour will be documented by all educators and families will be able to access these at all times. If the behaviour continues, then in conjunction with the school principal, other alternatives will be sought for the child and care will no longer be given by ELC.

According to National Quality Standard 2.3 the service ensures that all aspects of children's safety are protected and as a guiding principle, the rights and best interest of the child are paramount.

Families / Carers Guidelines

- Families/Carers who wish to discipline their own children whilst at the service will at all times use acceptable language and not, at any time, use any form of physical or humiliating punishment
- It is unacceptable for families and carers to discipline any child/ren other than their own whilst at the service.
- All families/Carers are to conduct themselves in a civil and respectful manner at all times whilst in attendance at the service or over the phone.



Customer Feedback

YMCA views customer feedback as an opportunity for improvement and deems to utilise these events as an opportunity to not only improve the service provided but to build stronger relationships and loyalty with individual customers who have taken the time to let us know how they are feeling.

All customer feedback received is used for quality Improvement purposes.

Complaints

ANONYMOUS CUSTOMER COMPLAINT

Responses to all anonymous customer feedback / complaints are to be displayed with the action or response addressing the complaint.

VERBAL CUSTOMER COMPLAINT

All verbal feedback from customers should be responded to by the ELC Director, or staff member directly receiving the feedback. The customer is encouraged to complete a Customer Feedback Form which will be forwarded to the ELC Director.

WRITTEN CUSTOMER COMPLAINT

All written customer feedback is to receive a written reply within 48 hours of the complaint. These procedures ensure the highest quality of service is reached.

Feedback received from these sources allows constant review of service levels, increased customer satisfaction and therefore, increased positive feedback within the community. Customer feedback received will be reviewed at quarterly management meetings.

The YMCA as an approved childcare provider is also required to forward all complaints to the state regulatory body – The Education Standards Board of South Australia.

Phone: 1800 882 413 | **Website:** esb.sa.gov.au

Confidentiality

The YMCA acknowledges and follows confidentiality guidelines as outlined in legislative requirements by the Department of Community Services Centre - Based and Mobile Child Care Services Regulation (No2) 1996, The Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA) Code of Ethics and the Privacy Act.



Established in 1850, YMCA South Australia is one of Australia's oldest and most respected community organisations. We provide a range of programs and services to build strong people, strong families and strong communities.

sa.ymca.org.au/ELC