

SERVICE DETAILS

Service Name	Service Approval Number
Milestone Child Care and Kindergarten	SE-00004788
Primary Contacts at Service	
Alyssa Wright - Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor	Lisa Pollard - Second-in-Charge/Certified Supervisor
Physical Location of Service	Physical Location Contact Details
<p>Street: 372-374 Maroondah Highway</p> <p>Suburb: Croydon North</p> <p>State: Victoria</p> <p>Postcode: 3136</p>	<p>Telephone: 03 9727 4414</p> <p>Email: milestonekinder@bigpond.com</p>
Approved Provider	Nominated Supervisor
<p>Primary Contact: Colin Sann</p> <p>Telephone: 0419 307 365</p> <p>Mobile: 0419 307 365</p> <p>Email: colinsann@bigpond.com</p>	<p>Name: Alyssa Wright</p> <p>Telephone: 03 9727 4414</p> <p>Email: milestonekinder@bigpond.com</p>
Postal Address	Educational Leader
<p>Street: 67 South Road</p> <p>Suburb: Brighton</p> <p>State: Victoria</p> <p>Postcode: 3186</p>	<p>Name: Anu Kaushik</p> <p>Telephone: 03 9727 4414</p> <p>Email: toddlerroom@live.com</p>

OPERATING HOURS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SERVICE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Opening Time	7:00am	7:00am	7:00am	7:00am	7:00am	CLOSED	CLOSED
Closing Time	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm	CLOSED	CLOSED

Parking is out the front. We have a family car park and a staff car park, as well as parking in our service lane. The centre is only closed on Victorian gazetted public holidays and weekends.

6 weeks - 14 months Nursery

1 - 2 years Toddlers

2 - 3 years Pre-Kinder

32 months - 4 years Kinder

4-6 years Pre-School

Nominated Supervisor, Alyssa Wright

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Play Based Learning Program

At Milestone, we believe that play is a vital component in the development of all children which is why we follow a play based learning program. The implementation of an indoor/outdoor program has given children the freedom to decide where they wish to play regardless of weather. We value outdoor play and think of our indoor and outdoor environments as one whole space rather than separate areas. Through the provision of a wide range of materials, children have the opportunity to explore and extend on their learning and experiences. We believe in letting the children play without interruption from adults and encourage them to take risks and make their own choices.

High Expectations for Children

We pride ourselves on having high expectations on what children can achieve. Every child at Milestone is viewed as a capable and active contributor to their own learning. We allow children to make choices and inspire them to engage in risky play. Children are provided with many opportunities to demonstrate their independence and are encouraged to further extend on their skills throughout their day. We allow the children to regulate their own play while also encouraging them to respect their environment and others.

Inclusive Environment

At Milestone, we respect all cultures and believe in unity in diversity. The centre challenges stereotypes surrounding gender bias, culture, age and ability. We believe that the cultural blend of families in our community has a positive effect on our centre via the opportunity to explore these cultures through experiences and celebrations. Our team is committed to providing an environment that is inclusive for every child and family at the centre.

High Quality Relationships

The development of high quality relationships with children and families is of the utmost importance at our centre. We aim to provide a home-like environment that is warm, friendly and nurturing. We work closely with families to foster collaborative relationships that will assist children to achieve quality outcomes. We believe that a working partnership between families and We is beneficial to the ongoing development of each child. Families are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the centre's operations and are invited to participate in all events. Our families have identified communication as being of the highest standard. We endeavour to act on concerns raised by families quickly and efficiently.

Committed Educators

We are proud to provide warm, affectionate, dedicated and compassionate educators who are available to children & families when required. We feel that our team is one big, happy family who are devoted to continuously evolving in the early childhood field. All of our educators work collaboratively to improve practice and relationships through team meetings, reflection and professional development. They are excited and open to change, show a thirst for knowledge, and are proactive in providing children with engaging play spaces. The relationships we foster with our families and the local community is of the highest priority.

Connected to the World

Our centre is committed to embedding sustainability within our daily practices. We encourage children to be environmentally responsible and engage them in many sustainable practices such as recycling and maintaining edible gardens. We provide play environments, both indoors and out, that allow children to explore a multitude of natural materials. We aspire to build many meaningful relationships within our local community and regularly utilise social media as a more sustainable and effective way of staying connected.

QUALITY AREA ONE - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

Our programs are flexible and include children's interests and spontaneous experiences following observations and critical reflections. We record observations to seek information about each child's areas of interest and level of skill development. This information is used to build upon current skills, are the foundations for planning, and are assessed and modified as required. Different observation techniques provide a wide range of learning through photos, note taking, checklists, family conversations, artworks and children's voices. Developmental milestone checklists are used throughout the year along with observations. Each child has their own portfolio that is added to throughout the year. Portfolios are accessible to children, educators and families and they are encouraged to view these portfolios at any time and add to them if they wish. Portfolios can contain a mixture of observations, artwork, photographs, developmental checklists, and input from families.

We provide a mix of child-led experiences and intentional teaching activities in their programs. We allow for children's ideas and not solely their specific interests. Intentional teaching moments are provided to extend on child/children interests and to introduce them to different topics such as community, culture, science, technology etc. as well as providing them with new ways of learning. The program provides a balance of child interest/child focus, intentional teaching, family and community input, and routine times. Self-help and independence is encouraged during experiences and routines.

Each room follows an ongoing monthly cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating for their programs and each child's individual observations. Room leaders utilise information recorded on plans and observations to write up a program and provide experiences for the children. Room leaders are given extended planning time to help them to plan high quality programs. All educators in the room are also given planning time throughout the week so they are regularly contributing to each child's learning and development. It also provides them with opportunities to include their ideas in the program. The children progress through each room according to their development and willingness to move up. Transitions into new rooms are supported by detailed conversations between rooms, ensuring the new team knows all about the child's individual needs, goals, interests and routines. When the plan is assessed, each child's extension of learning is supported and set up in the room.

We ensure that the play-based curriculum we are providing covers all developmental outcomes and encourages children to reach their full potential. Through the use of a variety of observation mediums, we provide rich and meaningful programs that contribute to each child's learning and development. Older children are given the opportunity to discuss with us what they would like provided to them. We believe in encouraging children's independence in making their own choices about their learning. We support children in making these decisions through conversations, observations, routines and learning opportunities throughout the day.

Experiences and activities provided in the program are purposeful and meaningful to children. We extend on or modify programs and experiences as necessary and allow children to guide how they explore them. Programs run monthly allowing children adequate time to explore the setups and master skills. It also ensures that children who attend on 1-2 days per week or have been away due to illness or absence are also provided enough time to explore and challenge themselves. Children who attend more frequently are given even more opportunities to master skills and experiences are modified to keep them interested.

Each room follows a flexible indoor/outdoor daily routine and we ensure that each child's needs are being fulfilled throughout the day. We are very proud of our indoor/outdoor all-weather program and are regularly sharing the benefits of the program with families and the community. Room routines are organised in a way that provides children with long uninterrupted periods of unstructured play which is another value we hold. Children are encouraged to participate in small and large group experiences and help us with daily tasks, but are given the opportunity to keep playing if they wish to do so. One-on-one, small group and whole group play experiences are conducted throughout the day to provide children with collaborative learning opportunities. These can be pre-planned or spontaneous. Programs include all developmental areas and allow children multiple opportunities to maximise their learning.

Planning is done on room iPads to ensure sustainability. Only necessary documentation is printed. The centre has wi-fi throughout the entire service so we can access the internet at all times for planning and teachable moments. We use Facebook groups, Facebook messenger and emails to communicate with families. We share frequent photo and video updates and speak with families as a group and also one-on-one, providing them with information about the program and how they can provide input and feedback.

QUALITY AREA ONE - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

Our educational program and practice consistently aligns with our *Centre Philosophy*. Our indoor/outdoor, play-based program and multi-age grouping opportunities are the basis of the entire centre's daily routine. The philosophy was developed over a number of years, with input from families, staff, management, professional organisations and the local community. Through staff meetings and regular reflection, we decided what our values and beliefs were and designed our ideal program from there. A trial basis followed, where we trialled different ideas to see what worked better, and modified as necessary. Continual small and whole group discussions were had, as well as the collation of regular feedback from families and other stakeholders, to lead the philosophy to what we follow today.

Our educational leader has worked with the team to create a planning document that is user-friendly and has been reflected on and changed over time to better suit the children's program and reduce staff burnout. They guide, suggest and advise staff on ways they can extend on, modify or enrich their programs. Through past and ongoing critical reflection, we are flexible in relation to routines, considering children's needs and development of independence skills and agency, with extended time provided long, uninterrupted periods of play. This maximises children's participation in learning experiences.

All staff contribute to children's documentation and follow the planning cycle of observation, analysis, interpretation, planning, implementation, and evaluation, as well as reflective practices. Educational programs are guided by different frameworks and documents. They are unique to each room, as we use different formats that relate and work for each age group and its team. We are encouraged to reflect on the environment, program, routines, individuals and small & large groups. We do daily reflections, room reflections, plan reflections and personal reflections. We use many different ways to critically reflect on our programs, including, but not limited to, staff meetings, management meetings, staff appraisals, and meetings with families.

We collaborate regularly at team meetings to work towards continuously improving centre routines, policies, procedures and practices. Educators can add their own topics to the agenda so they can be discussed and reflected on as a team. Every educator has a personal reflection book to critically reflect centre operations and practice. The educational leader works closely with staff to ensure that everyone is providing high quality programs and documentation for each individual child. We make sure that all educators are familiar with our philosophy and belief system.

We use a variety of ways to critically reflect on our planning and practices, such as reflective documentation, team meetings, and policy reviews. We use our team Facebook group to share topics, information and resources which facilitate conversations about our current practices and how we can adapt them. We support, encourage, review and discuss each other's practices. Due to the professional relationships we have formed with one another, we can do this respectfully.

Educators from different rooms will go on planning at the same time, allowing them the opportunity to network with different staff each week. During planning, they will have professional conversations about the rooms, routines and programs as well as support one another when they have questions or ideas. We also provide opportunities for staff from the same room to go on planning at the same time, so they can work together on developing and reflecting on programs. Frequently throughout the year, senior will also be given opportunities to network and reflect with different staff at room leader meetings or management meetings. Our educational leader and wellbeing team leader often have planning time together so they can reflect on ways they can achieve similar goals together.

We keep records of suggestions, compliments and grievances regarding policies and procedures and are guided by this feedback when going through the review process.. This information drives the quality improvement plan and allows staff to critically reflect on how we can improve or what we are doing well. We also provide families with multiple opportunities throughout the year to provide feedback on any aspect of the centre's operations or the educational program.

QUALITY AREA ONE - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community

Our enrolment and orientation procedures help to build meaningful engagement with families from the beginning, and then this is extended on throughout the family's time at our centre. Families are provided with 'child profile' forms upon commencement so we can begin familiarising ourselves with each child's interests, culture and abilities. Information from enrolment forms is sent from the office to the subsequent room in an email so they have easy access to important details about the child such as family members, allergy information, and booked orientation periods.

We ensure all new children engage in orientation before commencement so we can gather information from their families about their needs, interests and development. This information can be used to assist children in feeling a sense of belonging in our environment from their very first day. Families can have as many orientation sessions as they like, so children can feel really connected to and secure in the environment before their official commencement. Each room has its own email address so families and educators can communicate directly. Rooms also have private Facebook pages where they post photos, videos and daily routine information throughout the day so families can get real-time updates on what the children are up to.

