



Stepping Stones
Children's Services
"we're sharing the care"

Outside School Hours Family Information Booklet

**Welcome to
Stepping Stones Children's Services
Outside School Hours Care**

This information booklet has been designed to answer some of the more commonly asked questions regarding outside school hours care.

Should you have any further enquiries, please contact us on 1300 665 699 or via email tarryn@sharingthecare.com.au

We look forward to sharing the care with you!

What types of care do we offer?

Before and After School Care

For Services that provide Before School Care, it is offered from 7am-8.45 am each morning, with After School Care from the end of the school day until 6:00pm.

The care area is homely and relaxed allowing children to do as little or as much as they like. The children also have access to a great outdoor area which allows for great ball games!

Vacation Care

Vacation care is offered at some programs during all school holidays (and on pupil free days if there is sufficient demand), except public holidays. Please contact Head Office for a holiday program near you. The programs operate between 8am and 6pm (some are able to open at 7am) each day and children can attend for the whole day or for a half day where available.

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What will the children do?

We believe that children should be able to do lots, or nothing. They are out of school after all! To that end, we have countless activities, some planned, some always on offer, and all of them interesting. We use the Framework for School aged children as a guide when programming to make sure that the curriculum contributes to each child's learning and developmental outcomes.

We have the old favourites such as construction equipment (including Lego, Interstar, marble runs, and large blocks), painting, drawing, home corner, dress ups, music and a reading corner.

We have other activities such as science experiments, special art and craft activities, cooking, board games, ball games and beading to assist staff with intentional teaching.

Other activities are planned around the children's interests and needs, with staff actively listening and encouraging children's ideas.

What about morning and afternoon tea?

We will always provide morning and afternoon tea for the children in our care, depending on which program your child is in. Parents simply need to pack a healthy lunch and drink (for those in vacation care). Should your child have special dietary needs, please let us know so that we can support you to provide appropriate food.

Please note: we are a nut aware service.

What do we do on arrival and departure?

When you arrive for Vacation Care, please come in with your child so that you can officially hand them over to our care. It is necessary by law, and a safety requirement, to sign your child in and out each day, the electronic sign in device is located inside the main room. Staff will sign in children for After School Care, and sign children out for Before School Care.

When you collect your child at the end of a session please let staff know that you have arrived and sign your child out on the same device. Please check that your child has all of his or her belongings.

How do I book?

Stepping Stones uses an online enrolment form, through our software provider Xplor. These forms once completed will automatically come to our Head Office where we can finalise your enrolment. This can only be completed by the person who has lawful authority of the child/children.

Enrolment links can be accessed by either emailing Head Office at tarryn@sharingthecare.com.au or via our website www.sharingthecare.com.au. Once the enrolment has been received we will send you details as to how to access Xplor on both an app and online.

You will be required to create a password to enable you to complete Ezi Debit details through the auto debit setup tab and Childcare Subsidy if you are entitled before care can commence.

Depending on the days of care required, we may be able to confirm your bookings immediately or place your request on the appropriate waiting list.

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Should your child have any medical conditions which require an action plan, we will provide you with details as to how to provide that information. The plan must be completed before care can commence. Children can be booked into a program with no minimum session requirements; the only exception is that where full day excursions are planned in vacation care, children will need to be booked in for the whole day.

What is Childcare Subsidy and how is it accessed?

Childcare Subsidy is a fee reduction scheme offered by the Federal Government. For families who have a combined income under \$351,248 year are eligible for some fee relief. To see how much reduction you can claim on our fees, please telephone 136150 and register your child for childcare subsidies. Ask what your percentage will be and how many hours of care you may be eligible for. FAO will then send you an assessment notice and from that we can determine your fees. The government pays different amounts for non-school children compared with school children. They define a school child as a child attending school five days per week.

How Much Are The Fees?

The fees are dependent on how much Childcare Subsidy a family is entitled to, with most families, seeing a reduction in fees. Please call 1300 665 699 to get the standard fee for your chosen session. Where there is a cost associated with a Vacation Care excursion, parents will be notified in advance, and an Excursion fee will be applied.

How do I pay fees?

Our only method of payment is **Ezi-Debit** which **must** be completed via your own Xplor account you will create before care commences.

