

# Family Handbook

Learning  
for **Life**

**Explorers**  
Early Learning



### **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 Statement from the Heart and to be strong, courageous allies in the quest to hear the voices of our First Nations people.

**“Every child is an artist.”**

– Picasso



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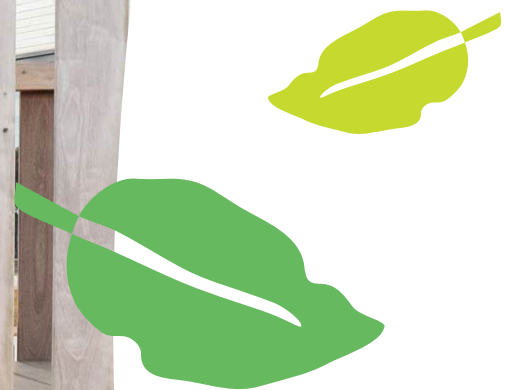
# Welcome to **Explorers Early Learning**

We are delighted you are considering our centre and the Explorers difference in exceptional early learning.

We take great pride in providing nurturing care and education inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach®. Our uniquely tailored environments spark curiosity and creativity, offering an elevated space for children from infancy to kindergarten.

Our premium education and care extend to our three and four year old Kindergarten programs, including our Ready Program, which prepares children for their primary school years. We believe that every child deserves a distinctive and transformative early learning experience. We are committed to collaborating with families to nurture each child's growth and development through our innovative Learning for Life Curriculum and Framework of Joy Program.

We look forward to demonstrating how our dedicated team and thoughtfully curated spaces can enrich your child's early years with fun, joy, and meaningful learning experiences.



# The Journey of Lynda, Explorers' Founder

## The Explorers Story and our ongoing vision

The Explorers story begins with a personal journey from Lynda Salvo, the Explorers founder. Her search for a great childcare experience for her first child, led to the creation of a place where children can thrive, families are supported and educators are driven and passionate about early childhood education.

My journey in early learning began in 2004, whilst searching for a nurturing, high quality childcare environment for my firstborn. After finding it difficult to find options that met my standards, I felt inspired to create my own centre, and was so happy to find my first site in St Kilda by the end of that year.

Eager to be involved in the whole process, I immersed myself in learning everything I could about Early Childhood Care and Education and dedicated my time to building the foundation of Tree House Child Care.

A few short months after the arrival of my second child in December 2006, we opened the doors to Tree House St Kilda. Balancing a growing family with a new business was an incredibly rewarding challenge! Tree House quickly earned a reputation for excellence, and I couldn't have been prouder of what we built.

Over the next seven years, we opened an additional four centres, and I welcomed my third child. All three of my children were able to attend our St Kilda Centre, and I loved watching their early learning journey from the baby classroom right through to Kindergarten.

In 2013, I made the difficult decision to sell the Tree House brand to spend more time with my family. However, it was not long before I realised how much I missed the Early Childhood space, which led to the creation of **Explorers Early Learning**.

Now, in 2024, after celebrating the opening of our twentieth Explorers centre, I'm proud that we remain a privately owned, family run business, something that has become a rarity in our sector. As we continue to grow, my top priority is maintaining the highest standards and exceeding expectations at every Explorers centre. I look forward to welcoming your family into the Explorers community and being a part of your child's early learning journey.

**Lynda Salvo**  
Founder & CEO



Pictured (Right): My first son and I in front of the St Kilda site before Tree House was built in 2004. The wonderful Morten Bay Fig Tree was the catalyst for the name Tree House.

# Learning for Life

## The Explorers Difference



### Learning for Life Curriculum

The Learning for Life curriculum at Explorers reflects our commitment to creating environments that spark joy and inspire creativity through play for children from infancy to kindergarten. Drawing inspiration from the Reggio Emilia Approach®, our spaces foster opportunities for children to explore, express themselves, and build meaningful relationships.

### The Piazza: A Space for Exploration & Creativity

At the heart of every Explorers centre is the piazza—a vibrant, central space where friendships, games, and artistic encounters thrive. These areas serve as hubs for children’s interactions and exploration, as well as ateliers (or studios) where they can engage in creative learning experiences.

