PLAYMATES COTTAGE CHILD CARE CENTRE INC.

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INFORMATION BOOKLET

First written July 1995 Last updated January 2019

We Care for Lids

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PLAYMATES COTTAGE CHILD CARE CENTRE (INC.)

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DUBBO NSW 2830

Postal Address: P.O. Box 1349,

DUBBO NSW 2830

Phone: 02.6881.8810

Fax: 02.6881.8010

E-mail: centredirector@playmatescottage.com

Hours: 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. - Monday to Friday

We are closed Public Holidays and for two (2) weeks over Christmas and New Year.

What Playmates Offers

- We are awaiting our Assessment and Ratings visit.
- ♦ Our Staff: Child Ratios meets the regulation standards.
- ◆ Our Staff include Professionally Trained and Qualified, Experienced childcare workers and provide a well-balanced mix of ages and interests.
- ♦ We offer Educationally Based Programs for Individual children.
- ◆ We use Priority of Access Guidelines when envolling children
- ♦ We have a large, well equipped and shaded outside play area for the children.
- ◆ We offer Breakfast, Morning and Afternoon Teas and all drinks for the children.
- ♦ We have an Intercom Security System on the front door to ensure the safety of children and staff.



Welcome

The Management Committee and staff are pleased to offer your child/children a place at our Centre. We hope that you and your child will feel secure and happy at Playmates Cottage and that this booklet will help you become familiar with us. Parents are welcome here at any time. Our staff are, primarily, experienced Early Childhood personnel. They will welcome your contributions of ideas, time, resources and family experiences, so that we can all work together as an effective team for the benefit of your child.

Management Of The Centre

Since 3rd July, 1995 Playmates Cottage Child Care Centre (Inc.) has been operated by an Incorporated Parent and Community Management Committee. This Committee consists of Parent and Community Representatives. Meetings are held regularly, with the Annual General Meeting being held each September or October. Parents are most welcome to attend any meetings or offer items for discussion. They are also able to nominate themselves for positions, when they become available. To assist you in getting to know the Management Committee, we have a photo and name board in the foyer.

Philosophy

At our Centre we have outlined a number of values and beliefs in the form of a Centre Philosophy, which we believe are essential in meeting the needs of children in our care. This is displayed in our foyer and if you would like a copy please ask. It is regularly evaluated, and we value input and/or suggestions from parents. We endeavour to structure the Centre's activities, the children's program, their learning experiences and the quality of their interaction with staff, to reflect this philosophy.

Parent Involvement

Parents are welcome at the Centre at all times. The doors are always open! Parents can be involved with the Centre, by helping staff with the children for a few minutes or a few hours, by coming along on excursions, if possible; collecting and bringing in suitable craft materials, or by sharing skills, interests and hobbies with the children. Staff are happy to explain why activities are designed as they are and value parent comment or suggestions for inclusion in the program. As already outlined, parents can also be involved in the management of the Centre developing policies, making financial decisions, attending Committee meetings, employing staff ... etc.

The Curriculum

In line with our philosophy, we strive to provide a safe, loving and caring environment for children and their families.

The children are free to choose the areas of interest in which they will participate throughout the day, both as individuals and as part of a group. The daily program is carefully planned to enable children to participate in a wide range of educational activities at their own level. We make use of open ended activities that the children can extend and expand on to the limit of their own interests and capabilities. This ensures that all activities offered to the children are developmentally appropriate for their age and developmental level. These activities include language, music, dramatic play, gross and fine motor activities, art and craft, etc.

Developmental Records are kept on each child and are available for the child's parents to view on request. Children with additional needs who attend Playmates are fully included in the program.

The playrooms will show you details of your child's activities throughout the day. Parents can also talk to educators through the 'Earlyworks' programme or access information from the monthly newsletters, bimonthly Management Committee Reports) or by talking directly to staff and committee members.

If you have any queries or would like more information, please speak to the staff - it is important that we are working together to provide a happy learning and caring environment for your child.

