



Family Handbook



Big Fat Smile

Big Fat Smile is a leading provider of early childhood education and care, recreation, cultural and inclusion services in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

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Our Values

Our values guide our practices across all levels of our organisation, from Head Office, to Educators in services.

- **Safety:** We are dedicated to child safety and wellbeing.
- **Integrity:** We are consistently respectful, honest, ethical and accountable.
- **Child-centric:** We put our children at the centre of our relationships, philosophy, quality practice and innovations for education and care.
- **Inclusion:** We embrace the diversity of our children and colleagues and provide authentic opportunities for participation.
- **Leadership:** We lead through excellence in practice.
- **Connection:** We recognise connection as a foundational element to authentic relationships.

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Welcome to Big Fat Smile

Childhood is a time of great discovery and growth. We are honoured to be partnering with parents and carers everyday to care for, guide and educate children and young people in their formative years. Positioning children to thrive throughout their schooling and adult life starts here, today, and we take this role on with great pride. We are deeply passionate about our role in your child's education and development.

Big Fat Smile is a not-for-profit organisation, founded in 1981 and now governed by an elected Board of Directors. Along with the myself and the Big Fat Smile Executive Team, we have a range of experts and skilled professionals supporting the 37 centres across the Illawarra, Southern Tablelands and Macarthur regions.

Our experienced and highly skilled teachers and educators work closely with you to ensure our teaching and learning approach meets your child's individual needs. The children are centric to everything we do.

Our vision is to enrich the lives and mind of our children and families in their communities everyday, scaffolding them for success is our very purpose. We thank you for entrusting us with this important role.

Kim Bertino
CEO, Big Fat Smile

We have over
3,500
Big Fat Smile families

our
630
employees
care for and
educate over

4,500
children each
year

We care for and educate children through our:



Community Preschools and Long Day Care Centres
for children birth to 5 years.



Fun Clubs (OOSH)
for school-aged children aged 5 to 12 years.



Community Programs
delivers supported playgroups, parenting workshops, inclusion programs, transition to school support.



IncludeME
Building capacity and ensuring education & care environments are inclusive for all



Our Educational Philosophy

At Big Fat Smile we are driven by our vision - we enrich the lives and minds of our children and families in their communities. It guides everything we do and shapes the experience your child will have at Big Fat Smile.

The National Quality Framework

Big Fat Smile is committed to the National Quality Framework (NQF). This is a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services across Australia. Within the NQF are two learning frameworks that are tailored to Birth-5 years services called the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and 5-12 years services called My Time Our Place (MTOP). These learning frameworks emphasise the importance of "Belonging, Being and Becoming", and define the principles, practices and learning outcomes essential to high quality learning in early childhood and outside of school hours care services, and is embedded within our organisation's educational ethos and practices. 100% of our services are rated "Exceeding" and "Meeting" under the National Quality Standards.

The National learning framework highlights the importance of play-based, holistic learning and recognises the importance of language, social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. The five overall learning outcomes of the EYLF to give children the best start in life are identified as:

1. Children and young people have a strong sense of identity
2. Children and young people are connected with, and contribute to, their world
3. Children and young people have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children and young people are confident and involved learners
5. Children and young people are effective communicators

Additional information about the NQF can be found at: acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about



😊 **Our Educators and Teachers**

We believe our qualified and passionate educators and teachers provide sector-leading play-based educational curriculums that support each child's learning, development and growth. This optimum blend of experience, with a strong education and care framework, enables educators and teachers to support and foster all aspects of a child's development: social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical.

Our play-based learning and care environments are designed to nurture and develop your child's learning and developmental needs as they explore, experiment, problem solve, discover and build their confidence in an ever-changing world.

Safeguarding children's health, safety and wellbeing is our top priority as a child safe organisation. Educators across all our services adopt the National Principles for Child Safe organisations, placing the protection of children at the top of our responsibilities and obligations.

Our educators are further supported by a team of highly qualified subject-matter experts from our Head Office support team, including professionals from Operations, Pedagogy, Health and Safety, Customer Service and Inclusion.

😊 **Valuing Our Children**

Children are at the centre of all we do. Capturing and valuing children's voices is essential in ensuring our educational programs reflect The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Article 12 states that children have a right to have their opinions taken into account and their views respected in decision-making that affects them (UN, 1989). Our educators and teachers respect and recognise that individual children's perspectives, social cultures and their active participation within society can enrich the diversity of our educational programs.

Our Centres

Each of our centres have developed a tailored philosophy unique to their team, families and children, in order to:

- Create a sense of belonging
- Build strong, genuine and trusting relationships with families and community members
- Deliver a socially inclusive learning environment where each child is respected, accepted and valued as a unique individual
- Provide a holistic play-based learning program that supports the foundations of literacy, numeracy, creativity, information technology, sciences, critical thinking, problem solving and emotional and social wellbeing
- Strengthen a child's ability to be curious, think independently, explore ideas, make informed choices, collaborate with others and appreciate diversity
- Promote sustainable practices across both indoor and outdoor environments
- Keep children safe from harm; ensuring that children are safe, and that they feel secure in our care. We uphold and advocate for children's rights under the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.**
- Acknowledge our educational programs are child-centred and created alongside the interests and abilities of children as well as the latest research and theories
- All Birth - 12 years services are guided by the National Quality Framework (NQF)
- Our Community Preschools are guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Quality Framework (NQF)
- Our Out of School Hours Care Fun Clubs are guided by My Time, Our Place, the framework for school age care

The positive impact that well-grounded and vibrant early education and care has on a child's life is endless. It develops a child's ability to learn and retain information; it teaches them the importance of social inclusion; it supports the foundation that families are laying for the behavioural and emotional wellbeing for their child; and it provides role models that will positively impact children for years to come, possibly even a lifetime.



A Safe Environment For Your Child

At Big Fat Smile, creating a safe environment for children to grow, learn and play is our highest responsibility. We have developed best-practice policies and procedures and in all centres we uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Safeguarding children

We are committed to being a child safe organisation and embedding the NSW Child Safe Standards. We have a designated Safeguarding Children team to support child safety and wellbeing within the organisation.

Every employee is required to exercise their duty of care to children in our care and to act in their best interests.

Big Fat Smile has a code of conduct that outlines Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards of behaviour, professional expectations and professional boundaries for all of our staff in relation to their interactions with children, families, community and colleagues.

Our recruitment process sees all staff undergo an extensive screening and assessment process and all child related roles are required to have a Working with Children Check.

There is a zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards children and any breach of Child Protection Legislation. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and acted upon. If you or your child have concerns in relation to the conduct of a staff member towards a child please raise these through speaking with your Centre Director or through our Feedback email feedback@bigfatmile.com.au

We promote the wellbeing of children and protect them from harm.