### Visual Arts, Digital Technology & Sustainability

At Explorers, we believe in the power of creativity, innovation, and sustainability. As you walk through our centres, you’ll notice how Visual Arts, Digital Technology, and Sustainability are embedded in our everyday practices:

- **Visual Arts:** Children are encouraged to express themselves through various art forms such as clay sculpting, painting, drawing, and collage. These mediums allow children to explore their creativity and represent their ideas in unique ways.
- **Digital Technology:** Tools like digital microscopes, projectors, light tables, and video documentation help children explore new perspectives and engage with their learning in exciting, hands on ways.
- **Sustainability:** We promote sustainable practices through the use of reusable materials and by teaching children about the importance of conserving resources like water and energy. These practices are woven into the daily rhythm of the centre, empowering children to take part in caring for their environment.

### “Nothing without Joy”

Joy is at the heart of everything we do at Explorers. Inspired by the words of Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach—“Nothing without joy”—we ensure that our learning environments are filled with happiness, curiosity, and excitement. This principle has even shaped one of our core values: “Excitement: Be the Joy.” The joy we foster through play, learning, and exploration creates a truly special atmosphere felt by children, families, and educators alike.

### The Framework of Joy

To build on this joyful foundation, we created the “Framework of Joy”, a program that enriches children’s learning experiences. This framework includes Visual Arts, Language and Culture, Physical Education, and Musical Theatre. In addition to our ongoing visual arts program, we collaborate with external art teachers to offer children deeper creative experiences. The **Framework of Joy** ensures that children, from infants to kindergarten, thrive in a joyful, enriching environment where creativity and discovery flourish.





## Our Values



**Ownership: Own it, do it** Deliver the best, hold yourself and others accountable.

**Innovation: Be curious** Innovate to be one step ahead.

**Relationships: Better together** Support each other, to be our best.

**Joy: Spark Excitement** Energise people and places, create positivity.

**Learning: Love to learn** Commit to learning and teaching, make yourself and others better.

# Philosophy Statement



**At Explorers we are inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach® to early education and its principles as a catalyst for excellent practice in the cultural context of Australia. We strive to embrace excellence and foster relationships with the communities in which we live.**

## Wellbeing

Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture, and we actively reflect on and implement the Victorian Child Safe Standards. We acknowledge the history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and provide culturally safe and inclusive environments for children to thrive. We value and promote diversity and inclusion to enhance every child's sense of belonging.



The Australian National Quality Framework (NQF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) guide the development of all curriculum designed for children's learning at Explorers.

## Children as Citizens

At Explorers, children are viewed as active participants and citizens with rights. We welcome their thoughts, ideas and theories and recognise that their unique and diverse experiences contribute to their questions, curiosity, and wonder.

We uphold an image of the child who is interconnected with others, rich in potential, powerful, competent and capable. We believe all children are intelligent, have agency and co-construct knowledge in collaboration with children and adults. We listen to children with our hearts and minds and encourage them to participate in decision making.

We value our relationships with children and nurture them through respectful interactions and environments to explore, experiment and learn.

## Learning

We recognise the social nature of learning and provide play based experiences for children. Play is critical and essential for young children's learning and we recognise our professional responsibility to ensure that all children engage in rich, imaginative interactions and shared sustained thinking in this context. We recognise children as protagonists and believe they learn and communicate through different languages or modes of expression.





## Intentional Teaching

We design curriculum with intentionality, using both adult and child initiated provocations. We honour children as individuals and group members. We relaunch children's learning through open ended questions, thoughtful interactions and collaborative group research projects. We provide documentation to make children's learning visible in the social context. Time is an essential context for children's learning and we respect the rhythm of the children during the day. We deliberately and purposefully create opportunities for uninterrupted time to allow children to pause, think, play and discover.

## Innovation

Explorers have a strong commitment to continuous learning and quality improvement. Ongoing professional learning for Educators is undertaken regularly to ensure that practices are contemporary, innovative, relevant and exemplary.

## Families

Families are the children's first teachers and Explorers is committed to developing collaborative and respectful relationships with them. We acknowledge each family's diverse perspectives, values, beliefs and aspirations for their children. We honour every family, consider their culture, language, traditions and lifestyles, and invite partnership, participation and feedback.

## Community

Connecting with the community is an ethical responsibility and we value relationships with local schools and organisations. We explore the community with the children and discuss essential ideas such as environmental awareness and care for the planet.



We believe children are "rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all connected to adults and other children".

– Loris Malaguzzi, Reggio Emilia.



## Reggio Emilia Inspired



At Explorers, our program is deeply inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach®, a renowned early childhood educational philosophy from Italy. This approach emphasises child and adult centred inquiry based learning through meaningful learning environments where children can thrive.

