



Explorers
Early Learning

Enrolment Handbook



Welcome to Explorers

We are absolutely thrilled to have your family join the Explorers community.

This handbook is designed to help your family feel welcome and supported at Explorers, making the orientation process as smooth as possible.

Inside, you'll find everything you need to know, from daily essentials and what's provided, to settling-in strategies, and an overview of both our Learning for Life Curriculum, and Framework of Joy Program. Use this guide as your go-to resource for all the important information about your Centre.

We are committed to providing a nurturing and engaging environment for your family and our team is here to support you every step of the way. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please let your Centre Leadership Team know.

Kind Regards,

Lynda Salvo

Explorers Founder and CEO

In this guide you will find information regarding:

- Your enrolment pack.
- What to bring.
- Our secure drop off and pick up process.
- An introduction to Xap.
- An introduction to Storypark.
- How to book casual or make up days.
- Kindergarten at Explorers.
- Family grouping.
- How to provide feedback.
- Access to important policies.



Acknowledgement of Country:

Explorers Early Learning acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past and present, as the traditional owners of the land. We accept the invitation to embrace the Uluru Statement from the Heart and to be strong, courageous allies in the quest to hear the voices of our First Nations people.

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Starting Education & Care

Starting childcare can be both an exciting and emotional experience for families, it is completely normal for you and your child to have mixed feelings during this time.

Here are some tips and tricks to assist in the transition to care:

- For children who are breastfeeding, introduce them to a bottle prior to commencing care. This will make it more likely for them to accept a bottle whilst in our care.
- Attend all orientation sessions, these help your child get familiar with their new environment.
- Positively discuss what to expect when joining a new centre, this may include showing them photos from our social media of children enjoying different experiences.
- Commence care prior to returning to commitments to allow your child to attend shorter days initially.





Separation Anxiety

Commonly with babies and toddlers, children can develop a fear of being parted from their primary caregiver, referred to as separation anxiety.

As babies develop an understanding of secure attachment at around six months old, they understand when you are together, and when you are apart.

Please be assured separation anxiety is normal and expected. Each child settles in differently, and as they become familiar with the routine of the centre and our Educators, they build trust in their new surroundings and that you will return at the end of the day.

What can you do to support the transition to care?

It is important to be positive and encouraging with your child about the experience. Children have an innate ability to sense when their parents have apprehensive feelings. Try to keep your interactions with your child about starting care positive and bright.

Strategies to assist with Separation Anxiety:

- Provide a family photo for your child.
- Bring comfort items from home.
- Establish a drop off and pick up routine with your child and Educators.

Can I check on my child throughout the day?

You are more than welcome to contact your Centre Director or your child's room at any point during the day via phone, to seek some feedback on how your child is settling in. Our supportive Educators will also regularly communicate via the Storypark App.

Your Enrolment Pack & What to Bring



To establish your child's sense of belonging at Explorers, we have prepared a special Welcome Pack that includes the following items:

- **Belonging Bag:** A designated bag for your child's personal items to keep everything organised and easy to find.
- **Wet Bag:** Ideal for storing any wet or soiled clothing, a sustainable solution for ensuring they stay separate from clean items.
- **Bucket Hat:** Perfect for sunny days, this hat will help keep your child shaded and protected.
- **Warm Beanie:** Essential for cooler days, this will keep your child's head warm and cosy.

Additional or replacement items can be purchased at the centre.

To ensure your child is prepared for changes to weather and the curriculum planned for the day, below is a summary of what Explorers provides and what to bring.

We recommend ensuring all personal belongings are labelled carefully with your child's name.

What is provided:

The following items will be provided to support your child's daily routine:

- Nutritious, age appropriate meals from breakfast, morning tea, lunch, late snack and water.
- Appropriate formula for infants and toddlers.
- Nappies and wipes.
- SPF 50+ sunscreen suitable for children's skin.
- Cot and sleeping mat bedding for your child's comfort.