Your comments and suggestions, as well as concerns and criticisms are important in making changes. Parents are also regularly asked to comment on policies, add suggestions, etc. as well as complete Centre Evaluations at various times. We encourage Parents to participate whenever possible.

<u>Staffing</u>

The nature and number of staff employed at a Centre is determined by regulations set by the Department of Family and Community Services. Playmates Cottage however, operates with more qualified staff than the regulations state. We believe that this helps us to provide a higher quality of care and education for your children.

Our staff include:

Administration,

Director / Nominated Supervisor

Must have a recognised Early Childhood Teaching Degree or Diploma.

The Director is an employee of the committee and is responsible for the planning, control and operation of the Centre and implementing the aims and policies of the Management Committee.

They are responsible to the Department and as Nominated supervisor the Director must follow regulations adopted by those departments to ensure the safety and well being of children and educators.

As an exofficio member of the Management Committee the Director attends meetings, gives a bimonthly report and offers advice and information to the Management Committee but cannot vote on matters that may arise.

The Director provides a channel of communication between the Management Committee and staff and vice versa. They attend to the daily management, supervision and organisation of staff, their professional development, leave and occupational health and safety.

The Director is responsible for handling Centre administration such as maintaining records, waiting lists, enrolments and purchase of children's consumable materials and equipment.

Along with all staff, the Director establishes and reviews the aims and objectives of the educational program for children and ensures that plans and excursions are carried out.

Assistant Director/Educational Leader

Must have a recognised Early Childhood Teaching Degree or Diploma.

They support the Director in all areas and are specifically responsible for the planning, control and coordination of the curriculum. They implement the aims and policies of the Management Committee. They run the centre in the Directors absence.

Clerical Assistant

The Coordinator is assisted in administrative tasks by a part time clerical worker whose duties include: Preparation of Staff Wages, preparing accounts for parents, collection of fees, calculating fee assistance and general office duties.

Playroom Staff

The children attending Playmates are separated into three playrooms according to age: Crocodiles are 3-5, Kangaroos 2-3 and our Koalas are 0-2. The staff in each playroom are lead by a room leader who is assisted by the other staff to ensure that the daily program of activities meets the needs of individual children. The overall staff: Child ratio in each room is determined by licensing regulations.

Crocodiles

Room Leader: - Teacher

Must have a Recognised Early Childhood Teaching Degree and is responsible for preparing an age appropriate program for the 3 - 5-year olds, maintaining and evaluating individual children's records, preparing activities and directing day to day routines of staff and children.

Qualified Childcare Worker

Must have a Diploma Community Services in Childcare/Associate Diploma Social Science - Child Studies/CCC/CCC's and is responsible for: Assisting in the preparation of an age appropriate program, maintaining and evaluating individual children's records, preparing activities and directing day to day routines of children.

Kangaroos

Room Leader: -

Must have a Diploma Children's Services/Associate Diploma/CCC (minimum) Responsible for: Preparing an age appropriate program, maintaining and evaluating individual children's records, preparing activities and directing day to day routines of staff and children.

Qualified Childcare Worker

Must have a Diploma in Community Services in Childcare/Associate Diploma Social Science - Child Studies/CCC/CCC's or working towards. Responsible for assisting in the preparation of an age appropriate program, maintaining and evaluating individual children's records, preparing activities and directing day to day routines of children.

Assistant

Must have a minimum of Cert III and working towards their Diploma so a good knowledge of children and child development.

Responsible for: Assisting the teacher in preparing an age appropriate program for the children, assisting in maintaining individual children's records, preparing, setting up and cleaning up daily activities

Koalas

Room Leader: -

Must have a Diploma Children's Services/Associate Diploma/CCC (minimum) Responsible for: Preparing an age appropriate program, maintaining and evaluating individual children's records, preparing activities and directing day to day routines of staff and children.