Families are encouraged to bring in comfort items or items of familiarity to support their transition into care. We also ask families to provide family photos to display in the room which the children love to view and share. Staff ensure each child has a labelled locker or name label available for their first day so they feel a sense of belonging when they arrive. We also ensure all children and families are given a warm welcome upon arrival, and keep an array of separation techniques up our sleeve should any child be struggling with separation anxiety. Some key distraction favourites are to visit the fish tank, go outside to play on the swings, or stand up at the windows and wave goodbye to their family. We tailor the separation technique to the child and family.

Families are provided with multiple opportunities to give feedback regarding the program, routines and centre operations. We speak directly to families regarding all areas of their child's development. The centre provides families with the option of having family/educator interviews throughout the year. These give families the opportunity to sit down with their child's room leader one-on-one and discuss their child's development. Families are encouraged to contact us whenever they have any positive, constructive or critical feedback. We use that information to drive the quality improvement plan and ensure any critical feedback is regularly followed up on.

We asked families and educators to describe our educational program and practice and they used the following statements:

- I love the indoor/outdoor program.
- The centre creates multiple learning environments to encourage children to explore, create and construct.
- I love that the children can choose their own activities and are not forced to do any activity they may not like or want to do.
- The centre has a very relaxed, casual curriculum that allows the children to create their own learning environment.
- Indoor/outdoor policy is our biggest strength.
- Educators value and build on children's strengths, skills and knowledge.
- Planning and programming is really good.
- There is a cycle of reviewing and reflecting.
- Children of all ages are encouraged to interact and play together.
- The indoor/outdoor learning environment has allowed children to explore and make choices as to where they want to engage.

QUALITY AREA ONE - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE

Summary of Strengths

We asked families and educators to describe our educational program and practice and they used the following statements cont.:

- . All room staff are involved in programming.
- . The indoor/outdoor program works really well..
- . I love the all-weather policy.
- . Beautiful portfolios.
- . The educational leader is very helpful.
- . Multi-age grouping is perfect for siblings.
- . Indoor/outdoor program during all weather is a great strength.
- . Open gate time/multi-age play is wonderful.
- . Documentation is meaningful and written with confidence.
- . All staff are involved in the planning process.
- . The program is play based/child led.
- . Staff have high expectations.
- . Programs have been developed based on children's interests, strengths, learning abilities as well as cultural backgrounds.
- . The indoor and outdoor philosophy follows the principles of EYLF.
- . The indoor/outdoor program promotes flexibility and freedom to choose where and how they want to engage with the program.
- . Children are able to make choices which encourages independence.
- . The program is non-structured.
- . I loved all the ideas to help with filling the days at home in lockdown.
- . The indoor/outdoor policy allows children to explore both at all times, regardless of weather.
- . The learning programs keep our daughter challenged.
- . Programs are unstructured, age-appropriate and flexible.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA ONE - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE

What outcome do we seek?

Element 1.3.3

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Families will be regularly informed about the program, their child's progress and their child's daily routine.

Success Measure

Proposed End Date: July 2022

- All rooms at the centre will have an accessible program that is easy for families to read and understand.
- Families will engage with the program and provide feedback/input.
- The centre will provide an online communication medium that updates families directly during the day.
- Updating families about their child's daily routine will be a regular part of our daily tasks.
- Informing families about the program and their child's progress will be part of the planning cycle.
- The public and private Facebook pages/groups will be posted on regularly with resources, experiences, questions, activities, links, and opportunities for families to get involved.

How will we achieve this outcome?

Priority Rating: High

- Ensure all staff are getting ample planning time to work on programs, observations, and daily communication tasks.
- Provide information, resources, training and support to staff who are involved in planning.
- Organise one-one-one, small group and whole group meetings to brainstorm ideas, develop plans, and review centre programs, observation methods and routines.
- Research online communication mediums to adopt at the centre.
- Encourage staff to update their private Facebook groups every day with photos, videos, observations, reflections and information for families.
- Regularly post photos, videos, questions, activities, ideas and links to resources on our centre public Facebook page.
- Share information & resources with families and staff via email, and private Facebook groups.
- Educational leader to provide consistent feedback to staff on their planning and work with them to achieve outcomes.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA ONE - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE

Progress Notes

- To get an app organised may take a little while, so in the meantime, we have started posting photos of our daily information boards on our Facebook groups so families can see children's meals, sleeps, nappy changes and bottles.
- We started researching different apps that we could use and contacted companies for free trials or webinars that we could watch that explain how the app is used.
- Staff have started posting their room setups for the month ahead on their Facebook groups, and have been explaining why the activities are being included in the program.
- The centre has decided to go with Owna, which is a child care app that staff can use to share information with families about their child's day.
- The centre has started uploading the data on all children, families and staff so the app can be used daily.
- Rooms have been restructuring their planning areas and displays so it is clear where the program is and where the portfolios are located.

QUALITY AREA TWO - CHILDREN'S HEALTH & SAFETY

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

Our philosophy and play-based curriculum states that children are able to play outdoors in all weather conditions which families are made aware of during centre tours, enrolment, and ongoing communication. We regularly highlight the importance of experiencing all types of weather and its benefits in regards to health and wellbeing.

We provide multiple opportunities during the day for children to interact with children of all ages, and throughout all rooms and outdoor spaces. This mixed-age grouping provides opportunities for younger and older children to learn from each other, with older, more competent children often providing leadership and support to those who are younger and less capable. It also provides siblings, cousins and friends the opportunity to interact with one another.

Children are also provided with risk taking opportunities where they can challenge themselves physically and become in tune with their own physical limitations. It is common for children to remove their shoes when outdoors in order to feel a connection with the ground, strengthen gross motor skills and increase agility.

All children are given the opportunity for rest or sleep throughout the day. We have a midday sleep/rest period in the 4 older rooms which the majority of children sleep during. However, children can have a sleep or rest whenever they need and we are guided by at-home sleeping routines and/or tired cues. In our nursery room, there is no set sleep period as we follow children's individual routines. We provide children with a tranquil sleeping environment complete with relaxing music/white noise, dimmed lighting and a comfortable temperature. Children that do not wish to sleep are offered quiet activities to relax and recharge their batteries, or can opt to continue playing outdoors. We provide children with active and passive play areas so children have the opportunity to relax throughout the day.

The centre adheres to the highest infection control standards. Families are notified when an infection/illness is prevalent at the centre via signage, emails, Facebook messenger, Facebook posts and newsletters, as well as being informed on weather changes, *e.g. what appropriate clothes need to be provided for all weather conditions*. Children are excluded from the centre when symptoms of an infectious disease or illness begin. Families are regularly reminded about exclusion periods, and are also given slips to take home that details what period of time the child must stay away.

Appropriate authorities are informed if there is an outbreak of infectious disease. Ill children are separated from well children and given the opportunity to rest. Throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have adhered to all government recommendations and adjusted our procedures in accordance with changes to these recommendations. Families were kept frequently informed on how we were managing the virus, and we have always ensured to update them in a very timely manner. Our COVID-Safe Plan has been constantly modified in line with updates to procedures. During the pandemic, we made visual posters for the children which showed our centre giraffe mascots washing their hands, wearing masks, getting their temperature taken, social distancing, using sanitiser and waiting at the room doors.

The centre provides a varied, nutritious menu that covers all dietary requirements. The menu includes a large range of fresh fruit, vegetables and legumes and meets nutritional recommendations. Meals are prepared fresh on site by our in-house cook who has been at the centre for 9 years. Health is at the forefront when planning cooking experiences. Our Wellbeing Team is working towards gaining recognition in the 'Healthy Eating and Oral Health' benchmark of the Victorian Achievement Program. Rooms include healthy eating practices in programs and set ups to represent healthy eating choices, *e.g. kitchen play, picnics, books, puzzles, art*

We include a variety of planned and spontaneous physical activity experiences in their programs regularly and ensure we have lots of equipment for children to engage in active play such as balls, climbing equipment and tunnels. We provide outdoor, active play experiences inside, and indoor, passive experiences outside. We have also invited a number of different incursions to visit the centre to get the children's bodies moving such as an AFL workshop, dancing class, and soccer class.

The centre follows occupational health and safety procedures to ensure that staff, families and children are protected from harm at all times. We follow an active supervision policy when with the children and ensure we always abide by child care ratios as per regulations. Supervision is managed through zoning of the yards to ensure all areas can be seen and staff know where they need to be. We store medication and chemicals in locked, childproof cabinets, rooms and medicine boxes. The play rooms in the centre use suitable child care chemicals only.

QUALITY AREA TWO - CHILDREN'S HEALTH & SAFETY

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

Families are notified immediately when a child injures themselves or becomes unwell via telephone. We ensure that all incident and medication documents are filled in completely. When a child requires an incident report to be filled out, the director or person-in-charge is notified and acknowledges the notification by countersigning the incident report. Staff are required to have full first aid to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge on how to deal with emergencies. Each November, the centre books in a whole group first aid/CPR session to ensure the majority of staff are on the same cycle and that their certificates do not lapse. First aid kits are located in each room, the outdoor yards, kitchen and the office. The contents of these kits are reviewed regularly throughout the year by the Wellbeing Team to ensure that they are well stocked and everything is in date.

We have been a SunSmart centre for 21 years and stay up-to-date with all SunSmart recommendations. We provide a range of sun protection measures at the centre and are guided by the UV index when planning our day. We allow for vitamin D exposure before the UV index reaches 3. We provide sunscreen and spare hats, and ensure our outdoor spaces have adequate shade. At Christmas time, all children are given a brand new hat for the year ahead as a gift.

Our centre has also been recognised as an asthma friendly centre by the Asthma Foundation Victoria. We keep an asthma kit in the kitchen with spare puffers should they be needed. Children's asthma action plans are required to be reviewed every 12 months to ensure the management advice remains current.

All staff at Milestone are trained in child protection via the Department of Education and Training online course: Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting. They are required to complete this course before commencing employment and redo the training every 12 months. Any volunteers or students on placement are required to complete the same online course before commencement. In May 2021, the entire team completed professional development together about the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme. We discussed these topics in great detail and had the opportunity to ask questions.

The centre is guided by the 11 Child Safe Standards in order to maintain a child safe organisation. Staff are aware they are mandatory reporters. They are required to report any child protection concerns to DHHS and any additional organisations, *e.g. Victoria Police*, and they do not have to seek approval first to do this. However, staff are encouraged to approach the director with any issues regarding children in our care, especially if they need advice or support, so we can work out a plan of action together. They are also aware that they are required to report any allegations of child abuse or child-related misconduct about colleagues, volunteers or students in line with the reportable conduct scheme.

We keep documented logs on any children we have concerns about to ensure the centre has appropriate documentation, if needed. All room staff know where these logs are and will add to them as required. The director keeps all information, notes, emails, and documentation relating to any children involved with child protection in individual files on the centre computer. This information has been used in the past for court proceedings attended by the director. If the centre believed physical abuse or sexual abuse of a child had occurred or is occurring at the centre, or if allegations of physical or sexual abuse were raised, the centre would report this information to DET within 24 hours.

As part of the recruitment process, potential employees are screened by WWCC status checks and the checking of references. WWCC status checks are completely frequently throughout the course of employment. The director monitors all WWCC expiry dates and gives staff sufficient notice to renew their cards if they are due to expire soon.

Water play is provided on a regular basis, particularly during warmer weather. We follow water safety and active supervision procedures when engaging in water activities. Each year, the centre organises a water safety incursion with the kindergarten aged children so they learn to be safe around water.