What to bring:

- Comfort items, including items required for sleep such as sleeping bags.
- Bottles and formula or breast milk (if applicable).
- Sunscreen (if choosing to not use the Explorers sunscreen).
- Spare clothes – we recommend two named changes of clothes.
- Warm clothing (weather dependent).
- Water bottle.
- Nappy cream (if applicable).
- Your Explorers belonging bag, wet bag, beanie and bucket hat.





Our Explorers Team

The Centre Leadership Team

Supporting families, children and our Educator Team is essential to providing a high quality nurturing educational program at Explorers. We have established a Centre Leadership Team that plays a crucial role in the daily operations of our centres. This team consists of the Centre Director, Director in Training and Educational Leader. These key roles are essential for effective planning, operational consistency and family support.

Centre Leadership Team

Centre Director

The Centre Director role at Explorers is the key stakeholder responsible for providing leadership and managing all aspects of the Centre. The Explorers Centre Director plays a crucial role in creating a nurturing and supportive environment for both employees and children.

Director in Training

Our Director in Training works closely with the Centre Director in supporting the day to day operations of the Centre. The Director in Training is your point of contact if the Centre Director is away from the centre.

Educational Leader

The Educational Leader will work closely with the Centre Director and Director in Training to ensure your child's learning experience is of the highest quality. They will oversee the curriculum, ensuring it is well designed and effectively implemented, while guiding and supporting our Educators to embed the Reggio Emilia Approach®.

Educators

Lead Educator

Lead Educators oversee their Room's curriculum, playing a vital role in creating a stimulating and nurturing learning environment. Explorers Lead Educators will work closely with families to understand each child's needs and interests to support the delivery of the best possible care and education.

Co-Educators

Our dedicated Co-Educators play a vital role in supporting your child's growth and development each day. They work closely with Lead Educators to implement engaging, hands on activities that inspire curiosity and creativity. Whether it's guiding children through projects, outdoor play, or helping them build social skills, our Co-Educators ensure every child feels supported, valued, and encouraged. Their nurturing presence helps foster a love of learning, making each day a meaningful and joyful experience for your child.

Our Educators Roles & Rosters

A primary focus at Explorers is to ensure consistency of Educators to provide the best quality program to the children in our care.

As our centre is open from early morning to late evening, at times you may not see certain Educators at drop off and pick up times due to their shift times. However, either our Lead Educators or Co-Educators are available at drop off to support transitions, and at pick up to communicate any information about your child's day.

Outside of your child's classrooms you will see a **"Who is Working Today"** sign. This will tell you what Educators are in the room for the day, and who is on leave.

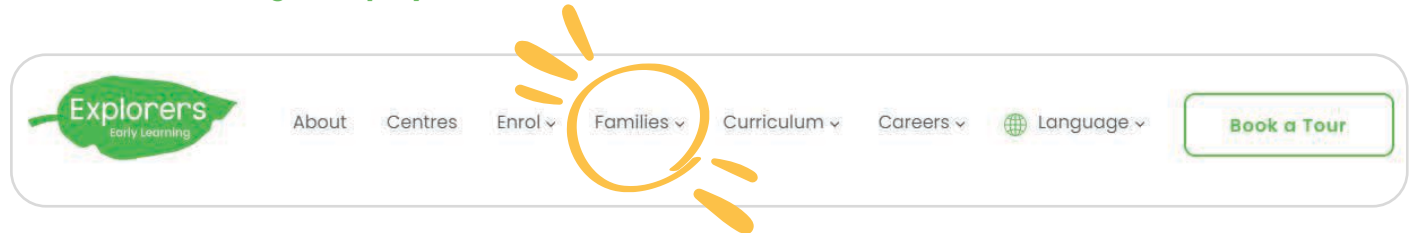
Our Family Support Team



Our focus is ensuring that our Centre Leadership Teams are available to support families, children and educators throughout the day. We have a friendly Family Support Team available at our Support Office to assist with any invoice enquiries, enrolment modifications and Child Care Subsidy enquiries.