Here's what it means for your child:

### Curiosity Driven Exploration

Children are seen as capable and curious learners. Our educators design the curriculum around children's curiosities, promoting motivation for children's understanding and meaningful connections.

### Conceptual Learning

We favour intentional conceptual learning, where children explore and understand key ideas and principles. A conceptual approach to learning provides children with opportunities to investigate ideas, complex concepts and ethical issues relevant to their learning for life journey.

### Project Based Learning

We provide opportunities for children to explore concepts in depth, driven by their underlying curiosities about the world. These collaborative projects provide children with contexts for sustained shared thinking.

### The Role of the Environment & Permanent Learning Contexts

Our classrooms are thoughtfully organised and designed to enhance children's learning experiences. We provide a wide variety of materials, resources, and equipment that encourage play, exploration, and creativity.

We incorporate flexible and permanent learning contexts within our rooms. These are dedicated learning spaces that facilitate play based experiences such as construction, visual arts, dramatic play and communication.

Each permanent learning context is intentionally designed and regularly modified to support the learning and development goals set for individual children and groups. This approach ensures that every child's unique interests and curiosities are supported, fostering an engaging and enriching environment for their growth and learning.



"The child has a hundred languages, a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts, a hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking."

– Loris Malaguzzi





### **Strong Relationships**

We build and foster respectful relationships between educators, children, and families. Partnerships with families enhance the educational experience.

By embracing authentic relationships, our programs ensure that children develop the funds of knowledge they need for the changing world they will encounter. This includes, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, teamwork and digital literacy.

### **The Hundred Languages of Children**

The Hundred Languages of Children are the various ways children express themselves beyond just words—through visual art, music, movement, play, and storytelling. Inspired by this approach, our curriculum promotes holistic learning by valuing each child's unique modes of communication, encouraging exploration and creativity in supportive environments. We foster collaboration, allowing children to learn from each other and appreciate diverse perspectives.



# Learning for Life



At Explorers Early Learning, our unique **Learning for Life** Curriculum tailors learning experiences to support children's development from infants through to four year old kindergarten. Our programs are designed to foster learning by exploring children's deep curiosities, ensuring a seamless **transition to school**.

Inspired by the **Reggio Emilia Approach**<sup>®</sup>, our program emphasises child and adult centred inquiry based learning, encouraging experimentation, creativity and critical thinking.

## Phases of Exploration and Play



**1 Experiencing:** seeing, touching, feeling, tasting, hearing.

**2 Connecting:** bringing different parts together.

**3 Making:** composing something out of parts.

**4 Reimagining:** making something creative and imaginative.



# Learning for Life in Action



Construction

Infants



1

Experiencing

Toddlers



2

Connecting

3-year old Kindergarten



3

Making

4-year old Kindergarten



4

Reimagining

Learning  
for Life

Scan the QR Code  
to see our curriculum  
in action



## Outdoor Environments



The outdoor environment is integral to the Learning for Life Curriculum as it offers children opportunities to learn about nature, learn in nature, and learn with nature. Outdoor environments offer children opportunities to run, jump, balance, and engage in various other physical activities.

Being outdoors is important for children's health and well being and provides an opportunity for them to learn about ecosystems, lifecycles, growth, and sustainability.





## Excursions & Incursions

Excursions and incursions are integral to our Explorers Learning for Life Curriculum, offering children a chance to engage with their local community in meaningful ways. We view children as active members of their community and believe it's crucial for them to experience real world environments in a planned, safe and supportive manner.

Our curriculum introduces key themes through experiences, including:

- **Local Heroes:** Engaging with police officers, firefighters, and paramedics.
- **Community Contributors:** Interacting with librarians, gardeners and horticulturalists.
- **Flora and Fauna Experiences:** Learning about and from living things.
- **Self-Care Experiences:** Understanding the roles of dentists, doctors and nurses.
- **Dynamic Topics:** Exploring a variety of other interests and themes based on the children's ages and stages.

To ensure a well organised and safe approach to excursions and incursions, we follow thorough safety protocols and risk assessments. We also keep families informed and involved by using signed permission forms, ensuring that every experience is safe and enriching for all participants.

### Excursions & Incursions

Scan the QR Code  
to explore our  
adventures



# Infants at Explorers



## Relationships

We believe that secure attachments are the foundation of a child's development. Our Educators are dedicated to creating warm, responsive relationships with each infant, building trust through consistent, nurturing interactions. We focus on understanding each child's unique needs, ensuring they feel safe, valued, and supported as they grow. These strong emotional bonds help create a sense of security, allowing infants to explore and engage with the world around them confidently.