Qualified Childcare Worker

Must have a Diploma in Community Services in Childcare/Associate Diploma Social Science - Child Studies/CCC/CCC's or working towards. Responsible for assisting in the preparation of an age appropriate program, maintaining and evaluating individual children's records, preparing activities and directing day to day routines of children.

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Must have a minimum of Cert III and working towards their Diploma so a good knowledge of children and child development.

Responsible for: Assisting the teacher in preparing an age appropriate program for the children, assisting in maintaining individual children's records, preparing, setting up and cleaning up daily activities

Additional Staff

<u>Centre Support Worker</u> (Part-time)

Must have a minimum of Cert III and knowledge of nutrition and food preparation.

Responsible for: planning breakfast, preparing morning and afternoon teas for the children, general kitchen duties, and helping room staff when necessary.

<u>Lunch Relief Person</u> (Part-time)

Must have a minimum of Cert III and working towards their Diploma so a good knowledge of children and child development Responsible for: Relieving the staff whilst they are at lunch. This ensures that our staff: Child ratios remain constant throughout the day.

To assist you in getting to know the staff, we have photos in the foyer and all staff wear name badges.

Attendance

On arrival, for your child's safety, please help to put their belongings into the correct locker, then bring your child to the staff on duty.

It is <u>essential</u> that you sign your child's arrival and departure times on the iPad daily. In the event of an emergency, we must have accurate records of attendance. If your child is absent, please try to notify the Centre by **9.00** am.

Children may only be taken home by their parents or regular caregivers unless the Centre has been notified by the parents, either in writing, or by phone that someone else will be picking them up. If unauthorised people come to collect your child, they will be refused. Please ensure that anyone collecting your child is over the age of eighteen (18) years.

If children are collected after normal closing time, parents will get a warning and then, if it happens again charged a late fee equivalent to \$20 for each 15 minutes or part thereof. If a child has not been collected thirty (30) minutes after closing time and their emergency contacts cannot be reached, they will be referred to the police, who will endeavour to arrange overnight care for the child.

What Your Child Needs to Bring

- * A set of fitted cot sheets with your child's name clearly marked.
- * A bag large enough to hold your child's sheets, spare clothes, lunch box, art works, etc. and with your child's name clearly marked on the outside.
- * A security blanket or cuddly, if needed.
- * Lunch and a drink bottle containing water only.
- * 2 -5 yr olds: A full set of spare clothes; a hat, jumper for cold days.
- * <u>Babies 0-2</u>: <u>Generally three (3) changes of clothes per day</u>, as well as five (5) disposable nappies for the day and a hat. (Refer to specific Information Sheet from Koalas Room.)
- * Parents are responsible for making up and supplying formula, if required. Please ensure that only plastic bottles are used.

Please have your child's name clearly marked on all belongings

Please leave at home:

- > Other toys
- > Sweets, chewing gum, fizzy drinks, twisties, etc.
- > Thongs and inappropriate clothing

Meals

The centre provides drinks, as well as breakfast. & fruit and healthy snacks for morning & afternoon tea & a late snack, if needed. Parents need to supply lunch & a drink bottle for their children. We request that only healthy, nutritious food be sent with your children for lunch, in quantities sufficient for them. We have developed a comprehensive Centre Nutrition Policy and are nut aware,

- if you would like to see it please ask

Settling In

This is as individual as your child. It is normal that your child may react to starting at Playmates. Wherever possible, we urge parents to visit the Centre with their children before commencing. This provides an opportunity for both parents and children to become familiar with the layout of the Centre, the staff and the routines of the day. When children first start, parents are encouraged to stay as long as possible. Your child may have periods of distress or be reluctant to come, even after being in the centre for a while.

Sometimes it may be better to leave your child shortly after arrival and then return early and spend time at the centre then - it all depends on your child. Please speak to the staff if you are worried or unsure of what to do.

MOST IMPORTANTLY: Never leave your child without saying goodbye and if you are worried or concerned at any time, please feel free to telephone the centre through the day on 6881.8810.