For further information contact
our Include Me
team or visit
bigfatmile.com.au/include-me

We're Inclusive

What does this mean? It means we have a firm belief that every child has the right to participate in all areas of our Big Fat Smile community.

We Believe in Diversity and Inclusion

In alignment with the National Quality Standards, educators and teachers take into account all children's learning styles, differing abilities, gender, family circumstances, connections, and their social, cultural and linguistic diversity when planning our educational programs. Our services believe strongly in the inclusion of all children, viewing children as competent and capable learners, therefore, enabling them to access and participate in all aspects of our program across our birth-12 years services. Furthermore, we acknowledge Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children who have a mental or physical disability should receive specialised support and care so they are able to enjoy a full and decent life.

Our educators and teachers are committed to supporting and respecting multiple cultures, history and backgrounds, inclusive of First Nations People. Educators aim to support each child's sense of identity and foster relationships among families and community members, by accepting and respecting various cultural perspectives and differences and actively listening to children's voices.

Big Fat Smile also operates playgroups across the Illawarra that aim to meet the diverse needs of our children and families. We work in partnership with other agencies to provide opportunities for children and their parents/carers to regularly meet with an educator who provides supported play-based learning opportunities for children.



Time To Get Started

Let's get started on your child's early education and care journey!

Enrolment forms

It is a regulatory requirement that you complete all sections of this form, providing us with your latest contact details and all authorisations required. We need this detail before your child can attend the centre.

You will also need to have your child's birth certificate and current immunisation record, any current court orders and parenting plans handy at the time of enrolment.

We recommend booking a time with your Centre Director before your child starts, to share all of your enrolment information and step through the enrolment form together.

Your Centre Director can answer any of your questions at this stage and together you can make sure all those important boxes in the enrolment form are ticked.

Your authorised nominee

On your enrolment form you need to provide one or more authorised nominees. These are the people that you give permission to:

- collect your child;
- authorise your child to leave the service (eg- for an excursion or regular outing);
- be contacted in the case of an emergency;
- consent to medication and
- authorise transportation

Next to each nominee name you'll need to indicate for each of these permissions the level of authorisation you are allowing each nominee to have.

Authorising the Centre

Essentials

On your enrolment form we will also ask you to authorise your centre to provide important essentials to your child such as sunscreen, and for us to provide or access medical treatment in the case of an emergency.

Help us promote our services

In this section we also ask you to consider if you would permit your child to be part of any photos or videos that may be gathered during our opening hours at the centre. This

is for authorised use to promote our services to the community and future families through news stories, social media, marketing and promotional materials.

You can indicate your consent in the section indicated on your child's enrolment form. Please be aware that this consent does not have an expiry and will last for the duration of your child's time with us, unless you speak with the Centre Director to advise otherwise.

Thank you in advance for your support and assistance in helping us to keep our organisation running by promoting all the wonderful work we deliver to support our families and children in our communities.

Communicating a medical condition and/or a diagnosis

In order to deliver the best and tailored care for your child, it is important for you to tell us if they have any pre-existing medical conditions or diagnosis.

If your child has a medical condition such as anaphylaxis, diabetes, asthma or an allergy, you will need to meet with your Centre Director to ensure we are best prepared to meet your child's needs and to complete the required paperwork.

If your child has any diagnosed disability or special considerations that you believe educators need to be made aware of, please speak with us about this prior to enrolment.

Orientation

We have consulted our children to make sure we include the most important things in the orientation process and their feedback was that there's nothing like experiencing the centre in person. Please contact your Centre Director to make a time for an orientation visit before your child starts.

This is where you will tour the rooms and become familiar with the centre's processes for signing in and out, where to deliver your child when you drop them off, where to hang bags and more.

We encourage you and your child to make a play-date visit to your centre, to feel more comfortable and familiar with our educators, teachers and centre environment. By the time you arrive for your child's first day, you'll be ready to go!

What to pack



A sun safe hat such as a broad brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style



Closed in shoes (please note that thongs and crocs are not suitable)



Sun safe clothing that covers the shoulders



Children learn through play, please wear clothes that can get dirty. Also remember to pack spare clothes



Clearly label your child's name on all items that you bring to the centre



Drink bottle or sippy cup which we can replenish with water throughout the day

What to NOT pack

Valuables and sentimental items.

Medication - All medication must be provided to an educator/teacher

Toys, devices or aides containing button batteries - if required they must be provided to an educator/teacher

Big Fat Smile does not accept responsibility for any damaged or lost items while in our care.

The First Week

Everything you need to know about your first week

The first week is a big step for you and your child. A few nerves and jitters, some goodbye tears and tired eyes are all to be expected. It's normal!

We empathise with the excitement and nervousness that the first week can bring. It's a big week for a little person and their loved ones!

Our friendly staff are there to guide you and your child through the journey.

When you arrive

When you arrive for your first day, if you haven't already stepped through the sign in and sign out process on orientation, you will be stepped through this

You will also be provided any relevant codes to access the centre. For the safety and security of your child, and all the others that attend the centre, codes must not be shared with any unauthorised nominee.

Easing in

We find that most little ones are not used to big days. That's why we like to suggest, where possible, organising for your child to attend shorter days to start.

This will help them get used to us and the centre in short stints, making the transition smoother for many of them.

Please don't be alarmed if your child experiences some separation anxiety. We assure you that this is normal and something that many children go through as they adjust to time away from their parents in a centre environment for the first time.

Often the nature of separation anxiety is that it gets worse before it gets better. This may mean that your child transitions into the centre really smoothly for the first few days, but they start to

become upset in the days that follow.

All of our staff are very familiar with the nature of separation anxiety and are skilled at working with both children and families through these separation phases.

We encourage you to trust the guidance and advice of our experienced team.

Saying goodbye

Saying goodbye to your child when it's time to leave is often the hardest part of the day.

Some parents and carers choose to stay at the centre for a little while after drop off to see their child settle in by participating in an activity with them. When the time does come to say goodbye, we strongly encourage you to say goodbye once and leave. Returning multiple times because your child is upset often confuses them and leads to distress.

Rest assured, you will be contacted if your child has trouble settling. If you want to check in to see how your child is doing throughout the day, please call the centre and our staff will be happy to provide an update.

Rest time

Rest time is an important part of our day in the centres. It can also be the most intimidating time of day for some little ones who are not yet familiar with the noises, sounds and smells around them.

As a result, your child may not follow the same sleep patterns as they have at home, initially. Our staff will gather the detail of your child's routine and work to maintain this. However, in those first few weeks please be prepared for a few tired days as your child settles into a new and unfamiliar space.

Staff rotations at Long Day Care Centres

Big Fat Smile operates a number of long day care centres that are open up to 12-hours each day.