## Rhythm and Routines

Our routine is tailored to the evolving needs of infants, allowing us to stay flexible and responsive to their natural daily rhythms. We do our best to support each child's routine in a way that feels familiar to home, while creating a calm and comforting environment for sleeping, eating, learning, and play.

## Communication and Language Development

Our Educators carefully observe and respond to infants' non verbal cues, understanding that even the smallest gestures and expressions are a child's way of communicating. As they grow, we nurture their early communication skills and support their journey from non verbal interactions to first words, using storytelling, music, and meaningful conversations through routines and play to encourage language social development.

## Environments

Our environments are thoughtfully designed to invite safe exploration, providing a space that supports their growth and development. We create areas that encourage multi sensory discovery and early learning experiences. Educators remain closely attuned to each infant's needs, continually adapting the space to nurture emerging abilities, stimulate curiosity, and offer comforting, supportive areas where they feel secure.

## Sleep and Rest

Our sleep areas are created to be safe and soothing, meeting the latest Australian safe sleep standards. We work closely with each family to understand their child's sleep routine, incorporating familiar sleep cues and comfort items.

## Nutrition and Mealtimes

Infants need balanced nutrition for healthy growth. Our in-house chef prepares daily pureed foods that support their development and transition to soft solids, focusing on nutritious, age-appropriate meals as part of their routine.





### Sun Safety

Infants have delicate, sensitive skin that requires extra protection outdoors. A hat is required for every infant while outside, and a hat will be provided during orientation, which can be used or replaced with another SunSmart approved hat. We encourage families to dress their infants in lightweight, sun-safe clothing that covers their shoulders, neck, and arms, providing extra protection against Australia's harsh sun. Educators ensure infants stay in the shade, when possible, apply sunscreen regularly, and monitor UV levels to keep them safe. Families are welcome to supply their own sunscreen if preferred.

### Family Communication

We know how important it is for families to stay connected with their child's day, even when they're not together. That's why we make sure to keep you updated on your child's sleep, meals, and play routines through the Storypark App. We want you to feel informed and reassured about your child's experiences with us. And if you ever need a little extra peace of mind, please don't hesitate to call the centre. We're always here to share how your child is doing.



# Toddlers at Explorers



## Relationships

Our Learning for Life Curriculum provides toddlers with responsive, nurturing Educators who are dedicated to building secure attachments. Through one on one interactions, our Educators create strong emotional bonds with each child, truly understanding and supporting their unique needs as they grow.

## Rhythms and Routines

Our approach to routines with toddlers supports their growing sense of independence while still providing the rhythm and guidance they need at this age. We create flexible routines that adapt to each child's stage of development, helping them thrive with a balance of support during mealtimes, sleep, toileting, and learning through play. Our Educators offer warm and respectful guidance through transition periods, encouraging toddlers to build their autonomy while feeling secure and understood in their environment.

## Toilet Training Support

We support each child's journey to toilet training at their own pace, respecting their readiness and individual needs. Our approach aligns with best practice standards in Australia, where we focus on making this transition a positive experience. Educators work closely with families to ensure a consistent approach between home and the centre, creating a supportive environment that encourages confidence and independence in each child's toileting milestones.

## Communication and Social Emotional Development

Our Educators are dedicated to nurturing toddlers' social and emotional growth, guiding them through respectful interactions and helping them explore their feelings in a supportive way. We focus on teaching self regulation through positive communication and gentle guidance, equipping children with the skills they need to manage their emotions and build strong, meaningful relationships. By modelling positive interactions and creating a safe space for expression, we support toddlers as they grow into confident and capable individuals.

Communication plays a vital role in this journey. We encourage toddlers to express their thoughts and feelings through words, gestures, and facial expressions, recognising the importance of every form of communication. Through storytelling, songs, and everyday conversations, we create a language rich environment that helps the toddler age group develop strong foundations for future linguistic skills while boosting their confidence in sharing their voice.

## Family Communication

We value families as our partners in your child's learning journey. Through the Storypark App, we share regular updates on your toddler's experiences, routines, and achievements which is connected to our Learning for Life Curriculum. This keeps you closely involved in your child's growth and development, providing insights into how they're learning and thriving each day. We're always here to offer reassurance and to keep you informed about how your child is progressing within our learning environment.