We recommend completing an **enquiry form** through our website for the quickest response from the team. Alternatively, the team can be reached via **live chat** or on **1300 000 335** during the hours of 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday.

Where to find the right enquiry forms on our website:



Who to Contact:

To support you in ensuring any enquiries are responded to efficiently and accurately, below is a summary of who to contact based on your enquiry.

Enquiry	Family Support Team	Centre Leadership Team	Self-Serve through the Xap app
Casual Day Request			✓
Make Up Day Request			✓
Notify of Absence			✓
Notify of Holidays for Holiday Discount	✓		
Notify of Illness		✓	
Account or Billing Enquiry	✓		
Updating your Enrolled Days	✓		
Child Care Subsidy Enquiry	✓		
Update to Dietary, Allergy & Medical Requirements		✓	

Family Support Portal
Scan the QR Code



How to navigate our website
Scan the QR Code



How to Request Casual or Make Up Days

At Explorers we offer casual bookings if families need an occasional additional day of care.

Casual days can be requested through your Xap account using the below instructions:

1. Open the Xap app.
2. Click on the Calendar icon.
3. Click on the green + button.
4. Select the relevant Child name.
5. Select the relevant room.
6. Select the relevant session.
7. Select the date that you would like to request a casual booking for and submit.

Casual days are subject to availability and require 24 hours notice to cancel.

We rely on families notifying us of absences to best support families in securing casual bookings, however we do our best to accommodate them wherever possible.

Absences & Holidays

Each calendar year, your child is entitled to four weeks of 50% holiday discount, relative to their booked days.

Requests for holiday discount can be submitted through the Family Support Portal.

Four weeks notice is required for holiday discount to be approved.

Payment & Billing

Explorers charge fortnightly in advance, with an invoice being sent to each family on a Saturday. Families have a minimum of 48 hours to review their invoice prior to the direct debit being processed.

It is a requirement that each family has direct debit details saved in their Xap account prior to commencing care.

- Enquiries regarding your fortnightly invoice can be submitted through our Family Support Portal.
- A 1.8% surcharge applies to credit card payments, and 3% for Amex.
- A late fee of \$15.00 will be charged if payment is not received within the fortnightly billing cycle.
- In addition, for each failed transaction a fee of \$8.80 will be incurred via a third-party provider.

We recommend watching this video on understanding your invoice:

**Understanding
you Invoice**
Scan the QR Code



How to update your Direct Debit details

Direct Debit details can be updated in your Xap account.

Child Care Subsidy

To connect your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to your account, we require the below information:

- Child Date of Birth and Customer Reference Number
- Guardian Date of Birth and Customer Reference Number

It is important to ensure the guardian details provided are those of the CCS claimant (the guardian who has applied for CCS approval).

CCS is automatically deducted off your fortnightly invoice.





Drop off & Pick up

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure their child is signed in at drop off, and signed out at pick up each day they attend care.

Signing In & Out

Sign in and out is done through Xap, using your mobile number to confirm your child's attendance. You will find a sign in and out kiosk at your child's classroom door.

Accurate sign in and out times are important for us to ensure the best possible roster that meets the needs of children attending. We ask that families remember to sign in and out each day.

Car Parking

To ensure a smooth drop off and pick up experience, the below parking is available for families.

Dedicated Parent Car Parking: We have special parking spaces just for child drop off and pick up, conveniently located near the entrance or lift area to make things easier for you.

Employee Car Parking: There are also designated areas marked as 'Staff Parking' for our team members. To help us keep things running smoothly, we kindly ask that you avoid using these spaces where possible.

Pram Storage

If you choose to walk to Explorers or use public transport, we have a designated 'Pram Storage' area that you are welcome to utilise.



We welcome families to leave their prams for the day if required. Your Centre Leadership Team can direct you to the location of your centres Pram Storage.

Security Access

At Explorers, each child's safety is extremely important.

All Explorers centres use a pin code security access system, located at all entry points to the centre.