The centre enforces the No Jab, No Play regulations and collects immunisation records at enrolment. All children are required to be up-to-date with their immunisations throughout their time at the centre. The director sends reminders to families before an immunisation is due so it can be booked in. A star system is used on enrolment forms to easily track a child's immunisation status. Red stars mean the child has had all required childhood immunisations. Blue stars mean the child has had every immunisation required by 18 months old. Any child without stars is not yet eligible for their 18 month vaccinations.

QUALITY AREA TWO - CHILDREN'S HEALTH & SAFETY

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

Milestone is enrolled in the Victorian Achievement Program which is a simple, evidence-based framework to create a healthy learning environment and support the health and wellbeing of everyone in our service. This initiative gives children the best possible start to their learning and development and also boosts staff productivity. The program helps coordinate health and wellbeing actions across six health priority areas. We can apply for recognition for promoting these health priorities once we have successfully met state-wide benchmarks. Our Wellbeing Team are responsible for working on the Achievement Program and for implementing healthy initiatives at the centre. We have already received recognition for meeting the benchmarks of Mental Health & Wellbeing, Tobacco Control, and Sun Protection. The Wellbeing Team, educational leader and centre director meet regularly to discuss strategies to meet the Achievement Program benchmarks. The cook is included in discussions relating to the Healthy Eating and Oral Health benchmark.

Regular emergency drills are conducted at least every 3 months with debriefing and reviews following each drill. The drills are a combination of evacuations and lockdowns and are organised by our Wellbeing Team. The centre has 5 different coloured codes so we can easily communicate the threat to one another in an emergency. These codes are discussed regularly in staff meetings and we have conducted training sessions about them at meetings. Following a drill in early 2022, we realised that our emergency procedures were not very easy to read and needed to be more simple, yet explanatory. They were reviewed over a number of weeks, following input from the team, and are now more uniform and understandable.

Each room has an emergency bag that is stocked in case of an emergency and/or emergency drill. Staff are required to take their emergency bag, any children's medication, and attendance records with them when they evacuate or lockdown. Families are notified once drills are completed via signage and Facebook updates. We follow the Emergency Management Plan developed by DET and regularly refer to this plan. This plan is reviewed regularly. The Wellbeing Team are also responsible for reviewing emergency procedures, training staff, conducting audits of first aid kits and staying on top of medications and action plans. Fire equipment such as fire extinguishers and hoses are checked regularly by Fire Equipment Services.

We are all responsible for managing & maintaining regular updates on anaphylaxis, asthma, allergies and the medical conditions of children in our care. We use a variety of communication mediums to ensure all educators are informed of children with a medical condition and the steps to be taken in the event of an emergency. When a child enrolls with a medical condition, a detailed post is written on the staff Facebook group which all staff need to acknowledge and state they have read and understood the information. This also provides them with an opportunity to ask questions or get further clarification. These medical conditions are also discussed at staff meetings. Children's rooms and the kitchen have allergy lists displayed in easy-to-view areas, and children's action plans are also displayed. Corresponding medication is accessible nearby. Expiry dates on action plans and medication are frequently monitored, and families are given over a month's notice before expiry to get them replaced. All staff at the centre are required to complete 'All About Allergens' and 'Food Safety' training before commencement of employment.

We use a variety of methods to plan, discuss, reflect and implement changes to practices, if needed. These include formal meeting times, daily discussions and online groups for each room where information about individual children's needs are shared and planned for. We often spend time outside of working hours using these groups to ensure our practices are consistently being adapted to suit the changing needs of our children.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been significant reflection about practices and procedures to ensure the health and safety of all stakeholders. At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, room leaders held a meeting with management to discuss how to safely manage the threat of COVID-19. New procedures were implemented which carried through 2020 and 2021, and some of which are still in place in 2022. Throughout these COVID-19 years, staff have continually discussed, reflected on and modified procedures in line with government advice.

Following any serious incidents or injuries, the centre informs DET within 24 hours. We write a report regarding what the incident was and how it occurred, and reflect on how we could prevent it from happening again. Serious incidents are discussed in staff meetings and on our staff Facebook group.

QUALITY AREA TWO - CHILDREN'S HEALTH & SAFETY

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community

We maintain an extremely clean environment and follow very thorough cleaning procedures. Families are encouraged to use hand sanitiser upon arrival. There is a sanitiser station at the front door and also in different areas throughout the foyer and rooms, including next to the sign-in/out kiosks. Children are encouraged to wash their hands many times throughout the day and are educated to cover their mouths when they cough & sneeze, and to get a tissue when they have a runny nose. If an outbreak occurs, signs are put up to inform all families, and infection control procedures are amplified, e.g. *linen is washed every day instead of once or twice a week, light switches and door handles cleaned and sanitised*. During gastroenteritis outbreaks, or outbreaks of an infectious rash, the exclusion period is raised from 24 hours symptom-free to at least 48 hours. Families are also provided with regular updates via email and are given a copy of our *Dealing with Infectious Diseases* policy. A generic email which simplifies this policy is sent out every year before the cold and flu season.

Children with allergies and sensitivities are catered for daily. Documentation relating to children's dietary requirements are displayed in each room. Children with allergies that require medications and/or medical conditions are required to have action plans at the centre that have been completed by a medical practitioner. The centre has a process in place to ensure that action plans and medication are current, in date, available in rooms and regularly reviewed. Children with allergies and medical conditions also have risk minimisation plans that are completed in consultation with families. If a child at the centre is diagnosed with anaphylaxis, the director provides the family with the anaphylaxis policy and works together with them to complete all relevant documentation.

At the beginning of a new year, the centre consults with families to ensure all allergies, sensitivities, preferences and medical conditions are current and being followed appropriately. If a child's medical status changes throughout the year, families are asked to email changes to their child's health management so it is stated in writing. Allergy lists are edited accordingly following that update.

When new children commence who have dietary restrictions, we will show the family the ingredients we use so they can let us know what is safe and what needs to be avoided. The director, room leader and cook will meet with families of children with allergies or medical conditions at orientation to discuss how to best manage the condition. Families update then centre on foods that children have tried in the home so we can ensure families are the first to offer new foods to babies.

To decrease the risk of an allergic reaction, we discourage families from bringing food and drinks in from home unless previously arranged. If food or drinks have been brought in, families are required to fill out a *'Food Brought from Home'* register. All staff have been trained in correct food safety and handling techniques. The centre cook and director are both trained food safety supervisors. The centre cook keeps track of fridge & freezer temperatures, and ensures all food is being stored and served correctly. Bottles are stored and heated correctly and are labelled. Children are provided with appropriate utensils for mealtimes - plates, bowls, spoons, forks, tongs etc, for self-serving.

Menus are designed to include foods familiar to the children's backgrounds, as well as their likes and preferences, whilst still maintaining a high level of nutrition. When families provide feedback about the menu, this is reflected in menu reviews going forward. The centre cook regularly shares recipes with families via centre newsletters and email. Families often ask her about dishes their children love and she shares the recipes with them. Healthy eating is promoted regularly in newsletters, updates and online. Families are encouraged to provide healthy foods at home through displays and reading material.

Rooms provide daily information to families on children's health and wellbeing whilst attending the centre. Nappy changes, sleep times, and meals are documented for families to access upon collection. Rooms use a variety of mediums to share this information including whiteboards, personalised communication books, and attendance sheets. During the pandemic when families haven't been able to enter the rooms, photos of these charts have been posted on the room Facebook groups. Families are also notified of any health concerns such as nappy rash, loose bowel motions, or an illness. Educators put notifications onto the centre kiosk prompting the family to seek out an educator, so they can pass on any important messages such as an incident, illness or upcoming medication expiry to a family. These messages pop up when the family uses the kiosk to sign their child out.

QUALITY AREA TWO - CHILDREN'S HEALTH & SAFETY

Summary of Strengths

We asked families and educators to describe our health and safety procedures and they used the following statements:

- Flexible routines in all rooms to suit the children's needs.
- Child-centred approach.
- Relaxed routine.
- Healthy eating is encouraged.
- The centre has mental health initiatives.
- Rooms are cleaned daily.
- I really like the health and wellbeing days.
- Children can take their shoes off outside if they choose.
- Staff encourage children to challenge themselves, giving them high equipment to climb, not stopping or stifling the way children decide to play.
- I love the flexible routine.
- Limited structure and fixed routines so the children have more time to engage in free play.
- Our menu is healthy and nutritional.
- Frequent emergency drills which are well practiced.
- The wellbeing team supports health and wellbeing initiatives at the centre.
- The children are not hurried.
- Each child's wellbeing is constantly being supported.
- We are working through the achievement program.
- Sleep time is a relaxing time.
- Regular nappy changes.
- Our flexible routines allows for children to not feel stressed or overwhelmed.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA TWO - CHILDREN'S HEALTH & SAFETY

What outcome do we seek?	How will we achieve this outcome?
<p>Element 2.1.3</p> <p>HEALTHY LIFESTYLE</p> <p>The <i>Healthy Eating and Oral Health</i> and <i>Physical Activity and Movement</i> benchmarks in the Achievement Program are met.</p>	<p>Priority Rating: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure members of the Wellbeing Team are given ample planning time to work on the benchmarks together and also separately. • Encourage Wellbeing Team to keep staff and centre cook well informed on their progress and on any changes that are being made. • Ensure centre cook is given ample planning time to work on menu planning.
<p>Success Measure</p>	
<p>Proposed End Date: October 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The centre will be able to apply for Achievement Program recognition for these two health priority areas. • The centre will receive stickers for the outdoor sign to show that we have met the <i>Healthy Eating and Oral Health</i>, and <i>Physical Activity and Movement</i> benchmarks. • Food and drinks provided at mealtimes, during special events and in educational programs will be healthy and nutritious. • Our centre menu will be assessed by the Healthy Eating Advisory Service. • The Wellbeing Team will start working on the next Achievement Program health priority areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information, resources, training and support to staff so they can effectively implement any procedures developed by the Wellbeing Team. • Share information, resources and links with families and staff on living a healthy lifestyle via email and public Facebook page / private Facebook groups. • Organise one-one-one, small group and whole group meetings to brainstorm ideas, develop new procedures, and review current policies. • Read the '<i>Menu Planning Guidelines for Long Day Care</i>'. • Complete the '<i>Menu Planning Checklist for Long Day Care</i>' to ensure our new menu meets all nutritional requirements. • Discuss ideas to meet the benchmark requirements at staff meetings. • Purchase resources that support healthy eating, oral health, physical activity and movement, for indoor and outdoor environments.

QUALITY AREA TWO - CHILDREN'S HEALTH & SAFETY

Progress Notes

- The centre hosts dental check-ups at the centre annually and have the 2022 visit booked for late May. All children at the centre are encouraged to utilise the service and it is across 3 days so more families can benefit. The dentists also provide a small incursion for the 3-6 year old children.
- Families are encouraged to send along a drink bottle from home so children can easily access water from a familiar source more frequently.
- Physical activity is promoted each day during the indoor/outdoor program.
- Special events cater for physical activity including soccer trials, international dance day, AFL workshop and little athletics day.
- Cooking experiences within the centre promote healthy eating, along with proper hygiene practices.
- We provide experiences which support the health and nutrition of children, *e.g. home corner area, discussion on food pyramid, lunch box day.*
- Each week, a weekly update is sent out which regularly includes information, links and resources about a range of topics, *e.g. Yarra Ranges Athletics Season Launch, Your Health Matters Newsletter, Road Safety Tips*
- Every 2 months, the centre sends out a comprehensive newsletter to current families. We regularly include information on healthy eating, oral health, physical activity and road safety.
- The centre cook has started working on the centre menu, making sure it meets all menu planning requirements.
- Rooms regularly provide children with yoga and movement experiences.
- Staff role model healthy choices by only drinking water in the rooms.
- Discussions are had at mealtimes about nutrition and making healthy choices.
- The centre paid for family access to an online magic show called '*Eat a Rainbow*' by The Nutrition Magician as part of the at-home learning program.
- The menu was updated and reflected on against the meal planning requirements and feedback from families. It was put into practice, and emailed to families.
- We have organised a yoga incursion for our 3 and 4 year old kindergarten groups on the upcoming Little Athletics Day.