### Environments

Our toddler environments are thoughtfully designed to spark exploration and curiosity, encouraging independence and creativity. Aligned with our Learning for Life Curriculum, we create permanent learning contexts that support toddlers in their journey of discovery. These may include areas dedicated to blocks and construction, books and oral storytelling, dramatic play, and manipulative play, all intentionally arranged to inspire children's learning. We also provide cosy spaces where toddlers can retreat for quiet moments, offering a balance of stimulation and comfort as they actively engage with their surroundings.

### Sleep and Rest

As toddlers transition from cots to sleeping mats, we support their growing independence in their sleep routine. We follow safe sleep practices and create calm rest time rituals that help toddlers feel secure and relaxed during the day, fostering a sense of wellbeing and restfulness.

### Nutrition and Toddler Meals

Toddlers require balanced nutrition for healthy growth and development. Our in house chef prepares nutritious, age appropriate meals daily, focusing on providing a variety of textures and flavours that support their developing tastes. Meal times are integrated into our routines, encouraging social interaction and healthy eating habits while ensuring that toddlers receive the nourishment they need to thrive.

### Sun Safety for Toddlers

We focus on protecting toddlers' sensitive skin while teaching them about sun safety. It's a requirement for all toddlers to wear a hat when outdoors, and we provide each child with an Explorers hat at orientation, which they can use or replace with another approved hat. We encourage families to dress their children in lightweight, sun safe clothing that covers their shoulders and arms, providing extra protection against Australia's harsh sun. Our Educators assist with sunscreen application and encourage toddlers to start learning how to apply it themselves, fostering their independence. We closely monitor UV levels and guide children to seek shade when necessary to ensure they stay safe while enjoying their time outside. Families are welcome to provide their own sunscreen if their child has specific needs.



# Kindergarten

## 3 and 4 year old Curriculum Program

### Experience the Explorers Kindergarten Program

Welcome to the Explorers Kindergarten Program! We offer a unique two-year Kindergarten experience, featuring dedicated programs for 3 year old and 4 year old children. Aligned with our Learning for Life Curriculum, our approach ensures each age group receives the guidance, learning opportunities, and support they need to thrive in our environments and preparing each child for school and life.

#### Environments

Our kindergarten environments are thoughtfully designed to inspire learning and creativity, fostering independence and exploration. Aligned with our Learning for Life Curriculum, we create permanent learning contexts such as blocks and construction, books and oral storytelling, dramatic play, and manipulative play. These interactive spaces encourage children to engage deeply with their surroundings, sparking curiosity and creativity. Our environments also include calming areas for rest and reflection, balanced with our enriching Excursion Program that extends learning beyond the classroom, connecting children to the world around them in meaningful ways.

#### Relationships and Respectful Interactions

During the kindergarten years, children develop meaningful relationships and friendships, moving from small group play to interactive larger group engagement. They begin to form friendships, navigate social dynamics, and learn valuable skills in self regulation and effective conflict resolution. Our program celebrates each child's ideas and contributions, creating a space where their voices are truly heard through one hundred different languages. As their vocabulary grows, children engage in deeper conversations with educators and peers, building a solid foundation for future social interactions.

#### Resilience

We support children with building resilience through the ability to bounce back from challenges, frustration, and conflicts with an outcome that is fair and equitable. We nurture resilience through positive relationships with one another and a sense of belonging. Educators support children's connectedness and wellbeing, helping them develop the confidence to face new experiences and handle setbacks with a positive mindset.

#### Rhythms and Routines

We understand that consistent daily rhythms play a vital role in supporting school readiness. Our kindergarten routines include structured times for learning, play, rest, and nutritious meals, providing stability that helps children feel secure and prepared for the transition to formal schooling.

#### Inquiry Based Learning

Inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, the Explorers Kindergarten program places a strong emphasis on inquiry based learning and collaborative projects. Children work together on group activities, building essential social, emotional, and cognitive skills while developing their ability to investigate and ask questions.

#### Language and Communication

During the kindergarten years, children's communication skills rapidly expand. Our Early Childhood Teachers encourage them to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas confidently. We focus on developing a rich vocabulary and strong articulation skills, which are key to supporting future reading and literacy success.



### **Nutrition and Mealtimes**

Mealtimes are a chance for children to learn about nutrition, enhance their social skills, and develop mindfulness around food choices. Our in house chef prepares balanced meals that introduce a variety of healthy foods, promoting positive eating habits.

