



**“Growing Your Child’s Future”**

# *Parent Handbook*

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## Welcome to Old MacDonald's Child Care

This handbook is designed to help you understand how the service functions. You will need to read this handbook before your child commences at the service and refer to it from time to time.

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Welcome to and service background	2
<b>1. THE SERVICE</b>	3
1a. Open Doors	3
1b. Our Vision	3
1c. Staff Structure	4
1d. Hours of Operation	4
<b>2. WAITING LIST</b>	4
<b>3. FEES</b>	4
3a. Child Care Subsidy	4
3b. Fee Payments	5
3c. Fee Arrears	5
<b>4. PARENT MEETINGS</b>	5
<b>5. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE</b>	6
6a. Feedback	7
<b>6. DONATIONS</b>	7
<b>7. LEARNING</b>	8
7a. Statement of Philosophy	8
7b. Curriculum and ChildCarers	11
7c. Grouping	12
7d. School Readiness	12
7d. Positive Guidance	13
<b>8. STARTING CHILDCARE</b>	13
8a. Your Child's first day	13
8b. Separation Anxiety	14
8c. What to pack in your child's bag	15
8d. What not to bring	15
8e. Toilet Training	16
8f. Clothing/footwear	16
8g. SunSmart	16
<b>9. ARRIVAL AND COLLECTION PROCEDURE</b>	16
9a. Arrivals	16
9b. Late Arrivals	16
9c. Pick up	17
<b>10. AUTHORISATION FOR COLLECTION OF CHILDREN</b>	17
<b>11. HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b>	17
11a. Health	17
11b. Exclusion Periods	18
11c. Immunisation	18
11d. Medication	19
11e. Accidents	19
<b>12. FOOD AND NUTRITION</b>	19
12a. Food and Nutrition for children under two years	19
12b. Food and Nutrition for children over two years	20
12c. Allergies	20
<b>13. OTHER INFORMATION</b>	20
13a. Safe Sleep and Rest	20
13b. Family involvement/ Volunteers	21
13c. Birthdays	21
13d. Emergency Evacuation	21
13e. Lost Property	22
13f. Parent and Staff Communication	22

## Old MacDonald's Child Care

Welcome to Old MacDonald's Child Care (OMCC). For many parents and guardians, this will be the first time your child has stayed with anyone outside of family or close friends. Our educators are experienced, have a minimum qualification of Certificate 3 in Early Childhood Education and or working towards one. Our educators also have a current Working with Children background safety check, first aid, Asthma, Anaphylaxis and food handling certificates. It is important to us that you feel safe and secure when leaving your child in our care.

As a service, we aim to work in partnership with our families. Your child will gain most from our service when families and educators work in harmony towards the common goals of developing happy, self-confident and inquisitive learners. It is imperative that communication is a two-way process as this allows a smooth transition from home to the service and vice-versa. Throughout the service documents when the word 'parent' is written, we are referring to parent, guardians, carers or anyone else who is responsible for the care of a child enrolled at OMCC.

We look forward to building a lasting relationship with you and your family as we work together to "Grow your Child's Future".

Old MacDonald's Child Care is an Australian private company owned and operated by Mark Sharp. OMCC offers a long day care service that provides care and education for 129 children aged 6 weeks- 6 years.

OMCC journey began in 2007 when MKB Contracting Pty Ltd (the company that owns OMCC) purchased the land and the original building. Mark's plans and dreams for OMCC started in 2010 when the original plans were drawn by an architect. It has been a long and slow process of developing what we all know today as Old MacDonald's Child Care, which began operating on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

There are nine rooms within the service. They are:

**6 weeks- 2 years, 3 rooms** = 12 children x 2 rooms (Lambs and Puppies) 11 children x 1 room (Ducklings)

**2 – 3 years, 3 rooms**= 15 children x 2 rooms (Foals and Bunnies) 10 children x 1 room (Kittens)

**3 –5 years, 3 rooms** = 20 children x 1 room (Chicks), 19 children x 1 room (Calves), 15 children x 1 room (Billy Kids).

Our name **Old MacDonald's Child Care** comes from the following:

**Old MacDonald** came from Mark's daughter who suggested the name due to the service being located on farming acreage.

**Child** means a young human being below the age of puberty or below the legal age of majority

**Care** means the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something.

The history of Orchard Hills within the Penrith City Council started with the Aboriginal Darug tribe and continued in August 1804 when the first land grant was made by Governor King to Rev Samuel Marsden and Captain William Kent.

Later in 1806, Governor Philip King granted 600 acres on South Creek to Mary Putland, the daughter of the incoming governor, William Bligh. Mary named the property Frogmore.

In the early settlement years, the area was known as Frogmore, Mount Hope and York. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of October in 1910, a public meeting was held, and it was decided the area would be known as Orchard Hills.

The history and name of our street Mandalong Close originated when Rick Pisaturo purchased 300 acres of land in Orchard Hills in 1960. With this purchase, Rick established Mandalong Stud, which borders the services back fence. In the early 2000's part of Mandalong Stud was sold off and redeveloped into what we know today as Mandalong Close Orchard Hills.

By developing child care on the site, we are combining the area's history of the school-church (1901) and farmland. Our service logo is a barn and our room names are different farm animals.