In order to meet our regulatory staffing requirements, our educators and teachers are rostered on early, middle and late shifts to cover the day. Therefore it is common that the educator or teacher that you leave your child with will not be the same one that you collect your child from.

Don't worry though. We have excellent communication methods in place to ensure that your important information is communicated across staff shift changes.

Attendance: arrival and departure

Each day you must sign your child in when you arrive and sign them out when you leave. We are required to maintain a record of the children in our care at all times. This record is also critically important in the case of an emergency.

We use a digital sign in and sign out system to monitor our children's in and out times. Each authorised nominee will use their phone number and personal PIN number to sign children in and

out. For the safety and security of your children and the centre, personal PIN numbers must not be shared.

Families are responsible for ensuring that their contact information, including information on authorised nominees, is kept up to date at all times.

Information sharing

Information sharing between you and your centre is so important.

Information goes in: We want to know all about your child, what is important to them, routines, likes, dislikes and strengths. If they are babies, we like to know the times of their bottles, rest times and food already introduced. For older children, this includes their rest schedule and the foods they do and don't like.

Information goes out: All of our centres provide daily information to our families including the times your child rested, the food and drink they had throughout the day and toileting/nappy changes. In your first week our centre staff will show you where you can find this information in the centre when you come to pick up your little one.

We exchange important details with you each day including food and drink, rest times and toileting/nappy changes

Keeping You Connected

Get ready for collaboration! We love to work in partnership with you, keeping you across your child's learning and development journey.

This includes:

- Regularly sharing updates of your child's development and how they are spending their days with us via our secure Kinderloop app;
- One on one discussions regarding your child's development, education or individual needs.
- Our regular parent survey where we ask for your honest feedback on what we're doing well and how we can improve.

You can ask your Centre Director how you can be more involved in the centre or within Big Fat Smile.

Kinderloop App

We understand the peace of mind that comes from receiving real-time updates on your child's day and what they are up to.

Kinderloop is our way of keeping our families updated on the progress and status of their little ones.

The app is compatible with any smart device or desktop computer via the Kinderloop web browser. Download it today to get the most out of your child's experience with Big Fat Smile.

Feedback

If you or your child have any feedback whether it be compliments or concerns you can contact us via [**feedback@bigfatmile.com.au**](mailto:feedback@bigfatmile.com.au)

Stay connected

There is so much happening across Big Fat Smile and we don't want you to miss a moment!

Stay connected with all that we are doing via our website and social media:

[**www.bigfatmile.com.au**](http://www.bigfatmile.com.au)

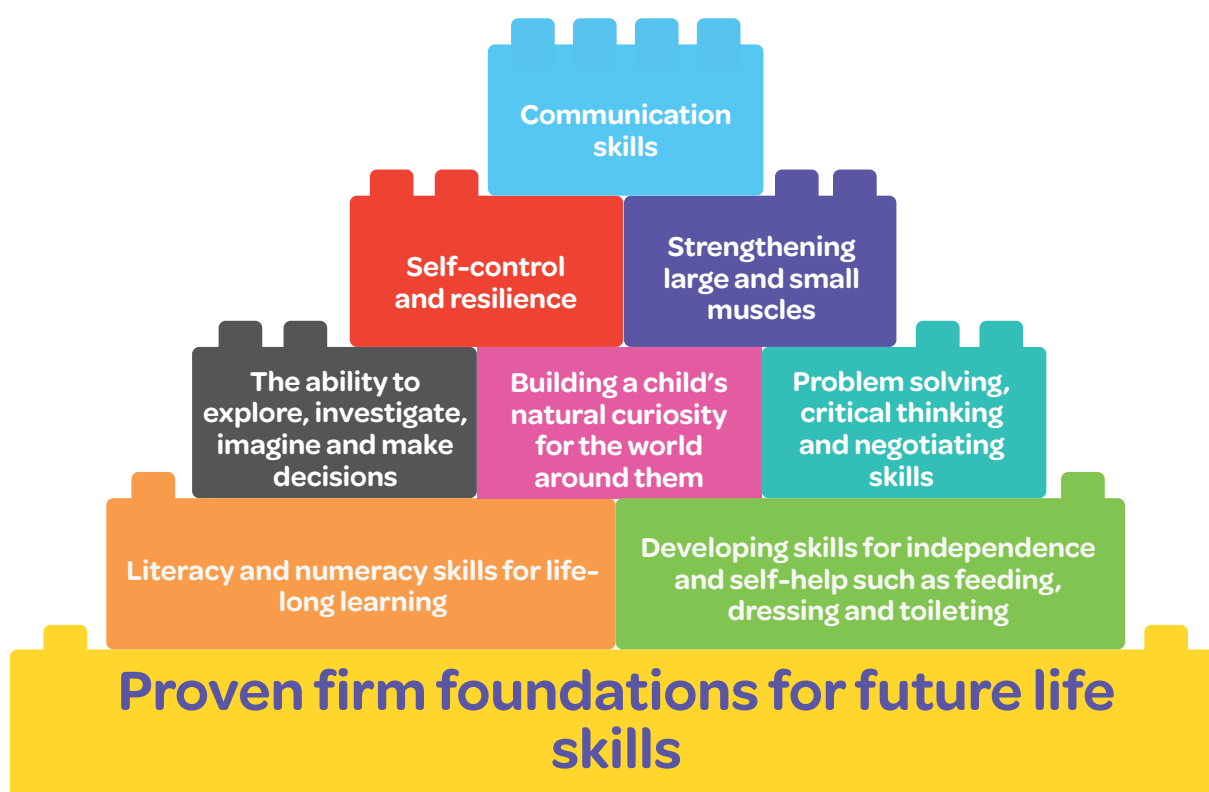


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[**instagram/big_fat_smile**](https://instagram.com/big_fat_smile)





Learning in Action

Cast your memory back to your fondest moments at preschool and you'll find the time spent playing is often the most memorable. Much research in recent years has confirmed that time spent playing is actually a crucial part of a child's learning and development.

We call this play-based learning which has been described as the 'work of children'. That is, when children are engaging in our experiences in both our indoor or outdoor environment, it is more than simply 'playing'; they are learning important skills for their future.

Our Big Fat Smile educators understand how important play-based learning is. They follow the National Learning Framework (called the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for birth-5 age children and My Time Our Place (MTOP) for school age care) to provide guidance and support in this learning process, by actively engaging with children through a range of age appropriate play experiences.

Our approach to learning and play-based experiences will ensure your child has endless opportunities to develop their emotional, social, cognitive, language and physical abilities, that will benefit them in their early years and support them as they move through school and adult life.

Excursions and Regular Outings

Children learn from experience, and excursions are a valuable part of many Big Fat Smile programs. We focus on planning to make the most of the experience whilst ensuring the safety of all those involved. We require your written consent for your child to attend excursions and regular outings.