### **Sun Safety**

We teach kindergarten children to take responsibility for their sun safety by encouraging them to apply sunscreen independently. This practice empowers them to develop essential self care skills and promotes their autonomy. By giving children, the tools to manage their sun protection, we foster a sense of responsibility and independence, helping them understand the importance of sun safety in their daily routines. We encourage families to dress their children in lightweight, sun safe clothing that covers their shoulders and arms, providing extra protection against Australia's harsh sun.

### **Family Communication**

We believe that families are essential partners in their child's development. Open communication is a priority, supported through daily interactions, phone calls, and updates on your child's learning and development via the Storypark app. This collaboration ensures we stay closely connected to each child's needs, supporting their growth both at home and within our Learning for Life Curriculum.



# 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 our program in action





### What is the Victorian Government Approved Kindergarten Tick?



The Victorian Government has introduced the Kinder Tick to help families find funded and approved Kindergarten Programs. The Kinder Tick tells families that:

- Our kindergarten program is recognised and **funded by the Victorian Government**.
- The program is led by a qualified **Early Childhood Teacher (ECT)** also known as a Kindergarten Teacher. ECTs must hold a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education or equivalent, typically a 4 year degree.
- We offer a play based learning program, as highlighted in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF).



## Framework of Joy Enrichment Program

The Explorers **Framework of Joy** forms part of our **Learning for Life** Curriculum.

The **Framework of Joy** is unique and concept-based, developed for children from birth to Kindergarten. It is inspired by Loris Malaguzzi's quote that there should be "nothing without joy" for children and their learning.

This dynamic program is tailored to all children's ages and stages, starting with Visual Arts, Language and Culture, Physical Education and Musical Theatre. The **Framework of Joy** will evolve as children's curiosities evolve, ensuring that Explorers children thrive in a joyful learning environment.





### Visual Arts

Visual Arts provides opportunities for infants and young children to develop their ability to communicate their ideas and test their theories.

Through our visual arts program, our Educators use a combination of art elements and the aesthetics of joy, with a beautifully curated range of two and three dimensional art materials to create 'cognitive knots' for the children to untangle.

### Language and Culture

Our Language and Culture Program offers children an enriching opportunity to understand the world and explore diverse cultures through language, stories, song, dance, cooking and other engaging experiences. By celebrating and exploring diverse language and cultures we foster empathy, tolerance, and open mindedness in our children.

### Physical Education

Physical Education offers a variety of fun and engaging physical activities to help children develop and improve their cognitive and situational skills such as throwing, kicking, balancing, bouncing, stretching and much more.

Creative challenges test children's physical and mental abilities, and promote teamwork, inclusion, and a sense of identity.

Children progress from simple and moderate to difficult tasks while mastering the fundamentals based on their abilities.

### Musical Theatre

Musical Theatre engages children through storytelling, physical activities and individual creativity, fostering a unique learning experience.

Each class progresses from structured warm ups to skill development, instilling joy and motivation in every child.

By merging movement, songs and imaginative play, children discover new talents and build creative confidence.



# Family Involvement

Families are an integral part of our curriculum, and we believe that their involvement in our Learning for Life Curriculum enriches the learning experience for children of all ages. By hosting family information nights and themed evenings relevant to their child's age and stages, we create opportunities for parents and caregivers to connect, share experiences, and celebrate the diversity within our community.

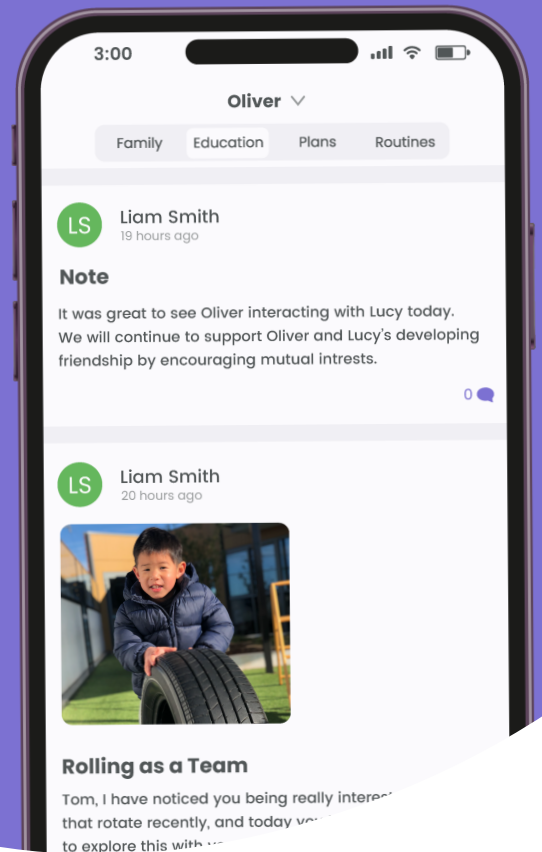
We collaborate with each family to understand their child's development, interests, and aspirations, using these insights to set individual goals and tailor the child's program.