Fees must be paid in full each week/fortnight to ensure that all accounts are kept up to date. Overdue accounts will receive an overdue fee of \$20.00 every week for accounts that are more than three weeks overdue.

What If My Child Is Away?

Please notify staff as soon as you know that your child will be absent. If children who are booked in for after school care do not arrive, we will need to put into place a “Lost Child” procedure which will include phoning the parents, the school and if necessary the bus company. A fee may be charged if costs are incurred by us during the search.

Where children are away (even if sick) normal fees will still apply, as two weeks’ notice is required to cancel all bookings.

Please note: For all permanent cancellations a minimum of 2 weeks’ notice must be given or full fees will apply. The child must physically be in attendance throughout the notice period to remain eligible for normal Subsidy fee relief.

Failure to attend during the notice period will result in full fees being applied from the child’s last physical day in attendance at the service as per Government Regulations.

Centre Staffing

We pride ourselves in having a professional, warm and friendly team of Educators and staff.

Educators work alongside children on activities and ensure that the children are fully supervised at all times. Each Service has a Senior educator (PIC – Person in Charge) responsible for creating the weekly educational program based on the approved Learning Framework for school aged children, MY Time Our Place.

From time to time throughout the year, our staff will be attending workshops, conferences and the like in order that they may sustain and develop their knowledge/skills. At such times, you may notice relief staff taking their place. We endeavour to use the same relief staff each time to provide your child with consistency and a feeling of security.

All staff, both permanent and relief, are screened by the relevant government departments and must hold current Safety Screening (TAS)/Working with Children Check (Vic) prior to taking up any position within our company.

All permanent staff have full First Aid/CPR and Asthma/Anaphylaxis training, and either hold or be actively working towards an early childhood qualification.

What Else Do I Need To Know?

Personal Belongings

Should children wish to bring any toys, games etc from home, we cannot take responsibility for any losses or breakage's. We strongly recommend that unless it is for a programmed activity, personal belongings should stay at home.

Clothing

Whilst children are in care, we do support all forms of play, which can sometimes be quite messy. We therefore recommend that children wear clothing that is both practical but also can withstand vigorous play and washing. A spare set of clothes is recommended to accompany your child in case of messy or wet play to give them something to change into should the need arise. Please ensure all of your children's clothing is marked clearly with their name, using a permanent marker to prevent loss.

Independence Skills

We believe that children of school age need to learn independence skills and to that end we will encourage them to take care of their belongings and to be responsible for ensuring that they have all of their belongings in their bag.

Sun Protection

All children need to have their own hat supplied for outside school hours care/vacation care and it would be appreciated if the hat could be left at the service. We enforce a No Hat, No Play rule and have only limited spare hats. All hats are washed weekly and hats are not shared amongst children. We also provide sunscreen for your child and ask that they apply it 20 minutes before going outside

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to play. Should your child be sensitive to any sunscreen products, please let staff know, and provide an alternative.

Behaviour Guidance and Discipline

Behaviour guidance techniques used by staff, are developed using positive reinforcement, positive role modeling by adults, intervention and re-direction. We aim to foster socially acceptable behavior and encourage children to take responsibility for their own actions. Our program aims to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment where each individual is valued and respected.

Unacceptable Behaviour

The centre has a policy regarding unacceptable and dangerous/extreme behaviour of children. If after consulting with parents, specialists and support services we feel that the behavior of a child is aggressive or of an extreme nature and presents a very real risk to other children and staff, we reserve the right to ask parents to withdraw their child from care.

What If My Child Requires Medication?

If your child is to be given medication whilst at the program, it must be in its original container, with a label which must include the drug name, the child's name, the prescribed dose and the name of the prescribing doctor. Only the prescribed amount will be administered and in the case of over the counter medications, the directions on the container will be followed in regard to children's age and weight range. You will need to fill in a Medication Authorisation form which must be countersigned by a staff member. The medication must be stored in the first aid kit or the fridge.

What If My Child Is Unwell at the Program?

If your child becomes unwell and is clearly not coping with being in care, you will be contacted and asked to arrange for someone to collect your child. We understand that this can be particularly difficult for working parents, but we have a duty of care to the health and wellbeing of all children and staff in the program.

What If My Child Has An Accident?