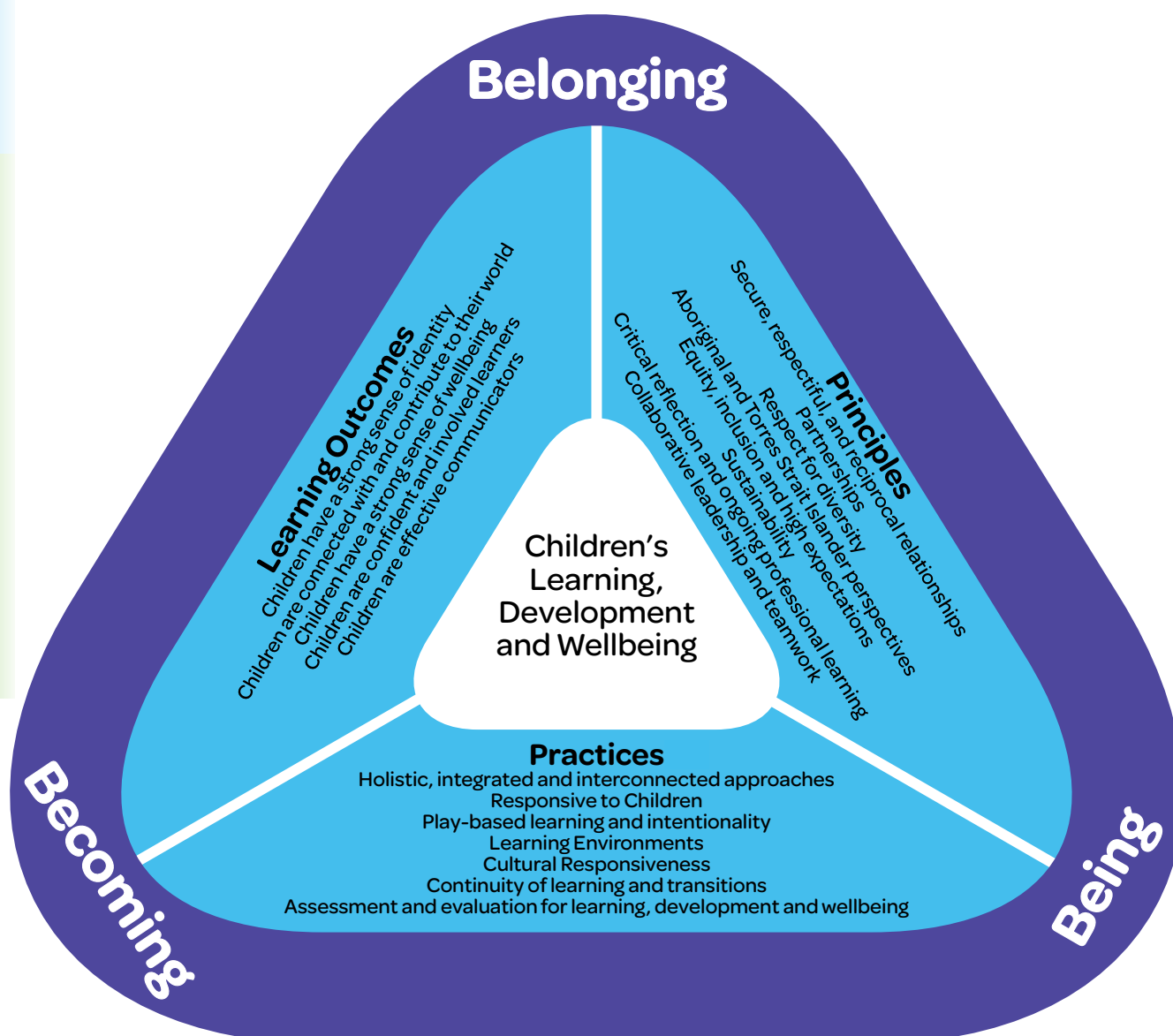


Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) in Australia provides a holistic and play-based approach to early childhood education, emphasizing children's learning and development through their unique interests, strengths, and social interactions.

Elements of the Early Years Learning Framework

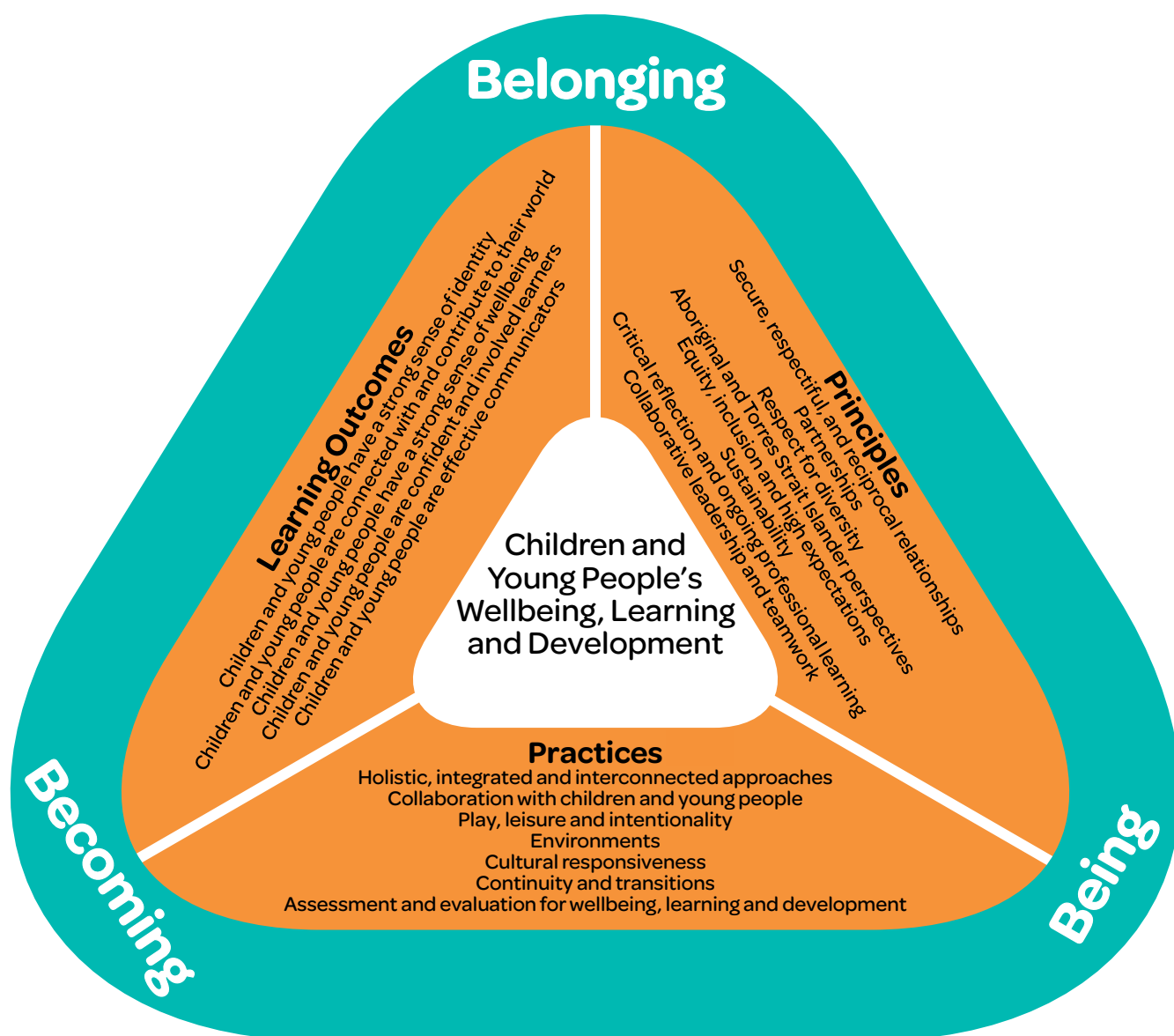
This diagram shows the integrated connections of the Vision, Principles, practices and Learning Outcomes the centre on children's learning, development and wellbeing. Belonging, Being and Becoming overlap all these elements.