At your orientation, you will receive the pin code for access from our Centre Leadership Team. It is important that this pin code is not passed on to anyone else.

Authorisation for a person to collect your child is required in writing, or to be added to Xap. Photo identification will be requested for any person unfamiliar to the Centre Leadership Team.

Family Grouping



We understand that families have diverse schedules and sometimes may require flexibility due to work or other commitments. Our goal is to ensure that parents feel comfortable and confident in using the service, knowing that their child will be well cared for, regardless of the timing of drop off and pick up.

At Explorers, at certain times of the day we run our Family Grouping program, this varies by centre however typically is within the below times:

- Centre opening to 8am.
- 5.30pm to centre closing.

Family grouping creates a natural, supportive, and interactive learning environment that mirrors the real-world community setting, where children of all ages learn together. At these times of day, you may find your child is enjoying Family Grouping in a different classroom or our central Piazza spaces.

Family grouping offers several key benefits for both the children and educators:

Promotes Peer Learning

Younger children learn by observing and interacting with older peers, while older children can develop leadership and mentoring skills by helping the younger ones.

The mixed-age setting encourages emotional regulation and empathy as children from different age groups interact with each other.

Builds Stronger Social Skills and Emotional Development

Children in family grouping often develop better communication, empathy, and conflict resolution skills as they interact with a wider range of age groups. They learn to cooperate, share, and negotiate, as well as how to support others at different developmental stages.

Encourages Positive Role Models

Older children take on the role of mentors and role models, helping younger children with tasks, guiding play, and demonstrating appropriate behaviours. This can enhance their sense of responsibility and self-esteem.

Strengthens Community and Relationships

Children in family grouping often form long-lasting relationships, not just with their peers but also with educators, as they have consistent interactions across age groups.

Enhanced Engagement with Learning

The dynamic and diverse environment of a family grouping promotes a rich variety of experiences, fostering creativity and curiosity. Children benefit from the varied perspectives and experiences of their peers, which enriches their overall learning experience.



An Introduction to Storypark

Storypark is a cloud based application designed to enhance collaboration and communication between our Educators and Families to share your child's **Learning for Life** Journey.

At the time of your enrolment, you will receive a log in to your Storypark account with instructions on how to download the app. Please see below further information to support your onboarding to Storypark:



Get Started with Storypark

1 Sign Up and Log In

- Storypark will initiate contact by sending an email invitation to create an account.
- If you haven't received the Storypark invitation in a timely manner via email please contact your Centre Leadership Team.
- Follow the link in the email to create an account.
- Once you have an account, you can log in online without installing any software.

2 Nominate Your Personal Sharing Network

You will be able to safely nominate a private network of people including family, friends and any additional support professionals relevant to your child.

3 Comment, Create and Share

Communication with your child's Educator Team has never been easier. Within your child's profile, you can view stories, share comments and directly message your child's Educator Team to meaningfully engage in your child's learning journey. Using your Storypark Family App, you're able to share your child's own moments and learning experiences from home.





An Introduction to **Xap**

Xap is our system for managing your child's enrolment details, bookings and payments.

We encourage families to download the Xap Smile App to be used for:

- Notifying us of absences.
- Requesting casual days.
- Viewing statements.
- Viewing bookings.
- Updating family or child details, including emergency contacts.

For more information on Xap, please use the QR code below:

**For more
information
on Xap**

Scan the QR Code



Xap App

**Scan the QR Code
to download
the App**



The Ready Program

Explorers Kindergarten



Our **Ready Program** is incorporated into our four year old Kindergarten Curriculum and promotes readiness for primary school, equipping children with the essential skills they need for a successful transition into their further learning journey.

As part of this program, children receive an Explorers Ready Pack that includes:

- Kindergarten T-Shirt
- Library Bag
- Lunch Bag
- Explorers Hat

*Launching for 2025 Kindergarten



Our Learning for Life Curriculum and Framework of Joy Program guide our educational approach, fostering holistic development while nurturing each child's individuality. Through a play based and inquiry led learning environment, children are encouraged to explore, discover and grow at their own pace.