## 1. The Service

### 1a. Open Doors

Our service has an '*OPEN DOORS*' policy that invites families and friends to visit and share many experiences with the children.

Our open doors mean:

- O** Our service is open at all times by appointment for parental/ guardian inspection.
- P** Parent participation/ feedback is important to us.
- E** Entry to families, friends and relatives is encouraged.
- N** Never use a service where you are not welcome.
- D** Do come and share your culture, abilities and experiences with us.
- O** Our service prides itself on high-quality education and care.
- O** Our educators are qualified, dedicated, experienced, caring and talented.
- R** Ring us at any time to ask about your child.
- S** See for yourself!



### 1b. Our Vision

At Old MacDonald's Child Care, we create a caring and homely atmosphere for all parents and children. We aim to provide a high-quality service that provides security, guidance, supervision, safety and an educational program for the children and families attending while complying with relevant regulations and legislation.

## **1c. Staff Structure**

Our team consists of experienced and dedicated childcare educators. The qualifications for the team comply with the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2018. Our team's professional profile will be displayed within OMCC and on our website.

## **1d. Hours of Operation**

Old MacDonald's Child Care is open from 7.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday, fifty weeks per year. The service closes for two weeks over Christmas.

The hours of operation at the service are not flexible. Children can only be in attendance during these business hours, as the service is not approved or Insured to cover children on the premises outside these hours.

## **2. Waiting List**

A waiting list application form is to be filled in for each child online through the webpage. Vacant positions will be allocated from the waiting list according to when the application was completed and priority. Three months before the listed start date, families will receive monthly emails to confirm interest in the position. To remain "active" on the waiting list, families are required to reply to the emails from my waitlist. If families do not reply to the monthly emails, their waiting list application will become inactive. Upon confirmation of a position at Old MacDonald's Child Care, an enrolment fee per child is required to secure your position. This fee is non-refundable.

### **Priorities of Access**

Under the Child Care Subsidy, there are no mandatory requirements for filling vacancies, and providers can set their own policies for prioritising who receives a place. However, here at Old MacDonald's Child Care as vacancies arise, the following priorities will be considered for children who are:

- Already enrolled or have siblings on the waiting list
- At risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

## **3. Fees**

### **3a. Child Care Subsidy**



Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available through the Department of Human Services. CCS is a means-tested subsidy that is paid directly to the service on behalf of the family. There are three components that will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy income, activity test and service type.

Applications to claim CCS are made by completing an application online at <http://www.humanservices.gov.au> and logging into your account. For further information, please call Centrelink on 13 61 50. Once your application has been processed the Department of Human Services will notify you of your entitlements. An application may take a few days to a few weeks to process. This means that families are required to pay full fees until approved. However, the CCS starts from the date that your application was processed. Once your entitlement details have been sent through to OMCC's CCSS software system; your account will be adjusted to reflect your entitlements. Any differences that have been paid on your fees account will now appear as a credit. CCS will only be applied to a family's fee account from the first and last day the child is physically present at the service. If a child is absent from care on their first or last day, this day and any consecutive days will be charged at full fees as per the legislations. Please contact Human Services for further information.

### **3b. Fee Payments**



The approved provider determines the fee levels. Upon enrolment, one week's fees plus two weeks bond are required. Fees must be kept up to date at all times. Fees are to be paid on the first day of attendance each week.

Fees can be paid by direct debit (preferred method of payment), Eftpos or credit card. No cash or cheques will be accepted.

When making a payment at the service, these are to be made at the front office or reception area. Payments are then recorded on the payment record sheet and signed by a staff member and the person making the payment.

Receipts will be emailed to families nominated email account. It is important that all receipts be retained in case of any queries.

Fees are not charged for public holidays. However, fees will be charged if your child is absent due to illness and holidays.

Two weeks' notice (excluding annual close down period) must be given **in writing** before withdrawing your child from the service. When two weeks' notice is given, your bond will be used to cover the last two weeks of fees.

The service's only source of income is from fees; therefore it is imperative that you honour your obligation to pay your fees so that we can continue our high standards of care and education for your child.

### **3c. Fee Arrears**

Fee reminders will be sent to the parents who fall behind on their payments.

The service director will issue a second fee reminder, and if fees are not brought up to date within two weeks, the service Director or Operations Manager will issue a third and final fee reminder.

If the fees are not paid, or the defaulting party has made no effort, the child's position, at the discretion of the Operations Manager, may be declared vacant.

Legal action to secure monies owing will be initiated by the Operations Manager. Fees incurred by OMCC to obtain all outstanding fees will be added to the arrears account.

## **4. Parent Meetings**



There are times during the year when parent meetings are arranged to provide families with current information about the service operations and special events. These times are important for bridging the gap between the Service and home and introduce other professionals. Meetings will also be arranged at the service for both educators and families to work together on the National Quality Standards and the Quality

Improvement Plan (QIP). By implementing the National Quality Standards, this assists OMCC to implement a continuous improvement plan that involves staff, educators, parents and management.

Your attendance at the meetings boosts educator's moral and helps to strengthen the partnership between you and the service.