<u>Fees</u>

Fees are payable from the Centre's opening date in January, until it closes in December. Fees are set by the Management Committee and are subject to alteration from time to time. The Commonwealth Government subsidises fees according to parent's income. Subsidies come through Centrelink.

Fees may be paid by cash, cheque, EFPOS or credit card and may be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly. However, it is necessary for your account to be at least one week IN ADVANCE at all times. Fees are paid for the days your child is enrolled at the Centre, including times when your child is absent due to illness or holidays, unless Place Sharing has been arranged and approved. Refer to Place Sharing. Equipment Levy Due at the start of each term and includes a centre logoed hat for each child. It will be added to your invoice.

We also offer MAKE UP DAYS. Make up days are for public holidays and up to 2 sick days per calendar year. You will have to pay for public holidays as usual however you may then organise a make-up day with staff on a day when we have a vacancy in the required room. If your child is sick you will need to notify the centre before 8.30am to be eligible for a make-up day in the future. Make up days can be used after public holidays and only when fees are up to date. They do not roll over to a new calendar year.

Please note: - Your child's position may be forfeited and no longer available, if fees are outstanding for two (2) or more weeks & you have not arranged a payment plan.

Withdrawing a Child:

Two (2) FULL weeks notice in writing MUST be given when withdrawing a child. i.e. If your child attends on a Monday and Tuesday and you give notice on the Monday, that week is not counted; it is two full weeks after that date. If insufficient notice is given, fees must be paid in lieu.

Children may not be withdrawn within the last six (6) weeks of the year. If children are withdrawn during that time, they may not be re-enrolled within four (4) months from the date of withdrawal.

How to Pay Fees:

Fees can be paid by cash, cheque, EFTPOS or credit card, i.e. Mastercard, Bankcard or Visa Card. It is <u>ESSENTIAL</u> that the correct fees for each week are paid at all times as change is not available at the centre. Payment by cheque or credit card may overcome this problem and is preferred.

When paying by cash or cheque: -

* Put your money in an envelope that clearly states:

Child's Name

Amount enclosed

Dates for which payment is being made.

- * Place the envelope in the blue fees box in the foyer. Receipts are usually printed on the Monday of the following week and will be placed in your information pocket.
- * When paying by EFTPOS please see Office Staff

<u>Holding Fee:</u> For new families, a Holding Bond of one hundred dollars (\$100) per family is payable on enrolment. This amount ensures your child's place at Playmates Cottage and is refundable when your family leaves the Centre, providing NO fees or accounts are outstanding.

Place Sharing

If your child is going to be absent, you can arrange `Place Sharing'; i.e. another child comes into the Centre to take your child's place. In this instance, the Place Sharing child pays for fees.

Please see the Coordinator if you wish to arrange 'Place Sharing'.

Please Note: NO Place Sharing will take place during <u>January</u> unless the child is familiar with the centre as this allows time for new children and infants to adjust to the Centre. There will also be NO place sharing during the last two weeks in December before Christmas.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special days and parents and children are welcome to celebrate at the Centre with a cake. Please see the Director for details.

Excursions

We try to schedule regular excursions or visiting shows for the children. Except in situations where the children are going for a walk around the hospital grounds or nearby streets, parents will be given at least one (1) weeks notice, that we are leaving the centre and a risk assessment will be available. For walks, parents will be notified on the day. All children leaving the Centre will need to have a permission form signed by a parent or guardian. This permission form will contain details of where and when the excursion will be, mode of transport, length of time and what activities the children will be participating in. Parents are free to withhold their permission for any excursion - alternate arrangements for the child's care will be organised.

Centre Publicity

At certain times we have press coverage, including newspaper photographs and television coverage. Unfortunately, we usually do not receive prior notice of their visits and are unable to advise parents of their presence. If you do not wish your child to appear in any of this coverage, please let us know.

Guidance and Discipline

We believe that it is important for children to be self-disciplined and to understand how their actions affect themselves, and more importantly, others around them. In order to do this, expectations must be clear and understood and appropriate to the child's developmental level. The Centre has a very concise Behaviour Management Policy, which ensures that all staff are clear and consistent about what behaviours are expected and important for children to learn.