QUALITY AREA THREE - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

All spaces, equipment, facilities and resources at the centre are suitable for their purpose. The centre follows health and safety procedures to ensure the centre and its facilities, equipment and resources are safe and in good working order. We ensure their rooms, yards and equipment are safe, regularly cleaned and maintained. The centre has regular access to a qualified tradesman for maintenance. He ensures all equipment is safe and in working condition. The centre's grounds are maintained on a regular basis by a local gardening business. Gas, electrical, plumbing and emergency equipment are regularly inspected and maintained by qualified professionals. The centre has employed a cleaning service to maintain the centre after hours 3 nights per week. We maintain all other cleaning requirements throughout each day. Risk assessments are completed for any activities that incorporate an element of risk, such as operating oil diffusers.

The centre's design allows for safe supervision in all areas of the centre, including outside. We implement an indoor/outdoor program so children can flow between both areas at their own leisure. We move throughout these spaces with the children to ensure adequate active supervision at all times. The centre is easily accessible for adults and/or children in wheelchairs, and there are large carpark spaces for families who need extra room. The centre has a disabled bathroom near the front door that all families can access comfortably.

The centre's layout provides ample space for children and families with additional needs to explore. Equipment and resources are sourced and provided for children and families with additional needs. The centre has utilised the Specialist Equipment Library on multiple occasions to source furniture and equipment that will enable children with additional needs to fully experience the centre and its programs. We regularly liaise with our inclusion support facilitator to access resources that benefit all children.

The centre strives to provide multiples of the same resource to ensure the children are getting the most out of that particular experience. There are always plenty of materials provided in art and craft activities so no children are excluded from the experience. The centre provides resources for children of all differing levels of ability and experiences are modified as needed so all children can participate. Resources are checked over regularly to ensure they are in good condition. Any worn or broken materials are replaced.

We worked through the requirements of the 'Small Green Steps' program to achieve full accreditation. This brought with it lots of positive, sustainable changes. We recycle paper, plastics, cans, and cardboard in our large commingled recyclables bin. In the foyer, we have a basket of plastic bags and recyclable bags that families can take home. Recycled materials are regularly used in play experiences and room set-ups. We have an ink cartridge recycling bin in our planning room that gets picked up by Planet Ark when full.

When rooms are not being used, we will turn the lights off. We celebrate a daily 'Earth Hour' from 12pm-1pm where rooms have lights off, or dimmed lighting, during rest periods. The foyer has all lights turned off between 11am and 2pm daily. Adequate lighting is always provided to children, while electricity is also preserved when light is not needed, e.g. sleep times, on very bright days. We had solar panels installed on our roof and LED lights installed throughout the entire centre which have greatly reduced our carbon footprint. Food scraps are given to staff members to feed pets. At mealtimes, children are given smaller serving sizes to ensure less waste, but extra helpings are always available. Children are encouraged to bring drink bottles rather than using cups. We have fruit trees at the front of the service which regularly bear fruit and edible gardens at the front of the centre and in the backyard. Children regularly grow plants and vegetables as part of the educational program. We have replaced paper towel with hand towels in our staff bathrooms.

We have cut back on printing by ensuring most documents are double-sided and are only printed if absolutely necessary. Important information is communicated to families via email and social media rather than in print form. We collate paper that is no longer needed and keep it in our scrap paper drawers/tubs. This is used daily in the office. It is also used to draw on in the rooms. When the centre receives unnecessary information via postal mail, the sender is contacted and ask to remove the centre from their mailing list. This has significantly reduced the amount of junk mail that comes in. Payslips are now emailed to staff instead of being printed. Each day, the director writes out the breaks lists for the staff on recycled paper, rather than printing new lists.

QUALITY AREA THREE - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

Two large yards at the service allow for all children to be outside at once. The centre provides children with access to both built and natural environments indoors and out. The centre outdoor spaces have a combination of tanbark and synthetic grass, and the 0-3 yard has many trees throughout the yard. The outdoor spaces have sandpits which children access daily. We work together as a team to plan areas and experiences in the outdoor spaces. We are always focusing on incorporating sustainable practices into daily routines and programs. This topic is discussed regularly at meetings and staff actively researching new ideas.

Children are able to access all equipment regardless of age or development and can explore activities at their own pace. During multi-age grouping time, children have the opportunity to explore all rooms and both outdoor areas. Siblings will seek out one another and older children will play with younger children. Younger children are supervised as they enter different rooms and explore new activities. Older children embrace this opportunity to visit their past educators and love standing at the kitchen window and talking to the centre cook about what's on the menu. A popular community space during this time is the front gate, where children love to congregate and watch the world go by. A favourite part of this time is when the delivery trucks come or a motorbike goes by.

Environments are always age appropriate with suitable challenges set out for children's development. Children are grouped according to their age or developmental needs. They may stay in a particular room for a longer period of time due to developmental or medical reasons. The program allows for indoor and outdoor learning. Changes to the furniture are occasionally done with the children's input. Quiet areas are provided for children to have space and move away from others, if they require. Pillows, blankets, tents, books and other quiet activities are provided.

Following years of reflection on the centre philosophy, we actively encourage children to take calculated risks when exploring their environments. Children are supported to navigate climbing equipment with educators close by should they need. We confidently and thoughtfully adapt spaces and resources when planning and as needed on a day to day basis. We consult and observe children in their learning environments which informs any plans for environment change and adaptation. Team meetings and discussions are held regarding any changes to the environment, *e.g. indoor/outdoor program, multi-age grouping, new structures, equipment, or resources to the service.*

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community

The office has committed to less waste by stopping the use of post-it notes, printing less, printing double-sided as much as possible, and by phasing out family forms, *e.g. holiday forms, withdrawal forms.* All correspondence in this form is done via email now. With the addition of the centre kiosks, we were able to eliminate the need for family sign-in/sign-out sheets. Families know they can call, email or message the centre at any time and will use these mediums to quickly contact us.

The front of the service and the foyer is very bright, clean and welcoming to families. There is a diffuser to give the entrance a pleasant smell, staff photos at the children's eye level for them to be able to look at, and a community board to share information with families. There is also comfortable seating, toys and books for families to access if they are waiting. These give it a homely feel, and encourages families to feel comfortable and at home in the service.

The room environments allow children to access their own bags, drink bottles, and belongings, so they understand they can have them at any time. Lockers are labelled and photos of the children are displayed throughout the rooms. This fosters a sense of agency and also a feeling of belonging to the space.

The centre regularly shares information with families about sustainable practices and how they can get involved at home, such as a recent post at easter on how you can recycle easter egg wrappers.

QUALITY AREA THREE - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Summary of Strengths

We asked families and educators to describe our physical environment and they used the following statements:

- . Our centre has a beautiful environment.
- . I love the trees in the backyard.
- . The way that educators set up the room is inviting and engaging.
- . Activities designed for open-ended play allow children to make choices and use their imagination.
- . Aesthetically pleasing environment.
- . We just knew this was the right place.
- . Spacious indoor areas.
- . Variety of fun activities.
- . Comfortable spaces.
- . Encourages play-based learning.
- . Opportunities to explore nature.
- . Lots of room to move.
- . Opportunities to challenge themselves with safe risk taking.
- . Big playground.
- . Exciting outdoor equipment.
- . Open-ended and inviting.
- . The environment has seen my son positively thrive.
- . Interesting and beautiful resources are provided.
- . Opportunities for sensory activities.
- . Sensory rich environment.
- . Staff provide quiet and relaxing areas for children to rest.
- . Everyone is able to participate.
- . Inviting indoor play spaces.
- . Lots of room to play.
- . The centre fosters a sense of belonging.
- . There are a variety of resources which are fun and educational.
- . I love that the 'family' gate opens each day.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA THREE - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

What outcome do we seek?	How will we achieve this outcome?
<p>Element 3.2.2</p> <p>RESOURCES SUPPORT PLAY-BASED LEARNING</p> <p>The visual arts, music and movement will be included in daily programming.</p>	<p>Priority Rating: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the Wellbeing Team to implement regular music and movement experiences at the centre.• Provide rooms with information, resources, training and support on creative arts and music and movement activities.• Organise one-one-one, small group and whole group meetings to brainstorm ideas, develop plans, and review implemented programs.
<p>Success Measure</p>	
<p>Proposed End Date: October 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual art, music and movement experiences will be embedded in our program and daily routines.• The experiences provided will be available for long, uninterrupted periods of time.• Families will be informed about the activities via photos, videos and daily updates.• A range of different experiences will be provided, including many different materials, especially recycled options.• Music experiences will be reflective of the cultural backgrounds of the families.• Children will engage in frequent movement experiences that strengthens their bodies and minds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all staff are getting ample planning time to work on programs, observations, and daily communication tasks.• Put the 'Ideas Bible' in the staff room or planning room for inspiration.• Visit Resource Rescue for sustainable and recycled materials.• Educational leader to provide consistent feedback to staff on their experiences and setups.• Regularly post photos, videos, ideas and links on the staff Facebook group.• Encourage staff to update their private Facebook groups every day with photos and videos of activities so they are informed on the activities available each day.• Collate information about family backgrounds to provide experiences that reflect the different cultural backgrounds that make up our centre.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA THREE - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Progress Notes

- The kinder and pre-school rooms have been providing interesting, new art experiences daily.
- The toddler and pre-kinder rooms have been providing daily art experiences that can be accessed by all children during the morning period.
- Nursery has been engaging children in frequent art experiences.
- Most mornings, the children in the pre-kinder room request Wiggles to be played so they can dance before morning tea.
- The 'Ideas Bible' has been put in the planning room to inspire staff.
- We have organised a yoga incursion for our 3 and 4 year old kindergarten groups on the upcoming Little Athletics Day.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA THREE - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

What outcome do we seek?	How will we achieve this outcome?
<p>Element 3.2.3</p> <p>ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE</p> <p>Sustainability is embedded in our daily practice.</p>	<p>Priority Rating: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the Wellbeing Team to implement and drive sustainability initiatives.• Organise one-one-one, small group and whole group meetings to brainstorm ideas, develop plans, and review implemented programs.• Enrol in local and online sustainability initiatives.• Purchase recyclable and sustainable resources to support practice.
<p>Success Measure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visit recycling centres and opportunity stores for second-hand resources.
<p>Proposed End Date: October 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable practices will be embedded in our program and daily routines.• Families and the local community will be aware of the practices we have embedded and will be encouraged to implement these at home.• The Wellbeing Team will focus on sustainability initiatives.• The centre will provide information and resources about the importance of sustainability and how to get involved.• Children will become environmentally responsible.• Tending edible gardens will become part of the daily routine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate sustainable practices into daily routines, such as gardening, loose parts, cutting back on paper use, recycling, edible gardens, reusing rather than throwing away, water saving, reducing food wastage, and providing plants around environment.• Ensure Wellbeing Team is given ample planning time to work on the benchmarks, in conjunction with the educational leader.• Encourage Wellbeing Team to keep staff well informed on their progress and on any changes that are being made.• Provide information, resources, training and support to staff so they can effectively implement any procedures developed by the Wellbeing Team.• Share information, resources and links with families and staff on sustainability via email and public Facebook page / private Facebook groups.• Research how other services are implementing sustainability into their services.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA THREE - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Progress Notes