## 5. Grievance Procedure

Old MacDonald's Child Care is here to do what is best for our families. **Please discuss any concerns that you have about the service or your child with staff or management so that they can be dealt with promptly.** If we are unaware of what concerns you, we cannot improve our service delivery. We are here to work with families and to deal with all issues that arise professionally and confidentially within OMCC.

Grievances/Complaints are either informal or formal. All grievances/ complaints/ feedback are recorded on a complaint/ grievance/ feedback form, for which a follow-up is undertaken. Once the document has been completed the complainant will be asked to sign the form to acknowledge the grievance. At the end of the investigation, an outcome will be determined, and the complainant notified. All formal complaints that allege the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised, or the law has been breached are forwarded to ACECQA.

### Informal Grievance and Formal Complaint

Nominated Supervisor, Staff, Educators, Families, Volunteers and Students will:

- Communicate if the issue is an informal grievance or a formal complaint;
- Not be disadvantaged in any way because of a grievance or complaint;
- Consider the following before communicating a grievance or complaint:
  - be clear about the topic you would like to discuss;
  - focus on the issues that are affecting you or your child from your perspective;
  - always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss;
  - think about what an acceptable outcome for all parties would be involved;
  - what you would like to see changed and why;
- Discuss all "little" issues as they occur and not allow concerns to snowball into something bigger. If privacy or confidentiality is an issue, an appropriate meeting time and place needs to be organised;
- Verbally address the issue at the base of the grievance/ complaint with the person who it directly relates to or forward the written grievance/ complaint to the person listed within OMCC;
- Be open to suggestions and flexible with expected outcomes as a lot that is implemented is based on legislation and law;
- Sign OMCC document in acknowledgement of the grievance/ complaint has been lodged;
- Be advised by the person investigating the grievance/ complaint of the outcomes and any improvements that will be implemented because of the grievance/ complaint and sign the document in acknowledgement;
- Listen to, document and follow up on issues raised by children where appropriate;
- Remember that when you have an issue that forms a grievance or complaint, it is not to a person, but with the actions that person has done or have not done. Using the grievance/ complaint procedure correctly will ensure a positive and professional relationship is maintained; and
- Discuss all grievance or complaints with OMCC management before involving outside agencies. If after discussing your grievance/ complaint with OMCC you feel that you need to notify an outside agency, you need to put your formal complaint in writing & address to:  
NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate  
NSW Department of Education and Communities  
Locked Bag 5107  
Parramatta, NSW, 2124  
Phone: 1800 619 113  
Email: [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)



## 6a. Feedback

Feedback is encouraged from everyone within OMCC and will be used to improve delivery in a variety of aspects. Feedback can be given verbally, emailed or in other written forms. Families are encouraged to converse with staff and educators on arrival and departure times. OMCC provides opportunities through a variety of mediums to obtain input so they can be included. Feedback opportunities include:

- Daily Reflections
- Weekly Program
- Learning Assessments
- Interaction
- Notice Boards
- Surveys
- Policy and Procedure Reviews
- Family Meetings



## 6. Donations

Spread the word that your child's service can turn your trash into their treasure by recycling and use the following items:

- Paper- large paper rolls, printer off-cuts, old draft plans
- Cardboard- old boxes, off-cuts
- Dress-up items- hats, shoes, bags, scarves, dance costumes, gloves, ties, old work uniforms
- Scrap materials- wool, lace, material
- Natural items- bark, shells, coral, insects, animal skins, leaves, flower and vegetable seeds, and fresh flowers to decorate our rooms
- Items of clothing for our spare clothes
- Dolls clothes
- Old books
- Craft materials, egg cartons, corks
- Empty containers- Chinese, food items, tissue boxes
- Items to go into our hairdressing, doctors, vets, beach, shops and mechanics prop boxes



## 7. Learning



### 7a. Service Statement of Philosophy

#### **Services Purpose**

Old MacDonald's Child Care (OMCC) is privately owned and operated by Mark Sharp in a unique semi-rural natural setting in Orchard Hills. Our service culture is unique. Within our OMCC community, we have the privilege of embedding the farm life of caring for the animals, growing and eating what the land has to offer and caring for the environment through sustainable practices. These practices complement our healthy and nutritionally balanced meals that are prepared daily by using high quality, locally sourced fresh ingredients.

While in our care at OMCC the children's health, safety and wellbeing are paramount. It is best practice to maintain, promote and implement high-quality standards of hygiene, infection control, monitoring risks, cleanliness, healthy eating, food safety and safety practices. All incidents, emergencies, illness and injuries will be recorded and communicated to families in a timely manner.

**Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships** are established through consistent interactions between educators and children. Educators consider each child as a unique individual with feelings, opinions and values. Through positive interactions and a variety of settings, educators acknowledge that children have rights and view each child as capable and able as they establish a solid base for exploration and learning. When children develop secure relationships, are protected from the elements, feel safe and supported by educators in a nurturing environment they feel more confident and are able to learn.

Educators are sensitive, attentive, responsive, nurturing and affectionate to children's needs. Warm emotional relationships provide children with a sense of security and belonging. Warmth and affection in secure early attachment relationships with familiar adults influence children's ability to regulate their emotions and support future wellbeing by developing a positive self-identity and self-esteem.