Elements of the Framework for School Age Care

This figure is a diagram showing the relationship between outcomes, principles and practice which centres on children's learning. The three themes of Belonging, Being and Becoming are included, thereby overlapping all of these elements.





Constant talking, singing, reading and giving cuddles develop early language and social skills

How Babies Learn (Birth-2 Year Olds)

Babies are learning from the moment they are born! Babies learn by engaging all of their senses including sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. That's why a play-based learning environment that enables babies to actively engage with the world and stimulate all of their senses is critically important in their early years of development.

In our baby's rooms we use a wide variety of play-based learning experiences to engage with them. This includes activities such as giving them objects to hold to develop their motor skills, playing games such as 'peek-a-boo' to develop their cognitive skills, and supervised tummy time to develop movement control by strengthening their little necks, heads and muscles.

At Big Fat Smile, we have our adult-to-child staffing ratios to ensure all of our babies receive the attention and care they need.

Our educators and teachers will also regularly communicate with and provide physical and emotional reassurance to your babies. This stimulates their rapidly growing and developing minds as they hear words, and it assists in building social bonds with others as they feel loved and secure in their environment. These positive and nurturing social interactions will develop early language and social skills as educators constantly talk, sing, read to and cuddle them.

Sleep is essential for babies to refuel. Our teams will work with you to understand your baby's sleeping requirements and work to meet this schedule.

Nutrition is the other vital piece of your baby's development, and our educators understand the importance of providing good nutrition for your baby to support their growth and development. Our centres also support breastfeeding mothers.

How Toddlers Learn (2-3 Year Olds)

When children are two to three years old they are rapidly learning to navigate emotions, enjoying the ability and freedom to move about more, and starting to speak and use language to interact with the people around them.

At Big Fat Smile, our educators and teachers are familiar with the nature of these huge transformations that your toddler is experiencing. Our sector leading centre environments and education approach for our 2 to 3 year olds have been designed to nurture this.

Toddlers naturally start looking for a greater level of independence. Our educators and teachers support this by giving children the opportunity to practise a greater level of independence, contributing to the development of their self-esteem, identity and wellbeing.

Our toddlers enjoy both indoor and outdoor spaces and are given the freedom to make their own choices as to where they play and to practise self-help. This boosts their confidence, their ability to make decisions and to think critically, while supporting them as they become more independent learners.

You will find a variety of safe learning spaces for our 2 to 3 year olds such as a sand pit, construction area, a writing and craft area and more.

Even though your toddler's social skills are developing, sharing is still a foreign concept to them. Children generally want to play alongside other children and our educators support your child in fostering friendships with others. We introduce your child to new children through exercises such as music and movement, drama, meal times and small group activities.

In addition to their major emotional, mental and social growth, toddlers are also physically growing at a rapid rate. That is why we work to provide positive eating experiences for your child with tasty, nutritious meals.

Safe learning spaces such as a sand pit, construction area, a writing and craft area and more

A young child with dark hair, wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, is focused on painting a colorful mask. The mask is made of a transparent material and is held in place by a metal frame. The child is using a wooden stick to apply paint. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be an outdoor setting.

Offering new challenges fostered through play-based experiences such as gardening, cooking and woodwork

How Preschoolers Learn (3-5 Year Olds)

Children who are three to five years old are starting to grow their own unique and often big personalities. They naturally begin to share and cooperate with other children as they become more socially and emotionally aware.

The next step for your growing little one is preparing them for big school. All of Big Fat Smile's educational programs for this age group feature school readiness programs to prepare your children for that next big step!

At this age and stage, play-based learning continues to be as important as ever. Play is how 3 to 5 year old children learn complex social behaviours and develop higher levels of cognitive, literacy and numeracy skills.

At this stage your child learns how to understand other people's perspectives, develop resilience and begin exploring the concepts of maths and science.

With this higher-level development well and truly underway, our educators and teachers understand that children need to be challenged and given the opportunity to try new and more difficult work. This is fostered through play-based experiences such as gardening, cooking and coding.

Our educators and teachers follow programs and create activities that support your child's wellbeing and positive mental health, stimulate their literacy learning and further develop their motor skills. Activities like role playing and fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, hopping, skipping, throwing and catching are commonplace in our 3 to 5 year old programs.

Transition To School Program

The big step to big school is an exciting milestone on your child's learning and development journey.

School transition is an important stage and significant change in your child's learning environment and day-to-day lifestyle.

Our transition to school educational programs are designed to equip children to successfully transition into Kindergarten leading to positive academic outcomes, indicating:

- social and emotional development
- concentration
- language abilities
- self-regulated learning and independence lead to positive academic outcomes.

Our play-based programs, provide a range of learning opportunities for children to explore, investigate and pursue their interests. Our educators and teachers extend children's learning by encouraging children to hypothesise, solve problems, think laterally and participate in rich conversations. An early learning environment that supports a quality transition to school program will include a variety of learning spaces.

Activities include:

- **Dramatic play** – expressing their emotions and dealing with conflict in an appropriate way, taking turns and communicating with others verbally and non-verbally;
- **Construction, puzzles and science-based activities** – develops problem-solving ability and encourages a healthy curiosity;
- **Literacy learning** – such as letter recognition, reading and listening skills integral to kindergarten education;
- **Physical activities** – develop muscles, coordination, stability, agility and balance;
- **Independence and self-help skills** – such as dressing themselves and unpacking their own lunch box.
- **Group and project work** – promotes investigation, team work, concentration and leadership.