- Recycling bins are being utilised in rooms.
- Scrap paper is used for drawing.
- Scrap paper is used for writing notes and information, thus removing the need for sticky notes, notebooks or new paper.
- Children are encouraged to bring drink bottles from home rather than using cups.
- Recycled materials are used in setups, experiences and art & craft.
- Children are regularly engaged in mud, sand, and natural materials.
- Most paperwork is completed online and families are encouraged to fill out forms online rather than printing off.
- All enrolment paperwork and daily forms have been converted to fillable PDF files so families can fill them out online and send them back, rather than printing off.
- Forms, information, letters, statements, resources, meeting minutes, payslips, updates etc. are emailed to staff and families rather than printed.
- Online registers are used to keep track of illness, waiting list families etc. rather than printed copies.
- Families are notified that email communication / Facebook communication is our preferred form of contact over written and printed communication.
- When the centre receives unnecessary information via postal mail, the sender is contacted and asked to remove the centre from their mailing list. We have unsubscribed from multiple resource catalogues.
- Food scraps returning after mealtimes are often kept for pets.
- The kitchen has implemented a less-waste policy. Children are given smaller serves of food and topped as it is eaten, rather than large serves at the beginning which were not being eaten. If a large quantity of pasta or rice is cooked, the extra amount is saved for another meal.
- We use an online sign-in/sign-out system so no longer need to print written attendance rolls.
- Centre foyer lights are turned off daily between 11:00am and 2:00pm. Centre organises a daily 'Earth Hour' where all lights in the service are turned off for at least between 12:00pm and 1:00pm daily. Unused rooms have lights turned off until needed again.
- Any important signage is laminated or framed to ensure its longevity.
- We have installed solar panels and LED lights throughout the whole centre.
- Whiteboards and pinboards are used to communicate with each other rather than printed notices or notebooks. If we need to keep this as documentation, we will take a photo of the board.
- Landfill and recycling bins are available in the staff room and kitchenette. Paper recycling bins are in the office and planning room. An ink cartridge recycling bin is in the planning room.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA THREE - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Progress Notes

- Face washers are used to dry hands in staff bathrooms, rather than paper towel.
- We have two giant outdoor waste management bins. One for landfill and the other for co-mingled recyclables.
- We planted lemon, orange and blueberry trees in pots at the entrance of the centre, which bear fruit.
- We planted edible gardens at the entrance to the centre and in the 3-6 year old yard.
- We enrolled in the Small Green Steps program and have met the requirements for all 4 levels.
- We have engaged in a lot of professional development relating to sustainability - online and at workshops.
- We enrolled in the Maroondah Waste Education Program.

QUALITY AREA FOUR - STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

The centre has at least one qualified educator in all 5 rooms daily. We have early childhood teachers that run our 3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs. The centre director is advanced diploma qualified. We have more qualified educators working in rooms than the ratio requirement specifies. All educators at the centre are either fully qualified, working towards qualifications, or have received recognition of prior learning certificates. The centre ensures that there is at least one qualified educator at the centre when opening and closing the centre, and that at least one of them has full first aid. The roster stays the same week-to-week, with very minimal changes, ensuring continuity for children and educators. Qualified staff are rostered on across the day so there is never a time when unqualified or newer educators are being solely relied upon to oversee the management or leadership that is required.

We have always been proud of our low staff turnover with the director having been here for 17 years (12 years as director), the 2IC for 14 years, and two of our room leaders for 11 years and 20 years respectively. Out of the 30 current educators, the majority have started within the past 2 years, as staff were recruited following the occupancy boom once lockdowns ended. However, 5 educators have been here between 2-5 years, and 4 have been here between 5-10 years. A number of staff had to leave at the beginning of the pandemic due to low numbers but many have returned in the past 12 months. Most educators finish up at the centre due to having babies, moving house, starting new careers, or moving onto bigger opportunities at other centres or workplaces. We always support educators to follow their dreams and apply for positions that we don't have available at the time. They are always welcome to come back home should they wish to return. When educators are being interviewed for job vacancies, the director shares lots of information about the centre and the role, and also delves deep into the centre philosophy and what our values and beliefs are. Even if they do not join the team, we are proud to share our pedagogy and hope that it inspires the educator to take it with them to their new service.

Our approved providers have owned Milestone since it opened in April 2010. However, they also owned us from 1999-2007 when we were named Charlie Brown's Child Care Centre. After a brief journey as ABC Croydon North, we were thrilled to know that they had acquisitioned the centre again in 2010. The approved providers have a wonderful relationship with staff, in particular the relationships built with management, and are very supportive and encouraging. Staff know and are familiar with the management team and know who they can go to if they need advice or support.

Due to the indoor/outdoor and multi-age grouping programs, educators, children and families have had the opportunity to meet people they wouldn't normally come across, and access areas they wouldn't normally see. This has created a strong family vibe throughout the centre as there are no strangers or new areas. When children move up to the next room, they are comfortable with the transition, as the room and educators are familiar. Children and families know the names of their new educators straight away and have already built a relationship with them before moving up to that space. Adding to the family feel is the regular recruitment of family members onto the team. Currently, we have the director and centre cook who are sisters, and a mother and daughter working together. In the past, we have had sisters, cousins, aunts, mothers, and even grandmothers and grandchildren working together. Staff are able to enrol their own children into the centre and are encouraged to build on their relationships throughout the day. If the child needs their parent, we support that attachment. Breastfeeding staff are supported to continue breastfeeding throughout the day, by swapping with nursery staff when required.

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

Educators at the centre are provided with multiple opportunities for professional development throughout the year to improve practice and relationships. All staff are required to complete food safety, allergen management, child protection and infection control online modules before commencing employment. Students are required to complete child protection training before commencing placements. Staff are given a thorough induction once beginning. New educators are placed in rooms with multiple other educators so they have time to settle in, find their feet and watch what we do. An induction checklist is worked through with staff in that room, providing a gradual but timely introduction to routines, policies and procedures.

QUALITY AREA FOUR - STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection cont.

Professional standards are maintained through yearly staff appraisals. Educators complete self-reflections before their appraisal providing them with opportunities to consider their strengths, areas of need and goals. At appraisal meetings, feedback is shared from both sides and used to drive personal development plans as well as quality improvement.

Positive interactions and relationships are maintained through regular communication, forward planning, and respect for one another. The centre has an online Facebook forum that we use for discussion, reflection, and the sharing of ideas. Collaboration has improved immensely since the implementation of this. Room meetings and team collaboration meetings are conducted on a regular basis and give educators the opportunity to discuss ideas, issues and questions. Meetings are documented and shared with everyone, including those unable to attend, via email and Facebook. These are also filmed via Facebook live in the staff Facebook group so educators can watch from home or refer back to them later.

We are aware of each other's strengths and skills and utilise each other's skills regularly throughout their day. We have developed some key roles for educators showing interest in certain areas, e.g. *Educational Leader or Wellbeing Team*. The educational leader is responsible for collaborating with educators, providing curriculum direction and guidance, supporting educators to effectively implement the cycle of planning to enhance programs and practices and leading the development and implementation of an effective educational program at the centre. The Wellbeing Team is available to any staff interested in improving, implementing and reviewing our health, wellbeing, sustainability and emergency management procedures.

We are encouraged to show respect towards one another. Issues between educators are dealt with as soon as possible through small group meetings. This gives staff involved the opportunity to discuss what their issues are and clear the air. Room leaders hold small room meetings on regular occasions to discuss ideas, issues and questions. We guide one another, if needed, and help train new educators on centre practices and procedures. The educational leader regularly holds meetings and forums with individuals and small groups to discuss the educational program and quality improvement plan. We also provide opportunities for leaders to all get together.

We use many methods to critically reflect on our roles and responsibilities as educators. We use online discussion groups, communication books, communication boards, and reflect at every staff and room meeting. We have professional discussions all day which gather information and perspective on a range of topics. We also reflect after attending any professional development training and share research, ideas and support organisations with one another. Before family/educator meetings, we reflect on what needs to be discussed and following the meeting, we reflect on how it went and what we need to do next.

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community

The majority of educators that are studying are doing so through a workplace training program offered by Selmar. A trainer visits the centre every 1-2 months to check on each studying educator's progress. The trainer gives the director a detailed rundown on where each student is at, and how they can be assisted to progress to the next module. The centre encourages educators to enrol in higher education courses and degrees or to complete additional training.

The centre director attends local director networks to share ideas and information with other directors and centre owners in the area. Regular directors meetings are scheduled by upper management, so all 5 centres and approved providers can get together. She also accesses support, advice and information online via Facebook groups solely for owners and directors of child care services. We are encouraged to utilise online Facebook groups for ideas and resources. All 5 directors in the company have a very close relationship and will contact each other regularly for ideas, support, feedback or advice. The 5 directors often network outside of work hours to have in-depth management discussions without the distractions of the workplace.

To comply with Victorian Government mandates, all educators needed to provide evidence that they had received 3 doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine or had valid proof of a medical exemption, in order to continue attending the centre.

QUALITY AREA FOUR - STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community cont.

Families are informed about staff changes in a timely manner. When educators finish at the centre, the centre writes about the change in the weekly update so families are updated and have time to say goodbye. We try to keep the core room groups in their rooms for at least 3 years, rather than changing every 12 months or so. This allows children to make attachments over the course of a year and doesn't disrupt their routines too much or unsettle them. It also provides educators with the opportunity to hone their teaching craft with that age group and work on long-term projects. Photos of educators are displayed at the centre so children and families can learn their names and put names to faces.

We view our centre as a community and see each and every educator, child and family as an integral part of our service. We support educators in the workplace but also within their home lives. If they are struggling at home or need someone to talk to outside of work, there is always a listening ear available. Educators have diverse backgrounds and some speak multiple languages which has helped children settle in if English is not their first language or they're not used to being away from their families.

We asked families and educators to describe our staffing arrangements and they used the following statements:

- Allowing time for all staff to be given planning time lightens the load off the room leader and creates a more positive and collaborative team environment.
- I'm grateful that shifts are flexible when possible & other staff help out with changing shifts when able to.
- Staff are enthusiastic, loving, respectful, knowledgeable and always smiling.
- Room leaders are confident and supportive.
- Staff get along well and communicate with each other.
- They always have big smiles on their faces.
- Excellent staff.
- Planning time is allocated to the educational leader and wellbeing team.
- We have so many professional staff.
- Educator wellbeing days have a positive effect on the centre as we feel valued.
- Staff work collaboratively to plan and implement programs.
- Team meetings are informative but also are fun and interactive.
- Staff are hardworking and dedicated.
- There are enough staff for individual room ratio ensuring children and educators are not compromised.
- All staff are qualified and trainings/certificates are up to date.
- The staff are of a very high quality.
- Staff are responsible, professional and very strong.
- Educators are proactive about change.