Children interact with and develop a secure relationship with people outside the home. When connections form with the broader community children are increasingly able to recognise and respond to the feelings of others and behave in socially acceptable ways. Children also become aware, respect and recognise that others have different feelings and ideas to their own. Educators have a clear understanding of acceptable behaviours. When mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, children are motivated to persevere and explore new opportunities. Classroom expectations are developed in conjunction with children to set guidelines and establish limits while developing problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

Through daily interactions, children learn how feelings and emotions are labelled, interpreted, expressed, understood, managed and regulated. Children are given encouragement and support to talk about feelings and why they and others might feel and act the way they do. Role modelling encourages children to interact, develop relationships and take on a variety of roles within their environment. Educators promote and extend children's independence and development through collaboration, teamwork, positive guidance and encouragement.

**Partnerships** between families, children, educators, supportive professionals and the broader community achieve high quality, positive outcomes that enhance children's well-being, experiences and learning. Partnership with a sense of belonging for families is achieved when welcomed, valued and listened to with appropriate two-way communication. Being welcomed is; a quick smile, friendly conversation or the exchange of information with staff and educators. By participating in the service, a shared decision making process occurs between educators and families and fosters a sense of joint responsibility and accountability, which benefits the children, families and the service. A professional partnership with families will be maintained

for the duration of a families enrolment by educators not linking or accepting connections with families on any platform of social media.

Families are the most influential teachers in a child's life and development journey. Positive relationships with family and OMCC develop a sense of trust, personal identity, autonomy and independence for children.

Valuing, trusting and sharing each other's information, concerns, opinions and knowledge of the child commences with our enrolment and orientation process. During orientation communicated expectations and attitudes from all parties are discussed, and families are informed about the service and how they can participate and receive information through formal and informal methods. Families are encouraged to provide feedback through direct communications, surveys, policy reviews and maintaining personal information. Our customer's feedback is used to reflect on and improve our service delivery. Family information will be handled with confidentiality. At times during the partnership, sensitive issues need to be discussed and will involve giving and receiving critical messages. Ideas should be communicated freely and respectfully in ways that are easily understood, relevant, meaningful and open to each other's perspectives and ideas. Open communication is critical for maintaining a trusting relationship with continued shared decision making approaches.

Productive partnerships within OMCC are achieved by management and educators working collaboratively as a team and have regular opportunities to meet together to share curriculum goals, appreciate each other's views, opinions, skills and knowledge.

Partnerships with the local community such as community elders, support workers and other allied organisations are essential to optimise children's learning and development and to respect and support individual families and children.

Child protection is a shared responsibility within our OMCC community. Educators as mandatory reporters are committed to attending child protection training to be advocates for all children in our service.

**High expectation and equity** recognise and value different types of knowledge, skills and ways things can be done regardless of circumstances or abilities. When achieved through partnership with families all children are more likely to reach their learning potential.

Providing individualised, modified or additional support to children who are vulnerable or experiencing difficulty is vital for inclusion. Children are intelligent, capable and able to progress to achieve their potential when encouraged to think, explore, problem solve, and help make connections with what they already know and can do.

Children are unique in their way and rate of learning, developing and exploring. A child's sense of agency is fostered through their right to express ideas and opinions and share in the decision-making process throughout the day while exploring a safe and secure environment.

Everyday routines and activities are flexible and are used to meaningfully engage children to participate, develop and learn culturally and contextually important behaviours and ways of interacting with people and everyday situations. Educators will assist in developing independence while assisting with meals, dressing, toileting and nappy changes while allowing adequate time for relaxation, meals and rest.

OMCC has a high expectation of effective supervision and interactions of children from our educators to reduce potential harm and manage the risks.

OMCC Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) reflects our commitment to continuous improvement through reviewing our practices for service delivery, curriculum, policy and procedures in partnership with families, educators, staff and management.

**Respect for diversity** underpins curriculum and pedagogy decisions. Australia is a culturally diverse country with a wide range of beliefs, values, traditions, rules and group cultures, which influence belonging, being and becoming.

We are all born belonging to a culture, which is not only influenced, by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities. We wish to bestow pride in all children for our country Australia; by

singing Australia's National Anthem 'Advance Australian Fair' and engaging and exploring learning experiences on Australian. Children have the right to have their culture, identity, strengths, and capabilities acknowledged and valued to develop their own unique individual cultural identity.

Children learn to interact with and relate positively to people from diverse backgrounds as well as children and families from other countries. Importantly, this includes appreciating and promoting a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, values, traditions, histories and experiences.

Responding to diversity impacts a child's attitudes and their ability to recognise and respond to unfair and unjust behaviours, as children are aware of differences in people and social attitudes from a very early age. Children learn about fair and just treatment, positive valuing of difference, and respect by observing people they encounter, the spoken and unspoken language of adults and other children.

Educators hold different and various theoretical perspectives and beliefs on children's learning and development, professional qualifications, backgrounds, experiences and characteristics. Through these skills, educators acknowledge and encourage a positive attitude to difference, foster tolerance, reduce prejudice and develop cultural competence.