If under the unlikely event an accident occurs, staff will administer any First Aid necessary. This will usually range from a band aid to a hug and maybe an ice pack. Accidents will be written up on an accident report form and you will be asked to read it and sign it when you come to collect your child. If further medical treatment is required ie: GP or hospital, further documentation will be required and our Regulatory Department notified.

Parent Complaints and Grievances

We would like parents to feel that they can communicate any problems that they are experiencing with the service openly and freely with the staff or the service PIC. If you are not satisfied with the outcome please contact Head office on

1300 665 699 or via email tarryn@sharingthecare.com.au.

All complaints and grievances will be dealt with in accordance with our Grievance policy, which can be located in our Policies and procedures folder at any of our services.

Child Protection

We take our commitment to the protection of our children very seriously. We work to protect our children from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as neglect. Tasmanian law requires us to report any suspected abuse to the Child Protection Team. Under Victorian law, mandatory reporting is not required, however our staff have a duty of care to report any suspected abuse to Management at Head Office located in Tasmania who will then advise on what course of action should be taken. Should you require further information in relation to child protection, or you would like to contact the child protection services, please see the policy folder which is available to all families

**Child Protection Advice and Referral Service (CPAARS)
Tasmania 1300 737 639**

Child Protection Crisis Line, Victoria 131-278

Medical conditions

If your child has a known ongoing medical condition or suffers from allergies or Asthma, a medical action plan must be completed and included with the enrolment paperwork. An enrolment will not be accepted if the required mandatory paperwork is not correctly filled in, and it poses a very real risk to a child and to staff if we do not have current information required to treat a child should the need arise. For further clarification please refer to the medical conditions policy attached to the enrolment form.

Lawful Authority

All parents have powers and responsibilities in relation to their children that can only be changed by a court order. These powers and responsibilities are referred to as Lawful authority. It is not affected by the relationship between the parents, as such as whether or not they have lived together or married. A court order such as under the Family Law Act, may take away the authority for the parent to do something, or may give it to another person.

Guardians:

A guardian of a child also has lawful authority/parental responsibility. A legal guardian is given lawful authority by a court order. The definition of guardian under the children's services Act 1996 also covers situations where a child does not live with his or her parents and there are no court orders. In these cases, the guardian is the person the child lives with who has day to day care and control/parental responsibilities of the child/children. Only a person with lawful authority in relation to the child named in the enrolment form can complete the form, and undertake to inform Stepping Stones in the event of any change of information.

Contact details

E-mail	tarryn@sharingthecare.com.au
Bookings	1300 665 699
Fax	6425 3599
Post	PO Box 70 Ulverstone Tas 7315

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Outside School Hours Care Philosophy

"Children have the right to find out things and share what they think with others, by talking, drawing, and writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people"

We acknowledge the value of the middle years of a child, and the importance of play and leisure in children's learning and development. We aim to foster a learning environment that recognises the importance of social and emotional development and communication in learning through play, ensuring that children in all school age care settings engage in quality experiences that will enable them to extend their learning and development. Research has shown that a parent's involvement in a child's education makes a significant contribution to the child's success at school. For many children this is not limited to between 9am and 3pm. Before School Care, After School Care and Vacation Care plays a significant role in shaping the life learning, happiness and wellbeing of each child.

We respect and value the diverse needs, interests and capabilities of each child and their Families. This is reflected in the curriculum by incorporating programs with activities/experiences that further develop each child's sense of being and belonging which in turn enables them to become within their community

We respect and acknowledge children's feelings and self-expression and aim to guide them in a positive and confident manner, to enhance their wellbeing, learning and development.

We aim to provide an environment where each child feels safe whilst allowing them to discover, explore and express themselves.

Educators collaborate with children to provide play and leisure opportunities that are meaningful to children and support their ongoing learning and development

We aim to promote an inclusive environment that supports children's participation in creating boundaries and rules.

We encourage children to take ownership of their own behaviour and environment.

We respect our children and Families' rights to privacy and recognise and acknowledge that families are the children's first and most influential educators.

We encourage the involvement of Families in our services as well as the community we live and work in.

We acknowledge that we are all a part of a culturally diverse community and aim to build strong community links to help support our children and Families.

Developed in conjunction with Educators, Children and Families.

We thank you for reading our Family Information Book, and we value and appreciate all Parent/Guardian feedback.

We look forward to sharing the care with you!