QUALITY AREA FIVE - RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

Our centre philosophy, values and beliefs are reflected in every interaction we have. We believe in being an advocate for children and having high expectations for each child. We believe that children achieve better outcomes when they are expected to succeed. Children are able to construct their own understandings and initiate, contribute to and lead their own learning. Allowing children to make choices for themselves encourages independence and agency.

Children are never discouraged from playing outside in cold or wet weather, and we view these days as wonderful learning opportunities. Children are free to engage in activities where they will get messy, wet and dirty and can take calculated risks. We provide opportunities for children to attempt tasks that may be considered “outside of their abilities” and support all children to get involved.

We encourage children to engage in any activity or with any child or educator at the centre regardless of their gender, race, age, culture, abilities, family background, appearance, behaviour, qualifications or years of experience. Our multi-age grouping time allows children the chance to interact with children of different ages and abilities, as well as freely exploring other rooms and outdoor spaces.

Our programs are free from gender bias and we will never deter a child from exploring an activity that is often regarded as only “for boys” or “for girls”. We challenge gender stereotypes at the centre by providing resources, information and examples of children and adults who are breaking down the typical gender norms.

On the other hand, children are never expected to participate in activities or experiences that they are not interested in or comfortable with. We have a “free-art” philosophy which is about letting the child use their own ideas, imagination and creativity when creating a masterpiece, rather than engaging in a teacher-directed or end-product art activity. We do not use templates or colouring sheets and do not alter a child’s artwork in any way. All art experiences are child-led and can be modified as per the child’s direction.

All children are given the opportunity for one-on-one interactions with educators daily. These interactions are warm & trust building, fostering a sense of security. Educators take the time to interact playfully and affectionately with each child, endeavouring to form attachment. Every child is given the opportunity to express their feelings, wants and needs with educators at all times. We extend conversations with children by asking open ended questions. Communication between educators and children is always positive and they convey patience, respect and genuine interest. We consistently give attention to each child and assist children to become happily involved in experiences. We welcome and support children to have a sense of belonging, a feeling of being included and of feeling safe in their environment.

If a child is distressed, educators immediately console that child and use positive redirection techniques to ease any separation anxiety. Children are shown that they are valued through all interactions. We interact with children in small groups regularly throughout the day, encouraging positive collaboration between children. We encourage children to submit their ideas forth to extend on play experiences. Children’s opinions regarding activities and routines are valued and used. We plan according to the children’s current interests and ideas, showing that their input is valued. We display individual children’s artwork and photos of all of the children in an aesthetically pleasing manner to show children that they are appreciated.

The centre provides a variety of artificial and natural resources to encourage cooperative play amongst children. We provide play experiences that encourage collaborative learning between small and large groups of children. Educators include themselves in play experiences to support play and teach children valuable skills. We are encouraged to work together as a group to reach a goal, *e.g. creating an open-ended art group mural*. We provide indoor and outdoor play environments that encourage collaborative and solitary play. The centre knows that mealtimes are a great time for socialisation. We sit and interact positively with the children during meals and organise chairs and tables in a safe and attractive manner which allow children to talk amongst themselves. They are unhurried and relaxed.

The program is accessible for all children, but it is not compulsory to participate in activities so they are able to explore according to their own interests. For example, if there are messy play, art, or group activities, children are not forced to join in. Older age groups regularly hold whole group sessions where they tell stories, sing songs, and encourage discussion all together. However, children have the option to participate and can continue enjoying the indoor/outdoor program should they wish.

QUALITY AREA FIVE - RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations cont.

Children and families are greeted by responsive and cheerful educators each morning, and given a kind farewell on departure. This provides a welcoming, family-orientated atmosphere which allows children to share their stories, news or what they have done over the weekend/that day with educators and their families. Older children are allocated time to present, share and talk about their experiences at group times. We also acknowledge and celebrate children's milestones and celebrations, *e.g., birthday, special events, cultural celebrations, new siblings, taking their first steps*

Children have a sense of belonging by having their own named spaces for their belongings, being able to access what they need, and having their own photos and photos of their families that they can see at any time. Portfolios are accessible to children and families so they can view their learning journey. Art work and creations are displayed for children to see so they can feel acknowledged and congratulated on their hard work and achievements. If a child wants us to keep a project aside, *e.g. a lego creation*, we will pop it up on top of the lockers to be access next time the child attends.

There is continual dialogue and communication with children, both verbal and non-verbal. We use visual aids to support communication and combine these with verbal communication. Educators let children know what they are doing during routines, before and when they are doing it, so children are aware of what's happening and what's next.

Each child is consistently encouraged and supported to manage their own behaviours, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts. We believe in encouraging & supporting children to resolve problems and frustrations, where appropriate. Children who play and learn in an environment which promotes independence are less likely to display inappropriate behaviours. Educators work closely with families to develop behaviour management plans that suit the individual needs of each child, to encourage them to manage their feelings appropriately. Many intentional teaching experiences, such as group discussions, are planned to explore and assist children in developing self-regulation, awareness of their actions, using language to solve problems and how to appropriately respond when they are hurt, angry or upset.

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

Children's voices and discussions can be seen through observations, interactions and planning. Professional reflections on children's behaviours, interests and needs occur every single day between educators. Routines are flexible to meet children's needs or to help reflect similar routines to home. They are also adapted to help children settle in to the centre or a new room. We consistently respond to children's spontaneous interactions and utilise these for future planned learning opportunities. Educators reflect on children's individual plans and their observations of children during planning and at every formal and non-formal meeting time.

Educators seek outside resources to ensure best practice and knowledge of child development guide their every interaction. Our inclusion support facilitator works closely with the staff and families to ensure all children are supported and included in the program. She provides resources, advice and feedback about the program, routines and behaviour management techniques. Online discussion groups are used to inspire and uplift educators to look past challenging behaviours and to support their interactions/practices with knowledge.

Behaviour management plans are developed with families and the room team, following a process of trial and error to see what guidance technique works best. Once the plan is developed, it is shared with the entire team so all educators are on board and following the same practice.

QUALITY AREA FIVE - RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community

Children with additional needs are included in the program and are given supports to encourage and strengthen their development. Visual cues are made available to assist children with interactions. Specialist equipment is sourced, if required, to ensure all children can completely engage in the program. We follow the behaviour guidance techniques described in our *'Interactions with Children'* policy.

We role model and assist children to become empowered to resolve conflict. In consultation with families, behaviour management plans are developed, where necessary. We access a range of support services and resources in order to effectively support any child with additional needs, be it developmental, behavioural, emotional or social. We have built strong relationships with our inclusion support facilitator, pre-school field officers, Noah's Arc, and the Cerebral Palsy Education Centre. We contact these professionals when we need support, ideas, professional development recommendations and resources.

Before children commence, we seek out information about them via their enrolment form, child profile, and child background documents. This provides us with information to guide programs and experiences that will interest that child. Once a child begins, regular communication is maintained with their family via phone, Facebook posts, Facebook messenger, emails and in person, to ensure we have all the information needed to adequately plan for that child.

At the start of enrolment, we ask families lots of thorough questions about their child such as culture, language, activities they enjoy, members of their family, what they celebrate throughout the year and so on to give us a better understanding of the child and their family. This information is consistently collected throughout orientation and once the child commences child care. If their child has additional needs such as a disability or an allergy, the room leader and director will meet with the family at orientation to have an in-depth discussion about the child's needs and how the family manages them at home. The pre-school room has further questionnaires for both the children and their families to gauge more individualised information.

We asked families and educators to describe our relationships with children and they used the following statements:

- The children really thrive in this environment.
- Staff genuinely love the children.
- The children get to know all the educators and we get to know all the children.
- The relationships between the children & educators is wonderful at this centre.
- Staff have formed great bonds and relationships with the children and the families.
- The vibe we got from the staff was so warm & inviting.
- Staff have really great connections with the families and children.
- It really is a home away from home.
- Staff provide the reassurance children need.
- All of the educators are resilient, patient, caring, special and loving.
- Our child has blossomed and loves each day she attends Milestone.
- We were welcomed into the service with open arms.
- Staff are advocates for children.

QUALITY AREA SIX - COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

Current information about the service is available to families in the form of newsletters, centre notices, regular emails, weekly updates, events calendars, communication boards, daily information sheets, social media, website updates and centre displays. Information regarding the centre philosophy, centre policies and procedures, and daily operations are available in the foyer and are also displayed throughout the centre. The director has written a series of newsletters entitled the '*Philosophy Series*' which gives families and the community a break down of the centre philosophy over a few editions. This is on display on a foyer table and also on our website. Our quality improvement plan is regularly shared with families and also posted on our website, encouraging feedback. Current information about community services and resources is frequently shared with families in weekly updates, newsletters, emails, social media posts, and on our community information boards. We encourage families to contact us if they need support or resources, and we will actively seek that out for them.

Educators pass on any relevant information regarding the children in their care to continuing educators when their shift is ending. Children are assisted when moving from room to room by the team. Children have transition visits to their new room as much as is needed before moving up to the next age group. Families are kept informed of this and are included in the development of the transition process. The children progress through each room at their own pace according to their development and willingness to transition. If a child is very excited to join their new room, they have the choice to move up permanently straight away.

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

Families are given multiple opportunities to provide feedback regarding service decisions. We have trialled many different mediums for feedback such as our Facebook page, private Facebook groups, individual Facebook Messenger posts, online surveys, and through email. All families are encouraged to give comments on policies, procedures and service operations. This feedback is included in our quality improvement plan. The centre policy folder is located in the foyer and policies are regularly emailed to families. Service provider information is also located in the foyer. Any changes to policies or procedures at the centre are thoroughly communicated to families via email, social media updates and notices.

Families can contact the centre at any time to chat about their child or the program, provide information, feedback or suggestions and/or ask questions. This is available via a variety of mediums - in person, email, phone, Facebook messenger, private Facebook groups, public Facebook page, and written correspondence. When a child is going to transition into a new room, educators ensure the new team is familiarised with the child's interests, strengths and current learning goals. Families are notified when their child is going to start orientating to the next room.

At times, educators may initiate challenging, and sometimes emotional, discussions with families about their child's development or educators about their practice. Educators will refer to supportive documentation, if required, such as developmental checklists or centre policies. The outcomes of these meetings, and the information shared, is used for short and long term goal planning for a child and ongoing professional development for an educator.

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community

The centre organises centre tours with families at two times daily. Originally, families could pop into the centre for a tour at any time, but during the pandemic period, we have needed to be mindful of social distancing. When families make an enquiry, staff organise a date and time for a tour over the phone or via email. As families have not been able to enter the rooms during the majority of the pandemic, centre tours are completed from the foyer. This means families don't get a full view of rooms and outdoor spaces like they normally would, so we send the family a comprehensive email before coming in for their tour so they have information about the centre before arrival. This email includes a family information booklet, COVID-19 declaration form, and links to videos of the room and outdoor yard for the age groups they are enquiring about. During the pandemic, we also shared a list of management procedures in line with our COVID-Safe plan so they are aware of what they need to do to keep safe when attending for their tour.

QUALITY AREA SIX - COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community cont.

Families are provided with a detailed enrolment pack during their first visit. This includes enrolment forms, events calendars, the weekly menu, and frequently asked questions which provides detailed information about our philosophy and values. The forms required for enrolment are also emailed to families following the visit so they can fill them out online and email them back, if that is an easier option. Families are provided with 'child profile' forms upon commencement so educators can begin familiarising themselves with the interests, culture and abilities of the child. It also includes questions about feeding, sleeping, separating from loved ones and anything particularly important to the family. Families are also able to list their own special talents or skills that they may wish to share with the team. This information is given to the room as well as a detailed email containing other important information listed in their enrolment forms and any important documents submitted by the family.