Communication between families and educators acknowledges and respects the diversity of knowledge, values, beliefs, aspirations and child-rearing practices and the reasons for them, and use these to inform a strong working partnership, curriculum decisions and pedagogy. Our curriculum values and connects with practice, beliefs of children's culture and communities, when there is continuity between home and OMCC; it motivates children to learn.

**Ongoing learning and reflective practice** involves engaging with questions of philosophy, emerging theories, ethics and practice in a respectful atmosphere to gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children's learning.

OMCC's educational curriculum reflects the Belonging, Being and Becoming- The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) through play. Play-based learning involves children exploring literacy, numeracy, science, art and technology individually or in partnerships with children to revisit and build on past experiences while making choices and being co-constructors in their learning. Learning incorporates children progressing to transition to their formal schooling within the local community.

Children are knowledgeable, intelligent and competent learners and partners in the learning when educators listen to their conversations, observe their actions to find out what they know and are interested in, have sustained conversations that value their ideas and opinions, and use the information to make meaningful curriculum decisions.

OMCC curriculum reflects an ongoing planning cycle that is documented and incorporates observing, assessing, interpreting/ analysing, planning and reflecting. Information obtained is used by educators to reflect on their own values, beliefs and teaching practices and to communicate about children's learning with families on how their child is participating in the educational program. Our cycle is completed in partnership with educators, children and families while reflecting the 5 learning outcomes, developmental areas, interests, experiences to plan for each child's individuality to ensure learning experiences are meaningful.

Pedagogy, practice, observation and assessment are adapted to facilitate children to build on previous and current experiences as well as what they are familiar with, to maintain high expectations and enable children to progress and experience success.

Educators work in partnership with colleagues, children, families and other professionals to share decision-making, engage in conversation and critical reflection about different theoretical and philosophical approaches to the pedagogy they adapt.

## 7b. Curriculum and ChildCarers

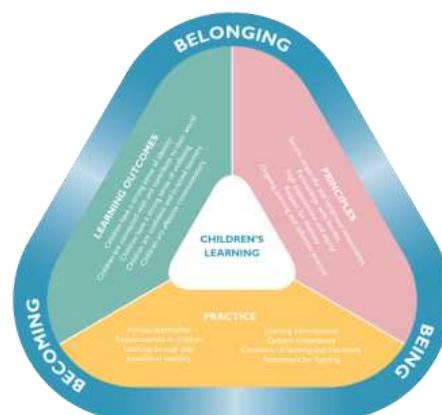
Children benefit most when a curriculum is responsive to their development, needs, interests and abilities. Our curriculum includes local, national and international events throughout the year both planned & spontaneous experiences.

We believe that the curriculum should honour children's active minds and be based on structured and unstructured environments in which children can make choices, follow their interests and have ownership of their learning.

An educator's role is to role model, support, monitor, encourage and assist children in learning and exploring their environment. It is important to recognise the development of the whole child, through the Early Years Learning Framework's (EYLF) 5 learning outcomes and the developmental areas.

Educators intentionally teach, reflect, observe, plan and think about all aspects of a child's learning.

Through a balanced curriculum, children will be encouraged to achieve a strong sense of belonging and self-esteem which will assist the children to reach their full potential.



Families can monitor a child's progress and participation in our service's program via ChildCarers our online method of recording observations and daily reflections. ChildCarers is also used as another method of communication between the service and families.

Families will be sent a link to see their child's learning assessments and daily reflection approx. two weeks after their child has started. To access ChildCarers via a smartphone or tablet, you can download the free parent app by searching for 'ChildCarers' in the Apple or Google app stores. To log in from a PC to access ChildCarers follow the link <https://oldmacdonaldscc.childcarers.com.au/Parents/Login>

Learning assessments (LA) will be linked to the Early Years Learning Framework's (EYLF) and incorporated to scaffold a child's development through play. LA and daily reflections will be shared with families through the ChildCarers app or the parent portal via your login details on a PC. LA is for individual children. All families who are tagged in the daily reflection will be able to see the photos and summary of the daily experiences for that particular room.

Families are encouraged to provide feedback which can be incorporated to further planning.

Only you know your password, nobody at the service knows your password. The accounts for all families are managed by Old MacDonald's Child Care.

Families can print off their child's learning documents to compile their own individual portfolio at the end of each year.

## **7c. Grouping**



OMCC has nine individual indoor learning environments that allow for small grouping of children. Within the groups, children are allocated to a primary educator to maintain continuity of learning documentation. Throughout the day children will actively participate in small group and individual learning experiences. Educators in each group are consistent so that the children can identify and feel connected to a particular educator. The 2-6-year-olds often play together during outdoor activities, while the 0-2's have a separate outdoor play environment. Educators value a curriculum that responds to each child's age and ability. Grouping of children has been organised in such a way that it allows educators to support each child's growing abilities. All age groups will combine at the opening and closing of the day and for special occasions throughout the day.