Our educators and teachers work hard to build positive connections with local schools to further assist our families in this transition-to-school process by creating connections and open lines of communication.

Speak with your Centre Director and staff if you have any questions or concerns about your child starting primary school. We can support you to reduce the isolation that can be felt by some families during this time.

Our Illawarra based centres utilise The Illawarra Transition to School Program that has been operating since 2005. It is funded by The NSW Government and managed by Big Fat Smile.

Together we will work to give your little one the most positive transition as they take this big step.



Fun Clubs (School Aged Children)

Preparing kids for life and beyond... We partner with you by offering before school, after school and school holiday care for your child.

Our Fun Clubs provide sector leading early education and care for children aged 5-12 years.

100% of our Fun Clubs are rated as exceeding and meeting the National Quality Standard.

Our safe learning environments encourage your child to build their confidence and create a greater sense of belonging.

We are strong advocates for school aged children's right to recreation and play, and the continuing importance of focusing on social and emotional development in this age group. Therefore our fun and creative curriculum includes activities such as drama, cooking, STEM, creative and visual arts, photography and dance. Structured planned sport sessions help to meet your child's daily physical activity needs.

Our healthy menus and serving style are co-designed through our research partnership with the University of Wollongong to develop healthy eating habits.

Homework support is available to help support your child's education.

Our Fun Club Educators...

- are dedicated, committed and passionate
- are professional and regularly trained
- are quality-achievers
- have a team approach
- have Working with Children Checks
- child to staff ratios at or above the sector standard

Fun Club Directors prepare a unique program for each school holiday period including on-site activities and off-site excursions.

Centre-based activities may include discos, treasure hunts, art workshops, sports tournaments and cultural days. Off-site excursions include destinations like movies, ten pin bowling, local parks, and local amusement services.

Visit our website for more information on our locations and their feeder schools, including supervised drop off and/or pickup transport service as well as our before and after school care and current school holiday programs.

bigfatmile.com.au/fun-club

1300 002 137

Fees

In this section you will find information about fees and payments.

Big Fat Smile is a not-for-profit, community owned organisation. Each year our Board reviews our fees and budgets, and these fee policies apply to all of our centres. While every effort is made to maintain fees at the lowest possible levels, fees may increase during the course of the year to meet unanticipated costs.

Weekly Statements

Each week we will send you a Statement via email before your weekly direct debit, to ensure that, where applicable, the correct Child Care Subsidy has been applied to your account.

Please check these Statements to ensure all payment details are correct and accurate. If there are any issues, please contact your Client Engagement Consultant right away.

Payment of fees

Big Fat Smile facilitates the following methods of payment for your fees each week:

- Direct debit from your nominated bank account or credit card; and
- Centrepay through Centrelink.

Direct debits are deducted each Friday.

Please keep this in mind and ensure there are sufficient funds in your account to cover this weekly payment.

Other payment options may be available to you upon written request. Please speak with your Client Engagement Consultant regarding additional options.

Fee reductions: Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

If you have a child enrolled in one of our Community Preschools or Fun Clubs you may be eligible for the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy.

It is the responsibility of each parent or guardian to follow the procedures set by Services Australia to apply for and/or vary their Child Care Subsidy.

This Subsidy is passed on to families by Big Fat Smile through a reduction in fees. The remaining 'gap fee' is payable directly by families to Big Fat Smile.

To be eligible for a reduction in fees through CCS you need to provide us with your Centrelink Customer Reference Number/s and dates of birth for both you and your child. You must then confirm the child care agreement through your MyGov account to receive this subsidy.

We are not able to pass on a fee reduction until your CCS is formally approved by Centrelink and you have approved the child care agreement through your MyGov account.

At Big Fat Smile, we understand that these things can be overwhelming and complex to start with. We have a dedicated Client Engagement team to assist you and we also encourage you to seek help through the Centrelink Family and Parents line by calling 136 150.



Attendance blocks

Big Fat Smile has the option for children enrolled in our long day care centres to select "Attendance Blocks", if their entitled hours are less than the hours their child attends. Please discuss with our Client Engagement Team whether attendance blocks will benefit your family.

Further assistance with fees

If you have any questions regarding your fees, or need assistance, please contact our Client Engagement team on 1300 002 237 or via email at clientengagement@bigfatmile.com.au

Procedures for overdue accounts

It is important that all fees are paid on time. As a not-for-profit, community owned organisation, your fees cover essential costs such as centre food for meals, rents, educator's salaries right through to nappies and sun cream.

Late payment fees:

14 days overdue: \$25 late fee

21 days overdue: An additional \$25 late fee, your child's care may be suspended and an additional bond will be requested.

In situations where families are experiencing genuine hardship, please speak with your Client Engagement Consultant as we will make every effort to work with those who have overdue accounts. We can look to negotiate a Payment Plan Agreement to bring your account up to date within a reasonable period.

Holding deposit

A non-refundable holding deposit per child is payable when accepting a position. Holding deposits will be forfeited if the required notice period is not provided to cancel or change your booking. Holding deposits are transferred to a bond once your child begins care.

This bond will be returned once your child finishes at the centre providing your account is paid in full and the required notice period is given. Please note EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) is the only method available for processing return bonds.

Big Fat Smile reserves the right to charge an additional bond to any family whose account falls more than 21 days in arrears.

Additional Fees

The following additional fees may be charged.

Late collection fees: If a child remains in a Centre after closing time, the following fees will be charged to your account:

- \$25 administration fee
- A 'late collection of children fee' charged at the rate of \$1 per minute per child for the first 10-minutes, increasing to \$3 per minute thereafter

Late collection fees will be added to your account and must be paid within 14 days.

Direct debit rejection fee: Our direct debit service is provided by a third party called Fat Zebra. Please note that Fat Zebra may levy their own fees and charges for unsuccessful payments, as per the terms of the Direct Debit Agreement.

Public Holiday Fees

While the Christmas closure period remains fee-free, Big Fat Smile will charge fees on public holidays throughout the year to comply with government funding regulations. Although our centres will be closed on these days, families eligible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will continue to receive it. Public holidays will be counted as absences in your child's CCS record, with up to 42 absence days permitted per financial year without requiring evidence.

Fun Club operating days

For our Out of School Hours Care Fun Clubs, fees will be charged for all gazetted school term days.

School Holiday Care is available on public school pupil free days at most of our Fun Clubs.

However, Big Fat Smile will charge fees on days when schools are closed due to industrial action.

Refunds

Big Fat Smile will only provide refunds if we are

unable to offer care on a day when your child is ordinarily enrolled.