Health and Safety

At all times, we endeavour to maintain a clean and safe environment for children so they can grow and learn, and we have developed a number of policies to ensure that this happens at all times. If you have any questions/concerns please ask.

Health Records:

There is a direct link between a child's health and their ability to learn. When you enrol your child, we will ask for information about your child's well-being which is confidential. During your child's time with us, we will keep this information up to date, it is important you tell us of any changes to your child's health. For our records, we also require a copy of your child's immunisation history statement, it is your responsibility to keep it up to date! It is important we, i.e. parents and staff, communicate with each other about immunisation, day/night health, etc. This is usually by way of notices or messages. We will both need to exchange information about events that may affect your child, as this could explain any change in behaviour.

Support Services:

We are not qualified health professionals, we rely on the sound advice from health support services.

- * The Centre Director will be able to help you get in touch with specialists in early childhood care, i.e. special needs worker, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, etc.
- * There is an Early Intervention Unit in Dubbo, which does work with children who need specialised help.
- * In the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease, certain actions must be taken to limit the outbreak (spread). The Director has access to public health units, who will provide support to staff and parents in the management of the disease.

Injury Prevention:

Children have little or no idea of danger. It is our responsibility to ensure they are safe. We will check the centre constantly for...

- * safe storage of chemicals;
- * safe placement of equipment,
- * safe supervision;
- * safe play;
- * safe people and events, and
- * please, if you see anything we may have missed, tell us!

It is important you clearly hand over your child to a staff member, so we know we are now responsible. When leaving remember to secure your child in a car seat, before you drive off.

Managing Injuries and First Aid:

No matter how careful we are, accidents do and will happen. We ensure that all room leaders and management has a current first aid certificate.

In the event of a major accident we will:

- * Implement first aid procedure;
- * ring ambulance/parent;
- * if a further accident could be avoided, corrective action is taken; and,
- * a report will be written, with a copy to you and one to the Management Committee.

In the event of a minor accident we will:

- * Implement first aid procedure;
- * ring you and inform you of what has happened, and ask you to come to take your child to a Doctor;
- * we will remain with your child, until you arrive; and
- * a report will be written, with a copy to you and one to the Management Committee.

In the event of a minimal injury (bumped knees, etc.) we will:

- * Implement first aid procedure;
- * we will ring you about all head injuries and give you the opportunity to talk to your child, if they are distressed; and
- * we will write a note, advising you of the first aid given.

Emergency Procedures:

There could be an occasion when we would need to evacuate the centre. Emergency evacuation procedures are posted by all telephones. If we needed to evacuate we would:

- * Blow the fire whistle and ring Emergency Service;
- * collect Attendance sheets;
- * marshal children to primary evacuation point,
- * check children off the roll ... now you see why we insist you fill out the attendance register!
- * if we are unable to return to the centre, the Director or representative would then contact you explaining what has happened and ask you to collect your child;
- * if we were able to return to the Centre, we would contact you to reassure you and explain.

Sick Children:

In an ideal world, children who are sick would all be cared for at home. Our centre is not equipped to care for sick children. However, we will do everything we can for the comfort of a child who has become sick whilst at the centre. There are some diseases, which will require your child to be excluded to protect other children. To try and stop the spread of diseases before they take hold, we ask you to monitor your child's health and watch for any of these symptoms, which could be the onset of an infectious disease:

- * High temperature/fever in the morning;
- * severe cold, sneezing or runny nose;
- * if your child seems sick without obvious symptoms, e.g. unusually tired, irritable or lethargic;
- * vomiting;
- * loose bowel motion;
- * rashes any irritation you cannot identify;
- * red swollen or discharging eyes.

We ask you not to bring your child to the centre if they are sick.