The service opens at 7.00am, Breakfast will be served until 7.25am in the Lamb's for the 0-2 years children and in the Chicks for the 2-6 years children. From 7.30-8.00 the children will divide into the Lambs (0-2yrs) Bunnies (2-3yrs) and the Chicks for the 3-5 yrs. Grouping will commence again in the evening from 5.00pm. The 3-5 years children will be in the Chicks, 2-3 years children will be in Bunnies and the 0-2 years children will be in the Lambs. From 5.30 the children will be in the Bunnies (2-5yrs children) and the Lambs (0-2 yrs children). All children will be combined in one room (Lambs) from 5.45-6.00pm. Between the hours of 8.00am-5.00pm, if the children and educator are not in their rooms a sign will be placed on the room door to advise where they can be located.

## **7d. School Readiness**

School readiness is an important stage of development for all children entering their formal schooling years after leaving OMCC. The most important areas to consider for "school readiness" are a child's social and emotional areas. There are many opportunities throughout every day for children to prepare for their formal academic learning. Our curriculum is designed to develop independence in all skill areas needed to adjust successfully and transition to "Big School". If a child is not ready for school, they will feel worried and insecure about their ability compared to the other children. Long-term learning and behavioural issues can begin in kindergarten if children do not feel competent at school. When a child is ready for school, they will be excited and happy about the next step in life.

Be sure to talk to the educators about your child's school readiness. They will have a clear idea of how your child is progressing. Educators are here to assist you to decide if your child is ready for school.





## **7e. Positive Guidance**

Educators assist children to understand that rules and limits are necessary to all children's safety.

The rules that are established in conjunction with the children relate to the physical safety and the well-being of the children. Children are inquisitive learners. With rules established such as care when climbing, walking inside, and care and respect for other children, adults and equipment, children can explore their environment without putting their safety at risk. Children learn by example.

As children grow they become more independent; they are encouraged to become confident and capable learners making their own decisions.

Most children test the limits when they first join a new group and again from time to time. If children make choices where their safety or the safety of others is at risk, educators will redirect the child to another learning experience and provide a reason they are being redirected.

If a child displays a continuing disregard for others and the service the problem will be discussed with parents by educators or management. Strategies will be developed in conjunction with outside agencies if necessary. Outside assistance will be sought to support both the family and educators. At all times the "Code of Conduct" guides educators to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of the child involved, and other children are protected. Educators are as consistent as possible, and we would like to include any limits that you have set for home if possible. Where families refuse to work with educators and management to modify behaviour and the safety of others are in jeopardy, a child's position within the service will be placed at risk at the discretion of management and a family may be asked to leave the service.

## **8. Starting Childcare**



### **8a. Your Child's First Day**

Selecting a service that is right for you and your child is vital to feeling comfortable and settled when care commences. Staff and educators are here to support the transition from home to the care environment to ensure that it is as smooth as possible. Before a child starts at the service, educators read each individual enrolment form to familiarise themselves with the individual information to establish a sense of belonging from the first time each child is entrusted into our care. There will be mixed emotions from all parties involved, if at any time there is anything we can do to assist during the settling in process, please let us know.

Depending upon your child's previous experience away from family and their age will determine how they adapt to the new environment. To prepare children with the transition families can:

- Talk to your child about the service and what might happen during the day;
- Bring their child with them for the orientation visit;
- Drive past and drop in, so the environment becomes familiar;
- Include your child in selecting the items needed to start (the list is below)

On your child's first day it is important to establish a routine, so they can feel secure. If your child is a little unsettled on the first day, it's recommended that the first few days are shorter if possible to allow them to adjust to their new environment.

It is normal for children to have some difficulty separating from parents when starting. OMCC will be a new and unfamiliar environment for children. Parents are encouraged to take a firm and positive approach to starting, e.g. 'Monday is a school day, and we always go to school on Monday' to help children settle in.

Children will soon pick up on if parents are feeling positive or guilty about separation. When the time comes, we encourage parents to spend time with their child in the service settling them into their new environment.

On a child's first day, walk in with your child carrying their bag (if appropriate). Show your children where their bag belongs and say good morning to the staff and educators.

When it is time to leave, say goodbye to your child and leave, never sneak away. Tell your child when you will return. Children do not understand time, but they do know what routine they are up to. Stay with this routine until your child settles in. Routine adds security and breaking a routine before a child has established a connection to the new environment can cause stress and anxiety. If your child runs after you, hand your child to an educator (if you stay with your child or keep coming back, you will only be giving them mixed messages and prolonging the inevitable). Usually, children will only cry for a short period before they settle. Even when children are well prepared, some children will have trouble separating. Separation anxiety is all normal and often occurs more in the older children as they are more aware of the social connections. Children start with excitement, and this can last for a few weeks, and they can change to "I do not want to go to school" stage. The different emotions are all part of settling in and could last a few weeks depending on the frequency a child attends. This time is particularly difficult for parent /guardians, but staying strong will benefit your child.

Parents are encouraged to call the service at any time during the day to inquire how their child is going. If a child is not settling in and is distressed, an educator will call and discuss strategies to assist with settling in.



## **8b. Separation Anxiety**

Entering into a new child care arrangement can be an emotional experience for both parent and child. Careful planning and the knowledge that some separation anxiety and tears are normal can make the transition from home to the service as pleasant as possible. How quickly a child adapts depends on a number of factors including the child's age and stage of development; the child's past experiences in the care of others; and the adults' ability to prepare themselves and the child for the separation. Here are some strategies to help make the process go smoothly.