Refunds will not be provided where a child does not attend on a day for which they are enrolled.

Attendance: explanation of absences

Big Fat Smile's Long Day Care centres are part of the Australian Government funding system. The Government requires us to maintain an accurate record of all child absences from our care.

Child Care Subsidy will be paid for up to 42 unexplained absences per child each financial year. Additional absent days will be charged at full fee, unless otherwise approved by the Government (documentary evidence is accepted to support additional absences).

Attendance: Notification of absence from after school care – Fun Clubs

It is important for you to notify your Centre director as soon as possible if your child will be absent from After School Care and mark them absent in the KT connect app.

It takes significant time for our educators to locate children who do not attend After School Care as planned. As such, a fee of \$20.00 will be charged where a parent or guardian fails to let the centre

know if their child will be absent.

Changing or ceasing enrolment

Notice of changing or ceasing enrolment is to be given in writing to the Nominated Supervisor or Client Engagement Consultant and will be processed by the Client Engagement Consultant. Increasing days of enrolment should be requested directly through the Nominated Supervisor.

To cease enrolment or reduce days, four weeks written notice is required. Occasional care bookings, including during vacation care, may be cancelled with 24 hours' notice. Bookings cancelled inside the 24 hours' notice period will be charged to the account holder. These notice periods apply from the 1st of February, 2026.

Fees will be charged for all booked days during the

applicable notice period, whether the sessions are attended or not..

Starting or ending care with an absence

The Family Assistance Legislation prevents us from applying the Child Care Subsidy to absences at the start and end of an enrolment.

This means that Big Fat Smile must charge full fees for the following days if your child does not attend the centre:

- The first booked day(s) of their enrolment; and/or
- The last booked day(s) of their enrolment (including during a four-week notice period).

Following recent changes to the Family Assistance Legislation, an enrolment will be automatically 'ended' by the Government if it remains unused for fourteen weeks or more. This means that regulations relating to absences at the start and end of an enrolment will also apply in the following circumstances:

- If your child ONLY attends a School Holiday Service and is absent on the first or last booked days of care during a holiday period; and
- If your child is enrolled with Big Fat Smile on a casual basis and does not attend the centre for a period of fourteen weeks or more.

Care for children starting primary school

If your child is enrolled at one of our Long Day Care Centres or Term Only Community Preschools, their enrolment will cease at the end of December each year.

If your child is starting primary school but requires care in January, we encourage you to consider enrolling your child at one of our School Holiday Care services. Please contact your Centre Director to explore this option further.

Alternatively, if you wish to remain in our preschool we can assess this based on availability of short term places at the centre your child has been attending.

Food Facts

Preparing and serving delicious and nutritious food for your children is something we love doing!

Our cooks, educators and teachers enjoy exploring ways to expand your child's palate while ensuring they get all the important nutrients that their little bodies need to grow strong and healthy.

Our on-site cooks (Long Day Care services only) follow government guidelines to ensure the meals they prepare meet the dietary requirements for all of our children. We ensure our servings meet the standards for a child's size across dairy, carbohydrates and meats. These guidelines set out the amount of times red meat, white meat and vegetarian food should be on the menu.

For those children attending our Long Day Care services, we are required to provide them with 50% of their recommended daily food intake. To meet this requirement, our Long Day Care services are careful in planning your child's meals.

All of our menus across our centres are reviewed externally to ensure all dietary requirements are met.

Fun Clubs

In our school-aged Fun Clubs we provide breakfast during Before School Care and afternoon tea in our After School Care program, from menus designed with our children. A menu is prepared in advance and available for both parents and children to view. Breakfast, morning and afternoon tea are provided during our school holiday programs, parents just need to supply a healthy lunch and drink.

Special dietary requirements, allergies and medical conditions

We cater to all the dietary needs of children enrolled at Big Fat Smile.

We recognise how important it is to know

the unique food and medical requirements of every child and we will work with you to understand what these are. We follow food and medical management plans and requests from families based on cultural beliefs and personal preference.

Please discuss your child's special dietary requirements, allergies and any medical conditions with your Centre Director. All medical action plans must be provided by your GP along with up to date medications prior to, or on your child's first day. All medications and medical action plans must be updated as per the expiry and review date.



What happens if your child gets sick.

Health and medical exclusion

The safety, wellbeing and care of your child is our highest priority! We are committed to creating a healthy environment through appropriate care and attention in the case of an incident, injury or illness.

Big Fat Smile has a thorough Illness Policy in place, that follows the requirements set out by the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Families can request a copy of this policy from our centre staff who are very familiar with the policies and procedures that it sets out. Our educators regularly refer to “Staying Healthy in Childcare” to stay up to date with medical conditions and their requirements. Educators are also in regular contact with external authorities such as the public Health Unit.

What to do if your child is sick

To ensure the health and safety of all of our Big Fat Smile children, we request that if your child is ill, suffering from an infectious disease or a condition that prevents them from reasonable participation in our centre’s program, that they stay home. It is required to inform us if you are administering medication to your child prior to arriving at the service. Please note; administration of panadol or nurophen prior to attending our services may mask symptoms and place children at risk.

Where an infectious occurrence arises, our centre staff will contact you as soon as possible. Similarly, we ask families to inform the centre if your child is suffering from an infectious disease as soon as possible.

If you are unsure what classifies as an infectious disease or condition requiring your child to stay at home, please refer to the centre’s list of infections and conditions requiring exclusion, sourced from the National Health and Medical Research Council. This list also sets out the

length of time that your child should remain absent from the centre, depending on their condition or illness.

Please note that families will continue to pay fees during any absence due to illness or exclusion. If you require more information please speak with your Centre Director.

Immunisation

The Public Health Act 2010 requires all families to provide an AIR Immunisation History Statement upon enrolment, to demonstrate that your child is up to date for their age with their scheduled vaccinations. From 1 January 2018, Directors of Centres cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided an approved immunisation form that shows that the child:

- is fully immunised for their age, or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated, or
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if the child has fallen behind with their immunisations.

All of this documentation needs to be provided to your centre prior to your child’s starting day.

It is the responsibility of our Centre Directors to inform you of any outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease. Similarly, if you have discovered a disease of this nature in your family, you need to let your Centre Director know immediately.

If your child attends another centre on alternative days, and a disease of this nature has been detected in that centre, we also ask you inform your Big Fat Smile Centre Director of this immediately.

Where a case of a vaccine preventable disease is detected and/or reported at the centre, Big Fat Smile is required by law to inform NSW Health. As a result, NSW Health may advise that you need to exclude your child from the centre for a period of time if your child is not currently immunised.

Fees are payable during these periods away from the centre.

Safeguarding Children

At Big Fat Smile, we embed child safe practices across all of our environments, service types and programs.