Join us in providing your child with a meaningful and transformative Kindergarten experience that sets the foundation for lifelong learning and success.



Kindergarten Program

Scan the Qr Code to see them in action



Opting in for Kindergarten Funding

At Explorers, children who are already enrolled in the Centre at the appropriate age will automatically have a three and four year old Kindergarten enrolment reserved.

For families wanting to nominate the Explorers Kindergarten Program as their funded three or four year old place, our Family Support Team will communicate with each family on this process ready for commencement the following year.

If you commence at Explorers mid year, you can still opt in for funding. Please let us know if you would like to do so.



Find out more!

Scan the QR Code
to read all about
Kindergarten at
Explorers



Mealtimes & Nutrition



Our in-house kitchen provides a nutritionally balanced menu prepared onsite each day. Our families often comment on the beautiful aromas coming from the kitchen, especially the smell of baked goods made fresh daily.

Children at Explorers are provided with breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late fruit snack.

Healthy, Fresh and Local

Our fresh fruit and produce are sourced from a variety of local suppliers.

All meals follow a menu that is age appropriate and nutritionally balanced and are prepared fresh on the premises by experienced cooks.

Explorers have fresh fruit bowls available for all children and families at the end of the day.

To increase the nutritional benefits, we reduce the amount of white carbohydrates and sugar given to the children.

A progressive approach to mealtime is provided to accommodate individual needs, allergies and intolerances.

During various cultural celebrations, children have opportunities to help cook special meals for the day. For example, we make dumplings to celebrate Lunar New Year!

Water is always available and encouraged.

Allergies and Dietary Preferences

We understand there are many children with specific dietary preferences, as well as food intolerances and minor to severe food allergies.

Only food sourced by Explorers is provided to children to protect those with allergies. Alternative options are available to accommodate allergies and dietary requirements. Common alternate options are dairy free, gluten free and vegetarian. Nuts and eggs are not used in any meals.

For the safety of all children, Educators and visitors, we ask that no food is brought into the Centre under any circumstances.

Our Menu

We're proud of our menu being culturally inclusive and reflective with variety of options of children that attend our centres and that our in-house cooks are part of the ongoing review of our menu and that it meets the guidelines from Nutrition Australia.

Progressive Mealtimes

At Explorers we believe that children should be trusted to make choices that benefit their individual needs. Progressive meal times offer several benefits, including

- **Encourages Independence:** Children learn to serve themselves and regulate portion sizes.
- **Promotes Social Skills:** Shared meals foster conversations and positive interactions among peers.
- **Enhances Learning:** Discussing nutrition and food origins enriches the dining experience.
- **Fosters Appreciation for Food:** Involvement in meal preparation encourages trying new foods.
- **Encourages Mindfulness:** Children focus on the tastes and textures of their food, promoting healthier eating patterns.

Overall, progressive meal times create a positive and enriching experience that nurtures children's development and healthy habits.





Allergies, Dietary Requirements & Medical Conditions

We prioritise the safety and well-being of all children, particularly those with allergies, dietary requirements, and medical conditions. We are an allergy-aware service, specifically regarding egg and nut allergies, and have implemented a range of strategies to minimise the risk of allergic reactions.

In the unlikely event of an allergic reaction, we are trained to recognise and respond appropriately. Risk-reduction measures include the elimination of eggs and nuts from our menu, the prevention of food sharing, thorough hand washing, and ongoing education for our staff.

Upon Enrolment and Ongoing Communication

During the enrolment process, it is crucial that parents inform us of any allergies, dietary restrictions, or medical conditions their child may have. All relevant documentation and medication must be provided to the service prior to your child's start date.

If your child develops any allergies, dietary requirements, or medical conditions while enrolled, please notify the service promptly. Updated documentation and medication will need to be submitted prior to your child's return to care.

In addition to any medical documentation provided by your child's healthcare provider, the service will create a Medical Management and Health Care Needs Plan to ensure additional safety measures are in place to reduce risks.