Families are encouraged to participate in the orientation process with their child and are given access to the family area in the foyer during orientation, if they need a place to sit and relax. Orientation sessions run from 10am-11am daily, and are pre-organised, ensuring that educators are prepared for the child needing additional support when separating from their families for the first time. Families are welcome to book in as many orientation sessions as they like, on any days that they like and can do them over a number of weeks. If a child is struggling with separation anxiety, families have the option of continuing with orientation sessions on any days their child does not attend, if they have the ability to do so. If an enrolment is organised in advance, the centre will contact the family around 2 months before their commencement date to confirm their start date and organise orientation sessions. Extra staff or multi-age educators are assigned to rooms during the one hour orientation period to help with settling the child in.

On a child's first day, staff will support the child and family with the initial separation. Children will be comforted and engaged in activities as a form of positive redirection. Staff are also available to console the family, if they are struggling with the separation. The family will be shown how to sign their child in and out on the kiosks and will be given information about how they can contact us and how we will contact them throughout the day. Educators will contact the parent regularly via phone and Facebook Messenger to give updates during the first few weeks. We share photos and videos of what the child is up to so the family can see how they are settling in. Families are welcome to call, message or visit us as many times as they like to ensure peace of mind.

We post photos, videos, room programs, room setups and daily information on our private Facebook groups so families can feel involved in their child's day, as well as be informed about their child's development and learning while at the service. If families aren't on social media, then children's photos will only be shared directly to them through email, direct Facebook messages and portfolios.

Families are provided with multiple opportunities to give feedback regarding the program, routines and centre operations. We speak directly to families regarding all areas of their child's development. The centre provides families with the option of having family/educator interviews throughout the year. These give families the opportunity to sit down with their child's room leader one-on-one and discuss their child's development. The director has many ways of keeping families informed, including weekly updates at the end of the week, quarterly newsletters, social media posts, emails, community boards and one-on-one conversations either in person or over the phone.

We respect all cultures and believe in unity in diversity. The centre challenges stereotypes surrounding gender bias, culture, age and ability. We believe that the cultural blend of families in our community has a positive effect on our centre and embrace any opportunity to explore these cultures through experiences and celebrations. Our team is committed to providing an environment that is inclusive for every child and family at the centre. We encourage children to engage in any activity or with any child or educator at the centre regardless of their gender, race, culture, abilities, family background, appearance or behaviour. Resources and information around the centre identify with a diverse range of cultures, backgrounds, differing needs, and multicultural themes.

Pre-pandemic, the centre followed an open door policy where families were encouraged to visit the service at any time to participate and enrich the centre programs. We are looking forward to recommendations changing regarding families entering rooms, so we can return to this policy. Over these pandemic years, we have instead turned to social media as a way of connecting with families without compromising on safety. Breastfeeding mothers are encouraged to visit during the day to breastfeed their children if they work or study close by and are interested in doing so. Breastfeeding staff are supported to continue breastfeeding whilst working, and building on their attachment with their own child is encouraged.

QUALITY AREA SIX - COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community cont.

A calendar of events is comprised yearly which provides families with numerous opportunities to visit the centre. We host annual family events for Grandparents Day, Mothers Day, Fathers Day, Christmas and Pre-School Graduation. These are always wonderful events with a very big turnout. We also frequently organise additional family events such as for a birthday milestone or to celebrate an achievement, *e.g. when we were rated exceeding or when we received recognition in the achievement program health priority areas*. When we host family celebrations, we will often play a playlist made specially for the event which will include a mix of the children's favourite songs as well as familiar nursery rhymes and songs, and culturally significant music.

Families are encouraged to visit the centre to share their jobs, talents and skills spontaneously or during planned events such as Careers Week, Diwali, Australia Week and NAIDOC Week. We have also got a yearly wellbeing calendar providing more opportunities for families to get involved. We host one wellbeing day each term which focuses on promoting healthy minds and bodies. We collect gold coin donations from staff and families for these events, as the basis of the day is to raise money for our yearly Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal donation.

Each year, we try to include different community organisations in our program. We have had visits from dentists, the responsible pet ownership program, a local animal farm, Kelly sports program, Minibeasts, AFL workshop and a weekly Happy Feet class, just to name a few. We have annual dental checks for all children and also yearly hearing tests for our pre-schoolers. We organise a centre photo week every year so families can purchase a memento of their child's time at the centre.

The centre collaborates with many different organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing. Early childhood intervention services are used regularly to help provide additional support to families. The centre frequently liaises with our local inclusion support facilitator to gain ideas, resources and support relating to children with additional needs. The centre has been supported by the FKA on a few occasions, and has been provided with a bilingual support worker to help integrate children from different cultural backgrounds into the centre in the past. We are aware of the process involved in accessing inclusion support assistance. The director is aware of how to obtain help by contacting our inclusion support facilitator. This support is sought when families and/or educators have expressed their need for help and the family has given their approval. Forms are obtained and filled out by the family, director and inclusion support facilitator and then sent to the appropriate support agencies.

School transition statements are completed by the centre kindergarten teachers towards the end of the kindergarten year. These reports assist in making the transition to school easier for the child and family. Primary school teachers are encouraged to visit kindergarten children whilst at the service so they can be familiarised with them before they start school. The kindergarten teachers regularly seek support and advice from local pre-school field officers. The centre has close relationships with a few local schools and the director has visited them in the past to learn about their educational program and what they provide to prep children.

We have 3 special friends here at the centre. Their names are Charlie, Geoffrey and Lenny and they are our Milestone giraffe mascots. They are here to share special moments with us. Charlie is our biggest giraffe. He lives at the centre and participates in centre activities & generally keeps an eye on us all. Geoffrey and Lenny are our travel buddies. They are available for families and educators to borrow for adventures and trips. Our giraffe twins have been camping in the Hunter Valley, visited theme parks on the Gold Coast, flown on big aeroplanes, and even went on multiple trips to the United States. Geoffrey, in particular, has been blessed to visit Niagara Falls, the Statue of Liberty, and has even seen Billy Joel live at Madison Square Garden. Families who have been on holidays, with or without the giraffes, can share photos or updates with us, which can form the basis for future interests or projects.

In the pre-school room, the children have access to pre-school buddies named Jasper the Sloth, Bertie the Llama and Blueberry the Fox. Each child has the opportunity to take a buddy home for the week to look after. Children can document their buddies journey with their family at home where they can share a story, photos or drawings, ready to add to the pre-school buddy folder and share with their friends back at the centre.

Families shape and leave a mark on our centre every year, bringing new ideas, knowledge, skills, assistance and feedback that helps to improve all aspects of centre operations. Families regularly show their appreciation of our team in thoughtful and generous ways and are so kind with their feedback. They will often leave reviews on our Facebook page, Care for Kids listing, Google listing or provide a glowing testimonial for our website.

QUALITY AREA SIX - COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Summary of Strengths

We asked families and educators to describe our collaborative partnerships with families and communities and they used the following statements:

- Educator/family relationships are strong.
- Everyone in the centre is treated with respect and dignity.
- We welcome everyone into the centre with warmth and love.
- The centre has great enrolment and orientation processes.
- We celebrate different multicultural events throughout the year.
- The relationships with families are beautiful.
- Educators are very supportive towards families.
- The centre make families feel welcomed and allows for open and consistent communication.
- There are a variety of ways staff communicate with parents.
- Educators ensure families are provided with lots of opportunities to contribute to the program.
- The centre is well known in the local area.
- Orientation is optional for all new children.
- The communication with parents has come a long way.
- Educators treat every family equally and with respect.
- The centre makes every transition a smooth one.
- All of the educators greet families on arrival and say goodbye on departure.
- The centre allows families to breastfeed throughout the day as needed.
- Photos that are posted each day tell me just how much fun my child has.
- The compassion, enthusiasm and over-the-top commitment to families is outstanding.
- Staff made my child's transition to day care so much easier for us.
- The centre has great communication.
- It has a real family-oriented feel.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA SIX - COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

What outcome do we seek?	How will we achieve this outcome?
<p>Element 6.2.3</p> <p>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Strong relationships within the local community are established.</p>	<p>Priority Rating: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all staff are getting ample planning time for the research and development of community programs and initiatives.• Provide information, resources, training and support to staff so they can effectively implement community links.• Organise one-one-one, small group and whole group meetings to brainstorm ideas, develop plans, and review implemented programs.
<p>Success Measure</p>	
<p>Proposed End Date: October 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The centre will become an important part of the local community.• The centre will be well known throughout the local community.• Staff will have a deeper understanding of the families that attend the centre as well as our local community.• Strong relationships with local community organisations and businesses will be established.• The educational program will be enriched by the inclusion of more community experiences, incursions and networking.• An extensive events calendar will be in rotation.• All families, staff and members of the community will feel welcome and accepted at the service.• The centre will develop ways to give back to our local community, city, state, country and the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share information, resources and links with families and staff on our local community via email and public Facebook page / private Facebook groups.• Encourage staff to have discussions with families regarding their skills and talents.• Invite local community members and organisations to visit the children.• Enrol in local and online community initiatives.• Research how other services are embracing the community in their services.• Develop an extensive events calendar which includes local, Victorian, Australian, cultural and International days of observance, importance and awareness, as well as events, initiatives, and incursions.• Organise a range of different incursions that will provide wonderful learning opportunities.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA SIX - COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Progress Notes

- Community incursions include dental visits, dental check-ups, hearing tests, library visits, water safety incursion, responsible pet ownership program, AFL workshop, Thingletoodle road safety incursion, soccer trials, and the Safety Seemore program, just to name a few.
- During Careers Week, families and local community members can visit the service to share what they do with the children.
- The centre is enrolled in the Victorian Achievement Program. This initiative requires services to meet a series of benchmarks in health priority areas in order to be recognised as a healthy service. Members of the Wellbeing Team regularly attend networking meetings with healthy professionals and other centres to help us meet the benchmarks.
- We regularly raise money for local, state and Australian charities.
- We share community information on two small pinboards next to the sign-in/sign-out kiosks, and change this information over fortnightly.
- Each week, a weekly update is sent out which regularly includes information, links and resources about a range of topics, *e.g. mental health support networks, local government initiatives, upcoming immunisation clinics*
- Every 3 months, the centre sends out a comprehensive newsletter to current families. We always include information on special events happening in the local area and also in the city of Melbourne. We also share information about a topic of current interest.
- A calendar of events is developed each year which includes special days, incursions, cultural celebrations and family events. Families are welcome to contribute to these days.
- We host Wellbeing Days throughout the year. These days have been implemented by our Wellbeing Team and focus on the importance of providing a physically and mentally healthy environment for children and staff. Each day has its own theme which all families and staff engage with. The rooms provide healthy experiences throughout the day, and staff are encouraged to bring an item of food to share with the team, that correlates with the theme of the day. We also collect gold coin donations on this day to go towards our annual Good Friday Appeal donation.
- Every Christmas, the centre organises a food drive for a local Christmas Food Appeal.
- Directors meetings occur at least twice a year, where the centre director networks with the directors of our other 4 centres plus the approved providers.
- Staff attended a professional development and networked with professionals at CPEC to support children at the centre who have Cerebral Palsy.
- Directors, room leaders, kindergarten teachers and educational leaders of our company share ideas with one another.
- The centre follows a number of social media accounts that share ideas about celebrating events, supporting different cultures, and strengthening family connections.
- Resources are frequently added to the program that reflect the cultures and abilities of our families and the local community.
- We have been in touch with the FKA Multicultural Resource Centre to access resources and professional development.
- We purchased some online professional development bundles to further develop our skills and knowledge in inclusion, partnerships with families and the transition to school.