We are a child safe organisation. We take a whole of organisation approach towards creating and embedding a child safe culture, environment and practices for all children, across all service types and programs.

Our Comprehensive Child Safe Framework Integrates:

Our comprehensive Child Safe Framework encompasses and extends upon the mandatory requirements for organisations under the NSW Child Safe Scheme and we uphold our legal and duty of care responsibilities to report to external agencies where concerns of abuse and neglect are identified.

Our Child Safe Framework incorporates:

- A child safe culture reflected through our Board Charter, Code of Conduct, strategic plan, and vision and values
- The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards through our Child Safe Organisation Plan, and individual Service Child Safe Action Plans
- An integrated Child Safety Risk & Compliance Framework
- Child Safe Policies and Procedures across recruitment & screening, feedback and complaints handling, operations, and child protection
- Professional Child Safe Learning Plan
- Advocacy Principles and Plan to advocate for all children and families and build capacity within the sector in regard to child safety
- A dedicated Safeguarding Children Team.

Our Approach

Our Educational programs includes our approach to ensuring children's rights are respected and upheld, and intentional teaching focuses on empowering children to know their rights, engage in protective behaviours and to seek help from trusted adults.

Zero Tolerance

There is a zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards children and any breach of the Child Protection laws. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and acted upon.

If you or your child have concerns in relation to the conduct of a staff member towards a child please raise these through speaking with your Centre Director or through our feedback email:

feedback@bigfatasmile.com.au



Incident and Injury Procedures / Insurance

What will happen if your child is hurt

At Big Fat Smile, our teams are trained and our centres are designed to minimise the likelihood of accidents and injury as much as possible.

However, it is impossible to completely safeguard children from all accidents and injuries. Through the nature of play, exploration and adventure, it is possible for children to hurt themselves.

The thought of this is as awful to us as it is to you, but at Big Fat Smile we are prepared! Our teams are well trained to deliver first aid to a child in the case of an injury, however staff will respond accordingly and call an ambulance if the situation requires it.

We also ensure that, at all times, an educator or teacher with a First Aid, asthma, anaphylaxis and CPR qualification is on shift at all of our centres and on excursions.

Where a minor injury does happen, our staff will apply first aid and complete a record of the incident. You will be notified and we'll ask you to sign an injury form.

Where a child has hurt their head, our staff may give you a courtesy call to advise of the injury and then continue to keep a close eye on your child throughout the day.

If an injury or incident is serious and our staff believe that urgent medical attention is needed, we will contact you as soon as possible following the incident. We may ask you to come and collect your child and take them for medical treatment. Where we believe an ambulance is required, we will call for one.

Where you or your nominated contacts cannot collect your child within 30-minutes we may call an ambulance. Where 30-minutes has passed, we will contact you once more to determine your estimated arrival time. If it is not within a few minutes we may call an ambulance.

If we call an ambulance you could meet the ambulance at the centre or go directly to the

hospital. If you choose to meet your child at the hospital, one of our staff will accompany your child in the ambulance.

While at the hospital or doctors we ask that you obtain a letter outlining the diagnosis and treatment. This needs to be given to the centre before your child's next attendance.

Centres are regulated by the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations which require all serious injuries and incidents to be reported to the Regulatory Authority. We will inform you of this when a serious injury or incident occurs. In these circumstances you may be contacted by a Manager from Big Fat Smile and you may also be contacted by a Field Officer from the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate. All serious incidents are assessed internally by the Big Fat Smile compliance teams and the WHS Risk Manager.

What if an Ambulance is called

Big Fat Smile does not provide ambulance cover for your child. If an ambulance is called for your child, we require families to claim the cost of the ambulance transport on their private health fund or health care card. In the case where families do not have these types of cover, please speak to your Centre Director.

Big Fat Smile does not provide personal accident cover for your child.

Public Liability Insurance

Big Fat Smile has a public liability insurance policy that covers the cost of damages where a person is injured and/or property is damaged for which Big Fat Smile is found to be legally liable by a court or insurance settlement.

Advocacy

As an organisation, Big Fat Smile prides itself on sectorial leadership and high-quality early

education and care. Moreover, we pride ourselves on our ongoing commitment to advocating for the evolving needs of our families. This includes liaising with governing bodies and political leaders at local, state and federal level, campaigning and advising for outcomes and policy changes to help meet

the needs of our families. We actively engage with and ask families to speak with us regarding areas of concerns relating to access, affordability and legislation within education and care and utilise our families voices and stories to lobby both State and Federal government for positive change.

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

What happens if there is an emergency at the Centre

As part of our strong commitment to safety, our highly experienced staff follow our policies and procedures on what to do should an emergency occur in the centre.

Evacuation procedures are displayed at the centre and we also make sure that the children are familiar with these procedures and able to act upon them quickly if an emergency situation were to ever arise.

We practise these emergency and evacuation drills regularly. During these drills our staff will simulate a range of emergency situations so all children know exactly what to do in an emergency.

If a real emergency were to occur at the centre, our staff would promptly guide the children through the appropriate emergency and evacuation procedure and immediately contact the relevant emergency service(s). This scenario may require children and staff to leave the centre and move to a safe meeting point or venue nearby. In the case of a real emergency, families will be notified by centre staff.

Big Fat Smile Education and Care Services Operations Manual

Our staff are required to adhere to all our policies and procedures. Our policies are regularly reviewed in consultation with Directors, educators, relevant external sources and most importantly, with our children and their families. The Big Fat Smile Education and Care Services Operations Manual can be found at all of our centres. All families are encouraged to view the manual in their centre and provide feedback on it. At Big Fat Smile, children's voices are important to us and we include these voices in policy reviews, service procedure reviews, service philosophy and our educational vision. Upon enrolment, all children attending our pre-schools and Fun Clubs will receive a children's orientation handbook.

Big Fat Smile Privacy Policy

Big Fat Smile respects the privacy of our children and families and has policies in place to ensure the protection of their information.

We also comply with our obligations under the Privacy Act 1988 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW).

Our privacy policies outline how we collect and store private information to meet the legislative requirements that we must adhere to. These

policies include our Privacy Policy; Data Breach Response Plan; Confidentiality, Intellectual Property and Information Security Policy; and our Internet, Mobile Device, Email and Social Media Use Policy.

Should you wish to receive information about any one of these policies, or have some questions relating to privacy, please contact our Privacy Officer on **(02) 4283 9900** or by emailing privacy@bigfatmile.com.au.

Notes

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The background of the image consists of nine vertical stripes of equal width, each a different color from the rainbow spectrum. From left to right, the colors are: purple, teal, magenta, light blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. The stripes are solid and vibrant.

Big Fat Smile

bigfatsmile.com.au