Infection Control Procedures:

The age and learning nature of the children, means that infectious diseases are easily transmitted in a childcare centre. We implement controls to try and stop the spread of contagious diseases. The simplest control is **HAND WASHING**. Detailed procedures for Hand Washing, Nappy Changing and cleaning and disposal of blood, vomit, wrine and faeces are displayed, please adhere to them. We follow a strict infection control procedure in cleaning all equipment, surfaces and rooms.

We urge all parents to ensure that their children wash their hands upon arrival at the centre, and before they leave to go home.

Management Of Infectious Diseases

Immunisation:

All children attending the Centre must be immunised. We need to protect children who are too young to have completed their immunisation schedule. Unimmunised children present an unacceptable risk. Please be sure to keep up with the schedule and show the centre the updated immunisation card. However, at the outbreak of any immunisable disease, Dept of Public Health guidelines will be followed. This is to protect your child and other children who are too young to be fully immunised.

Exclusion:

If your child gets an infectious disease, they may not attend.

Giving Medication:

We are willing to administer prescribed medication should a child require it. However, to ensure the safety of your children and the staff, please follow this procedure:

- * All medicine must be in the original bottle/tube prescribed, bearing child's name and dosage.
- * Parents must fill out the medication permission form, available from a staff member. This includes creams and ointments.
- * All medication is to be handed to a staff member NOT left in the child's bag.
- * Staff will fill out the form when they administer the medicine, detailing the time and dosage, and it will be signed by two (2) staff members.

Please Note: Due to regulations we are unable to administer Non-prescribed medication such as cough medicine.

Meeting Individual Dietary Needs:

All children are different, and this is reflected in the many individual diets, learning abilities and physical characteristics we see in our Centre.

We do try to minimise allergic substances in our centres, but we need to know of any specific allergies that your child may have ... i.e. flour, wheat, milk, etc. If your child has a specific dietary need, you will need to discuss this with the Coordinator or team leader in your playroom.

Child Abuse or Neglect.

Our community has agreed that abuse of any kind to anyone is unacceptable and abhorrent. Sadly, it does exist. In our role as the 'safe' person for children, we are legally required to report any suspected case of child neglect, emotional or physical abuse. If a staff member suspects a child is abused, they will notify the Coordinator, who will notify an officer in consultation with the Department of Community Services. If a parent suspects a staff member is abusing a child, they should report it to an officer in the Department of Community Services and/or Coordinator.

Skin Cancer:

The bronzed Aussie is dead or dying of skin cancer. We are now well aware of the risk to young skins from future skin cancers. We will in summer:

- * keep your child inside between 11.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m.;
- * provide shade in our playgrounds;
- * ensure you child is wearing a HAT and SUNBLOCK when playing outside. We ask that parents provide a roll-on sunscreen for your child to use when at Playmates. Although we do have spare hats at the Centre, we do ask that you please provide your child's own hat these should be clearly labelled with your child's name.

Please refer to our Sun Protection Policy for further information.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome:

The cause of cot deaths is still unknown. Recent research has identified some risk factors. Babies sleeping on their tummies, airless and stuffy rooms and passive smoking have been found to be additional factors. We ensure that your children:

- * are provided with a smoke free environment,
- * sleep in well ventilated rooms;
- * if under two (2) years of age, are placed on their side or back to sleep.

SOME FINAL NOTES

Please inform staff if:

- Someone different is picking up your child.
- You are leaving the Centre with your child.
- Your child is sick or going on holidays.
- Custody/access arrangements have changed.
- ♦ You have a change of address, phone number or employment so that you may be contacted quickly in an emergency. Please ensure emergency contacts are reliable and phone numbers are correct.
- We would appreciate parents' ideas and assistance in raising funds for the Centre.
- Please read the information on notice boards, so we may keep in touch.
- If you have any suggestions on how we can improve the quality of care we offer please let us know. Your suggestions are always welcome
- If you have any suggestions on how we can improve the way in which information about Playmates Cottage and what is currently happening in the Centre is passed on please let us know.

In conclusion, we look forward to a happy and rewarding association with your family in the coming year.