**Share information with the caregiver-** Share your child's unique likes, dislikes, fears, eating/sleeping habits and anything else that will help the caregiver understand your child, ease the transition and provide care that is reasonably consistent with yours.

**Visit the new setting with your child-** Show children where they will be eating, sleeping, playing and introduce the new educator. Familiarity will make the actual separation easier. Preschoolers may enjoy having a book read to them about going to child care.

**Shorten the first few days-** Shorter visits will give your child more time to adjust and will allow him/her to learn by experience that you will return.

**Build trust-** Let your child see you and the educator building a friendly relationship. Include the three of you in a brief conversation or play activity. Children often use their parents as a "bridge" for developing a relationship of trust with a new adult.

**Prepare the night before-** An unhurried, pleasant start to the day is crucial to successful separations. If the child is old enough, involve him/her in the packing their bag and the selection and laying out of clothes. For young children, a choice between two items (e.g., white or blue socks, grapes or an apple) is enough.

**Something from home-** Young children often use an object from home (such as a favourite teddy or blanket) to comfort themselves. Other children prefer to put a family photo or parent's familiar scarf or glove in their pocket or backpack. Eventually, the need for these objects diminishes.

**On the way, on the first day-** Have a calm, positive attitude. Babies and toddlers are especially sensitive to your moods and are quick to pick up any tension in your voice, face, touch or mannerisms. Sing a favourite song or talk about what the child or you will be doing today. In terms, the child will understand, explain when and where you will be picking him/her up ("After lunch and sleep, I will come and pick you up. You will probably be playing outside then. I will know where to find you". A common fear is that you will not return or that you will not find each other.

**Develop a "goodbye" ritual-** Rituals are reassuring, especially during stressful times. Plan a special way to say goodbye, such as a wave through the window or a lipstick kiss stamped on the back of the child's hand. You might ask your older child, "How shall we say goodbye? A kiss or a hug? One hug or two?" Giving them choices in little matters helps them feel that they have some control over what is happening. Regardless of how tempting it may seem never sneak out while the child is distracted. This destroys trust & will encourage the child to cling more on future occasions.

**Avoid repeated goodbyes-** Once you say "I am leaving now" and go through the established goodbye ritual, then go. Stalling can make the child more fearful and clingy, and coming back when you see your child in distress will create a yo-yo effect, as your child will settle when you re-enter the room, but will become distressed again when you leave.

**Accept and listen to negative feelings-** If you or your child are feeling upset about the separation, reassure yourself that you have taken all the required steps to place your child in a safe, nurturing and stimulating setting. Telling children that they are too big to cry or that they are making a fuss over "nothing" only aggravates their fears and fails to help them understand their true feelings. Saying, "I know you are feeling sad. I will miss you too," is more helpful.

Accept the fact that a temporary period of adjustment and some feelings of parental guilt or worry are normal. After you have left your child, please call the service to "see how things are going." Educators are here for both the families and the children. Stress from separations and adjusting to new situations can be a real strain for parents and their little ones. However, with careful planning, the adjustment period can be brief.

Source [http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/wp-content/uploads/RS\\_41-e.pdf](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/wp-content/uploads/RS_41-e.pdf)

## **8c. What to pack in your child's bag.**

The below items are what is required to be packed in your child's bag. All items are to be labelled, so all educators know who to return an item to if it falls out of a bag.

- A change of summer and winter clothes for all children. A few changes (at least 6) of clothing are recommended for younger children, who are toilet training or have just been toilet trained.
- Cot sheets for sleep time and a blanket for the cooler months.
- Labelled water bottle.
- Sterilised empty milk bottles.
- Formula (in original container) for children who require something different to S26 Gold or breastmilk.
- A dummy if required. Dummies are to be replaced every two months.
- A labelled container with a lid for your child's teething ring.
- Disposable nappies for children in a 3-5 years room.



## **8d. What not to bring**

Toys from home are difficult to take care of at the service & often it is difficult for children to share amongst a large group. Please explain to your child that they cannot bring their special items to school as they could get lost or broken. On occasions, items from home can come in for discussion but first speak to your child's educator. If your child takes home equipment, explain that OMCC toys are for sharing at the service, & if everyone took them home, there would be no toys left to play with at the service. Help your child return the toys to an educator next time they come in.

## 8e. Toilet Training

When children are approaching this important milestone in their life, please work with the educators to ensure consistency for your child between home and OMCC. “Accidents” can happen and it is important for this stressful time to be guilt free for children to ensure success.

## 8f. Clothing/ Footwear



Childcare can be a place for messy and exploratory play. When children attend, they need to be in clothing that is comfortable and easy to clean. Aprons are provided for painting and messy play. Occasionally children participate with/ without aprons or explore their environments. Stains may appear on the clothes that cannot be removed.

It is important to select clothing appropriate for the development of each child, e.g. toileting. Children need to experience independence. Any items of clothing that have buttons, belts or overalls may cause “toileting accidents” and distress for children.

All items brought to OMCC needs to be clearly labelled, including shoes, socks, bag and clothing. When selecting shoes, shoes need to be sturdy and support a child while running and participating in physical activity and protect a child’s feet from potential hazards within the environment. Shoes need to be secure and not be able to fall off while playing. All shoes must have the toes covered. No thongs, crocs or any slip-on shoes are permitted. Shoes and socks are only permitted to be taken off while in the sandpit during the warmer months and for rest time. At all other times, shoes remain on.