QUALITY AREA SEVEN - GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

The centre employs a centre director that has control over the service at all times. She is also the nominated supervisor. The centre director works in the office full time, 5 days per week, so is available to help families with administration enquiries, questions, concerns or provide any support needed. The director is available to families at any time to discuss fees, accounts and subsidies. She has been deemed fit & proper by the Department of Education & Training.

The centre employs approximately 30 educators whom work on a full time, part time or casual basis. We employ a 2IC and an educational leader and have also trained a small group of leading employees who can act as deputy assistant managers in the absence of management. The centre utilises a list of regular relief educators to cover for absences due to illness or leave. The centre director informs families of educator changes as soon as practical through notices, emails and newsletters. Certified supervisors have been appointed as fit and proper to manage the service in the absence of the nominated supervisor. We ensure that there is at least one certified supervisor on opening and closing shifts, and always at least one qualified educator. The roster stays the same week-to-week, with very minimal changes, ensuring continuity for children and educators. The centre has an educator photo display in the foyer and room staff are displayed on room doors.

When a new educator is employed, they are sent a comprehensive email containing many important documents including a position description, educator handbook, code of conduct and philosophy information. Once they commence their employment, they are given a thorough induction, and room educators use an induction checklist to ensure they have been informed on all policies, procedures and routines. The centre director checks the details of all new educators at induction. A fit and proper assessment is conducted and the document is stored in the educator details folder. All educators are required to have a current employee working with children check and/or VIT registration. WWCC/VIT information is required to be submitted to the centre for a status check before beginning the employment process. All staff records required by regulations are kept in an office folder. This information is also stored digitally within each educator's individual file.

The director utilises a centre diary to keep track of important information and ensure family and educator details are current. The centre diary has dates for WWCC, VIT, first aid, CPR, and child protection renewals so the director can inform the staff with one full months notice of expiry. She also keeps a record of children due for upcoming immunisations and sends their families a reminder email a month beforehand. At the beginning of each month, she checks that all educator and family records are up to date. All rooms are given updated documents at least monthly, including family contact details, room lists, social media permissions, and allergy lists.

The centre keeps all records required by the education and care services regulations, such as incident forms, medication forms, attendance records and staff details. The most recent records are filed in folders in the centre office. We also keep digital files of all families on the computer plus two back-up portable hard drives, so records can be accessed digitally, but safely stored. Other documents from previous years are stored in filing tubs in a centre shed inaccessible to the public, or off-site in a locked room of a sister child care centre. Current and previous families have access to their documents when required. The approved provider informs the regulatory authorities of relevant changes to the service with adequate notice.

A child care software program is used to keep track of family information and accounts. This program is linked to the sign-in/out kiosks, so when families use them, to sign in or out, it updates the office program. Rooms have access to the software program via iPads so they can check children are signed in or out and leave messages to families on the kiosk. Statements are sent to families on a fortnightly basis. Payments are made to the centre via a direct debit service, but an EFTPOS machine is on site should a family need to make a deposit payment or fix up an account.

In order to manage staffing and maintain continuity, the roster stays the same week-to-week, with very minimal changes. Rosters are emailed out a fortnight in advance, so staff have the opportunity to book appointments or extra-curricular activities. They are also posted up in the staff room. Time sheets are kept in the staff room for staff to fill out their start, end and break times, and document when they worked directly with children throughout the day. We also document who is the responsible person in charge on these records. Each day, the person in charge organises the breaks, planning and room cover for the day ahead. This ensures that all breaks are covered, planning time is being shared around adequately, and staff are covered before they begin for the day and after they finish. This information is written into room diaries every day so staff know who is covering them and when, and allows us to have a record to refer back to should we need. We also use the kiosks to sign-in and out each day so there is an electronic record of which staff are in attendance at all times.

QUALITY AREA SEVEN - GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations cont.

Serious incidents or complaints are appropriately documented and the Department of Education and Training is notified as soon as practical. All paperwork required to be sent to the DET is completed within the required 24 hour time frame. DET is also notified within 24 hours of any allegations of physical or sexual abuse. We keep documented logs on certain children they have concerns about to ensure the centre has appropriate documentation if needed. The director keeps all information, notes, emails, documentation relating to any children involved with child protection in individual files on the centre computer. All educators are aware of their responsibilities as mandatory reporters, and are regularly updated about the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

The centre director regularly liaises with the approved providers and other centre directors in our company during management meetings. At these meetings, we reflect on policies, procedures and routines and discuss ways we can improve on these services. We have developed new procedures together such as when managing the COVID-19 pandemic or implementing 3 year old kindergarten. The network is very supportive and allows the directors to debrief or seek advice. The approved providers also use this as a time to appraise directors and centres as a small group, but will hold individual appraisals with directors privately.

Our educational leader is responsible for leading the development of our educational program and providing support, guidance and mentoring to our educators. She keeps records of all discussions with staff, notes on the planning cycle, programs reflections and our involvement in the community. The educational leader has the opportunity to update and train staff at team meetings, and is given weekly planning time to manage her requirements. She utilises her planning time to review educational programs, meet with staff, observe practices, and research ideas, resources, training opportunities and support agencies. She regularly holds meetings and forums with individuals and small groups to discuss the educational program and quality improvement plan. The wellbeing team works closely with the educational leader to achieve common goals. The director leans on the educational leader for support and vice versa.

The centre has a current philosophy statement that is reviewed regularly. The philosophy is displayed in the foyer, stored in the policy folder and has been shared on our website. This philosophy was developed with educator, child and family input over a number of years. A copy is given to all families upon enrolment and all educators upon employment. When interviewing prospective employees, the centre director discusses our philosophy with the applicant to see if they have similar values and beliefs. We also view it as an opportunity to share what we are proud of, with members of the early childhood community, in hopes that the same values will be instilled in them throughout their careers. Our centre handbooks provide further information about our philosophy such as what you will and won't see at Milestone so all families and educators know exactly what to expect and how we live and breathe our philosophy.

We are very proud of our centre philosophy and aim to share our vision with all families, educators, students, visitors and the local community. To help others to understand our centre values and the benefits of our educational program, we developed a collection of documents known as the 'Philosophy Series'. Each chapter focuses on a certain aspect of our philosophy and explains how our practices, experiences and documentation link to our philosophy and also to the National Quality Framework. We have compiled a book of all five chapters which is located in our centre foyer and regularly send out individual chapters via email. The chapters are shared with new employees and used as a refresher when staff may need to refamiliarize themselves with our values. The five chapters are Play-Based Learning, Outdoor Play, High Expectations for Children, Celebrations and Events and an Anti-Biased Approach.

The centre has many policies and procedures relating to governance, management and administration including all of those required by the regulations. The centre policy folder is located in the foyer for all We, families and visitors to peruse. They are reviewed on a regular basis - at least annually - by our company management team. All members of the Milestone community - We, visitors, families etc - are encouraged to provide input through policy reviews. We also keep records of suggestions, compliments and grievances regarding policies and procedures and will be guided by this feedback when going through the review process.

QUALITY AREA SEVEN - GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Summary of Strengths

Exceeding Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection cont.

Any family grievances or complaints are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Families are notified on where complaints can be directed through a display in the family information area, in our *'Dealing with Complaints'* policy, on our website and in the family handbook. The centre keeps a 'Grievances and Complaints Register' to document all information relating to a family issue. This feedback is reflected on when reviewing our quality improvement plan. We also store information relating to complaints or incidents in folders on the computer so all information is collated together and easily accessible, if required.

Exceeding Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community

Our quality improvement plan is regularly reviewed and improved on. This self-assessment is based on the standards and elements of the national quality framework. We are given opportunities to review the QIP collaboratively. They have identified strengths, areas of need, goals that we need to work on, and regularly provide updates on how we are achieving these outcomes to add to the plan. Families and visitors are also encouraged to provide feedback for the QIP and we use this information when developing and reviewing our QIP.

We ensure that families and We are aware of the number of ways that we can communicate with one another. Families are kept informed via email, phone, small group meetings, social media, information sessions, Facebook messenger, newsletters, family/educator interviews, centre displays & signs, kiosk messages and in person. We encourage families to contact us via email with any enrolment, withdrawal, holiday, booking enquiries etc. for sustainability reasons and also to keep a record of conversations. We are kept informed via email, phone, individual, small & whole group meetings, social media, information sessions, newsletters, appraisals, centre displays & signs, informal & formal discussions, communication boards & books, and in person.

The director and management team have forged friendly relationships with families, including knowing all of the parents and children's names, making time to have conversations or meetings with families when needed, offering advice or information for families if needed and helping families connect with other organisations such as early intervention.

We asked families and educators to describe our governance and leadership and they used the following statements:

- . Staff ensure they are following the centre philosophy at all times.
- . Management is fast, efficient, organised and very informative.
- . Communication from management is wonderful.
- . Truly impressed on how quickly management responds to queries.
- . Communication from the centre is constant and detailed.
- . Management makes things so easy and happily answers any questions or concerns we may have.
- . The centre has a beautiful philosophy.
- . We are always informed about what's going on.
- . The communication we receive is of a very high standard.
- . Policies and procedures are clearly communicated by staff.
- . Management keeps communication flowing with office updates, phone communication, Facebook updates and email communication.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA SEVEN - GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

What outcome do we seek?	How will we achieve this outcome?
<p>Element 7.1.2</p> <p>MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</p> <p>Policies and procedures have been reviewed to reflect recent feedback from families, staff and regulatory authority.</p>	<p>Priority Rating: High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collate recent feedback from families, staff and regulatory authority.• Consult with staff and director network on changes or additions that need to be made.• Research current Department of Health and Department of Education and Training recommendations.
<p>Success Measure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through all information, advice, and recommendations shared by Federal and State Government bodies.
<p>Proposed End Date: March 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All policies and procedures will be reviewed.• All policies and procedures will reflect current Department of Health and Department of Education and Training recommendations.• The centre will regularly review and adapt policies and procedures as necessary, and will be guided by Federal and State regulations, recommendations and advice.• Families and staff will be kept frequently updated on policy and procedure reviews.• Families and staff will be encouraged to review current policies and procedures and reflect on any changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep staff and families informed via regular email and Facebook updates as well as in-centre signage.• Provide information, resources, training and support to staff and families.• Follow all Federal and State Government social media and sign up for their newsletters.• Organise one-one-one, small group and whole group meetings to brainstorm ideas, reflect on current policies and procedures, and discuss changes needing to be made.

PLAN FOR QUALITY AREA SEVEN - GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Progress Notes

- Policies started being reviewed in January 2022. Family, management and staff feedback since the last review was reflected in the reviews. Updates to government legislation and advice was reflected in the reviews.
- Policies continued to be reviewed throughout February 2022.
- The final remaining policies were reviewed in early March 2022. Child safe standards policy was updated to reflect changes coming into effect in July 2022.
- The policy folder was updated with the new policies and the contents was updated with new review dates.
- Families and staff were sent copies of the policies over 6 weeks, with 5 being attached to a weekly update each week. Families and staff were encouraged to provide any feedback, be it positive or critical.