We encourage families to share their unique culture, skills, and interests, fostering a vibrant and engaging learning environment. Whether it's celebrating cultural traditions, sharing favourite recipes, playing music or reading special stories, there are countless ways for families to participate and support their child's learning journey at Explorers, generating a strong sense of community and belonging.





# Storypark for Families



## Family Communication

At Explorers, we use Storypark as our dedicated online platform to capture each child's unique Learning for Life journey. It enables us to document and share meaningful moments and important milestones, ensuring families are actively engaged in their child's development. Storypark is designed to foster seamless collaboration between our Educator Team and families, enhancing each child's learning experience through open communication.

How Storypark supports families and our team:

### Enhanced Collaboration

Educators and families can easily share photos, videos, observations and notes that highlight each child's development. This makes it simple for families to stay connected and engaged in their child's progress.

### Real Time Updates

Families receive daily notifications and feedback from our Educators, keeping them informed about their child's daily activities and developmental milestones as they happen.

### Easy Access

The user friendly Storypark app ensures families can stay connected anytime, anywhere, providing flexibility and ease of use.

### Secure Sharing

Storypark is completely secure, allowing families to control what information is shared and with whom, ensuring privacy at all times.

### Smooth Transitions

Educators can access valuable insights from Storypark to support each child's learning journey as they transition from the infant room to kindergarten.



# Our Team

## The Centre Leadership Team

Supporting families, children and our Educator Team is essential to providing a high quality nurturing educational program at Explorers. To achieve this, 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 a dedicated Educational Leader. These three key roles are essential for effective planning, operational consistency, and family support.



## Educator Team and Professional Development

Our Explorers Team Members are professionally qualified or studying to qualify for their approved certifications. Each team member has a minimum standard or higher required to provide a high quality early learning experience. Explorers provides all team members further training opportunities to professionally strive for quality career development. We find this method of supporting our team, attracts and retains high quality team members to provide a consistent and positive experience for the children and their families at Explorers.

Our teams regularly meet at our HQ with our Pedagogy Team. Together they reflect, plan and collaborate on educational program, practice and professional development. They also have the opportunity to participate in our Reggio Emilia Study Tour in Italy.

## Qualifications

- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education
- Diploma of Early Childhood Education
- Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) or equivalent

## Certificates

All Educators are required to have:

- Valid Working with Children Check or an active Victorian Teachers Registration
- Asthma and Anaphylaxis Training
- Child Protection Training
- Safe Sleep Training
- Food Safety





"The environment should act as an aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes, and cultures of the people who live in it."

- **Loris Malaguzzi**



# Nutrition & Meal Times

# 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

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

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 chefs 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.



# Getting Ready for Care



## Supplied by Explorers

The following items will be provided:

- 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

## Explorers Enrolment Pack

We offer each family an Enrolment Pack with items to make your child's time with us more comfortable.

- **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's face shaded and protected.
- **Warm Beanie:** Essential for cooler days, this will keep your child's head warm and cosy.

## What to Bring

At Explorers your child will have their very own locker space to store their items. Families should bring a bag each day with your child's belongings.

We recommend including the following items in your child's bag.

- 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)





### Tips to Prepare Your Child for care

At Explorers, we understand that the initial settling in process can be an adjustment period for both families and children.

Here are some tips to prepare your child for long day care:

- For children who are breastfeeding, introduce them to the bottle prior to commencing care. This will ensure your baby is comfortable using the bottle they are used to drinking from.
- Attend your Orientation Sessions. These help your child get familiar with their new environment.
- Positively discuss what to expect when joining a new centre. A fun way to share this experience with your child, is to look up the Explorers Social Media pages and videos to view the exciting new Centre they will be joining.
- Commence care before returning to your commitments to allow your child to attend for shorter days initially, before gradually increasing the time spent in care.



### Starting Education and Care

Starting childcare can be an exciting, emotional and sometimes an adjustment period for families. It's normal for you and your child to have mixed feelings about starting care, especially for the first time.

### Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety refers to children's fear of being parted from their parents or carers and is common among babies and toddlers. However, it can affect children at any age.

### Why Does it Happen?

Babies develop an understanding of secure attachment at around six months old. This means your baby understands when you are together and when you are apart. Understanding the routine and trust that you will return takes time for a child to learn depending on their age and developmental stage.

### What You Can Do

Please know this reaction is normal and expected – children are very resilient and adjust as they get to know their Educators and their new setting becomes familiar. We assist our families with overcoming these anxieties through our Orientation Days, regular updates and strong communication.

### Your Feelings

It can be challenging in the beginning, but it's important to be positive and encouraging with your child about the experience.

### Strategies to Assist with Separation Anxiety

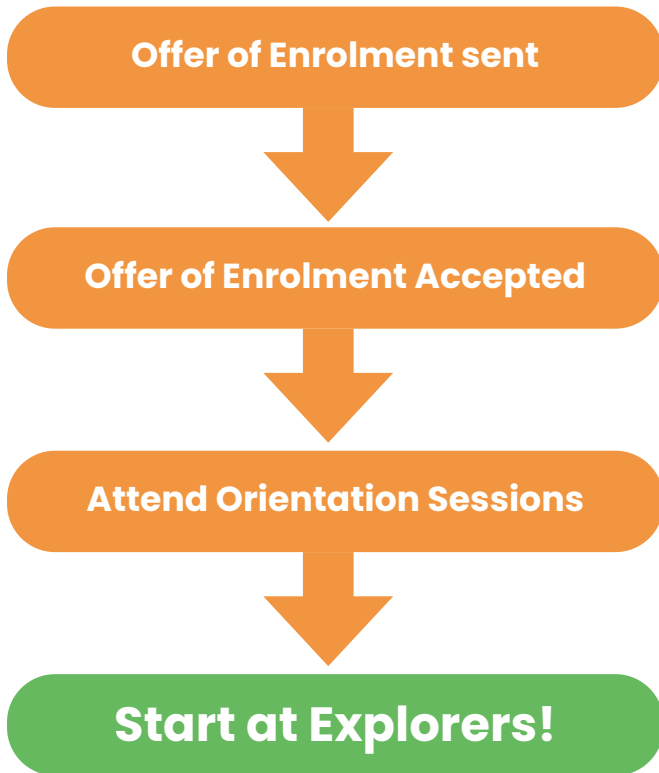
- Provide a family photo
- Bring a blanket or comfort toy from home
- Always say that you're leaving and always say that you're returning
- Give children a pickup time that they can remember, e.g. "I will be back after lunch."
- Call the Centre for updates at any time
- Enrolling in a minimum of two days per week is recommended for recognition of surroundings, environment and relationship building

# Becoming an Explorer



Our Explorers team regularly reviews our waitlist to offer enrolments to families as soon as they become available.

Here is the journey of becoming an Explorer:



## Accepting Offer of Enrolment

Explorers will send you an Offer of Enrolment for available places at the centre, offers are typically sent 6-8 weeks in advance (centre dependent). If you have been sent an offer, don't forget to accept it prior to the expiry date!

## Orientation Sessions

To support the transition into care, a two-part orientation process takes place:

- 1. Meet & Greet** – A one hour session where you will have the opportunity to meet the Centre Leadership Team and your child's Educators. You will spend time in the classroom, allowing your child to play whilst you go through important routine information with Educators and ask any questions you may have.
- 2. 4 Hour Orientation** – A half day where your child stays with us at the centre, giving them a chance to settle in and explore the new environment before their first full day of care.

We understand every child is unique, and welcome families to speak to their Centre Director if they feel their child would benefit from additional orientation sessions.

## Fee Assistance

### Child Care Subsidy

The Government funded Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is calculated by several factors including:

- Activity level
- Combined family income
- Service type and hourly rates

**For more information on Child Care Subsidy visit [humanservices.gov.au](https://humanservices.gov.au)**

### How to apply

To be eligible for the CCS, you are required to have a MyGov account linked to Centrelink. You can complete a Child Care Subsidy Assessment through MyGov, either online or through the app.

### Repayments

The CCS is paid directly to Explorers and is based on the attendance records that are submitted for your child. The gap between your Centre's daily charge and the CCS will be payable by the family via direct debit.

### Explorers Fees and Charges

Please discuss current fees and charges with our dedicated Family Support Team on 1300 000 335.





**Explorers**  
Early Learning

1300 000 335  
[explorers.com.au](http://explorers.com.au)



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