Managing Allergens

We provide meals that are tailored to each child's specific needs, ensuring that any known allergens are avoided as required. At Explorers, we are committed to creating a positive eating environment that reflects individual dietary needs, cultural and family values, and encourages healthy eating practices as part of lifelong learning.

To maintain a safe environment, **we do not permit food to be brought onto the premises** by families. This helps to reduce the risk of allergen exposure and ensures the safety of all children. Should special circumstances arise, prior approval must be obtained from the Regional Manager.

Making Changes to Enrolment

We understand that family needs can change and we're here to support you. If you require changes to your child's enrolment, such as increasing or changing days, you can let us know through contacting our Family Support Team. Please note, notice periods apply for cancelling days.

Explorers require four weeks' notice for the following:

1. Cancelling a child's place.
2. Reducing days of care.

Families can notify Explorers through the Family Support Portal.

The safety and wellbeing of all children and staff are our top priority, in rare cases Explorers reserves the right to suspend or terminate an enrolment at any time if this safety is compromised.



Policy Summary



For your convenience, we have condensed our suite of Policies to ensure the health and safety of our Explorers Community and briefly listed them below. If you require any of these policies in more detail please speak with your Centre Leadership Team.

Payment of Fees Policy

Outlines fee payment processes, including methods, due dates, and late fees, ensuring transparency for families.

Enrolment, Orientation, and Open Door Policy

Guides the enrolment process and orientation for new families, promoting a welcoming environment and open communication.

Child Care Subsidy Policy

Details available financial support for families, including eligibility and the application process to reduce childcare costs.

Additional Child Care Policy

Addresses options for extended hours and emergency care, providing flexibility while maintaining quality care.

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

Sets procedures for managing and preventing the spread of infectious diseases, ensuring health and safety for all.

Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Policy

Framework for responding to incidents and injuries, detailing reporting and management procedures for child well-being.

Medical Management and Health Care Needs Policy

Ensures children's medical needs are met, outlining medication administration and communication with families.

Sun Safety and UV Protection Policy

Promotes sun safety practices, including outdoor play guidelines and sunscreen use to protect children from UV rays.

Nappy Change and Toileting Policy

Ensures hygiene needs are met respectfully, outlining nappy changing and toilet training procedures for children.

Nutrition, Health, and Wellbeing Policy

Focuses on providing nutritious meals and promoting healthy eating habits to support children's overall health.







Family Feedback

We highly value feedback from our families, as it plays a crucial role in helping us improve and enhance our services. Throughout your experience at Explorers, there are several ways to provide feedback as below:

Onboarding Feedback: Following your orientation, you will receive a short survey from us to gather information on your onboarding experience and whether we can support in any way.

Family Survey: Our Family Survey is distributed regularly throughout the year to gather any feedback you may have.

Additionally, we welcome you to submit feedback any time through our Family Feedback form. This form can be found on our website, or on QR codes around your centre.

All feedback submitted is directed to our Support Office for review and action. We genuinely appreciate the time you take to share your experiences with us, as this is integral to our commitment to continuous improvement.



**Family
Feedback Form**

Scan the QR Code

General Information

Weekends and Public Holidays

Explorers is open 52 weeks a year, closing only on weekends and public holidays. Families are required to pay their normal daily fees for public holidays. To support our families, Explorers will offer a 'makeup day' for each public holiday. Makeup days must be requested in the Xap app and will be approved provided we can accommodate the dates you have requested.

The following conditions apply for makeup days:

1. Makeup days need to be booked within twelve months and are subject to availability.
2. Makeup days cannot be booked if a family is not up to date with their account (in debt).
3. Where a child attends Explorers five days a week, half the daily fee will be charged for public holidays.

Children with Special Rights

Explorers Early Learning is committed to an inclusive program for all children with special rights. The Centre can access several external services to support children and families. For more information, please contact your Centre Director.







Explorers
Early Learning

1300 000 335
explorers.com.au



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