## 8g. SunSmart



OMCC aims to protect the children as much as possible from the harmful UV rays from the sun. When selecting clothing for children, clothing needs to cover and protect their skin while outside. All tops and dresses are to have sleeves, no tummies showing. Shorts and dresses are to be long enough to cover the thigh. On enrolment, OMCC will supply each child with a hat that is approved by the Cancer Council. All hats are to remain in the service. If children take their hats home and do not bring them back or refuse to wear a hat outside the “No Hat No Play” rule applies, until the family supply a replacement hat or a child will wear their hat. Educators will apply sunscreen to all children 20 minutes before going outside.

## 9. Arrival and Collection Procedure



### 9a. Arrival

Parents/ Guardians are required to sign their child in on arrival to the service using the kiosks. The kiosks are located within all rooms in the service.

Please note that Old MacDonald’s Child Care will not allow any person under the age of 18 years to drop off or collect a child. Authorised persons over the age of 18 are considered adults, mature and capable of safely taking children from the service to the home. Signing a child in and out of the service is a legal requirement that requires an adult to complete.

Signing in and out is a requirement of the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education and Communities who issue the approval for OMCC to operate.

Once you have signed your child in, bring them into the playroom or playground to meet the educators. By bringing your child to the educator, this ensures that the educators know your child has arrived and can welcome each child personally. This opportunity also allows parents to share important aspects relating to the child since they were in care last.

### 9b. Late Arrivals



It is important that parents arrive to pick up their child at the agreed time. If you are delayed, please ring to inform the service when you will arrive. There is a late fee when a child is collected after 6.00pm, \$10.00 per 5 minutes or part thereof for the first 15 minutes and \$3.00 per minute after 6.15pm per child. Any family that have more than five late fees per year will be charged \$20 for every 5 minutes per child. All late fees are charged to your fee account and covers educators overtime wages. Late fees are determined by the service clock.

## 9c. Pick Up

Parents/ guardians are required to sign their child out on arrival at the service. Never collect your child without informing an educator. Collecting your child's belongings is best done with your child - it helps to develop a sense of responsibility and belonging. When collecting your child leave a little extra time to speak to educators about your child's day. If you wish to discuss your child's day, ensure that you arrive by 5.45pm, as this will allow you time to speak to your child's educator before the service closes at 6.00pm.



## 10. Authorisation for the collection of children.



We will not release your child to anyone without authorisation from you. If you wish for someone else to collect your child, they must be an authorised nominee on the enrolment form or have written authorisation from you and produce identification on arrival. Everyone including parents who are authorised to collect a child will be asked for identification by educators until you become a familiar person within the service. If a change in collection arrangements occurs, you need to phone OMCC and inform who will be collecting your child. If prior notice is not given and a person from your authorisation list arrives to collect your child, an educator will contact you before releasing your child.

Educators will be informed of these changes through the staff communication book situated in the office. Phone messages, which relate to a change in your child's pick up arrangements, are recorded there. If there is a parenting/ court order relating to access to a child, OMCC must have a copy on your child's file, and, if required, a delaying tactic will be put into action.



## 11. Health and Wellbeing

### 11a. Health

Childcare can be a time when a child builds up their immune system as it is exposed to different germs and illness other than what is in their home. If a child develops or is exposed to vaccine-preventable disease such as measles, please notify OMCC immediately who will, via notices, notify all other families that the children may have been exposed to a particular illness. It is important that families work with the service to minimise the risk of exposing others to illness. When a child is excluded from the service based on signs and symptoms that educators observe, a family must confirm with a Dr as soon as possible. When an illness has been confirmed, please notify the service ASAP.

It is at the discretion of OMCC Director as to whether a child is sent home. Parents must respect and consider this decision as final.

If a child has had an infectious illness, a letter of clearance from a medical practitioner is required when a child returns to the service. Please ring if in doubt and to advise if a child will be absent. Children who become ill during the day must be collected as quickly as possible. We are unable to provide the 1 to 1 care that sick children require. Below is a list of the most common illness a child could be exposed to in their life. Each item explains what the exclusion period is and if a doctor's certificate is required for re-entry. Please find a list of exclusion periods below.

## 11b. Exclusion Periods

### Disease / Illness    Period of Exclusion

<b>Chicken Pox</b>	Excluded until all blisters have dried (at least five days). Doctor's clearance required to return.
<b>Conjunctivitis</b>	Excluded until discharge has stopped from eyes. Doctor's clearance required to return.
<b>Croup</b>	Excluded until the child is feeling well. Croup usually gets better in 3–4 days.
<b>Diarrhoea</b>	Until all symptoms have cleared and until 24hrs after the last loose motion. Doctor's clearance required to return.
<b>Fever</b>	Excluded until 24 hours after fever has returned to normal.
<b>Hand Foot &amp; Mouth</b>	Excluded until all blisters have dried. Doctor's clearance required to return.
<b>Head Lice</b>	Excluded until effective treatment has been implemented. To return hair and scalp must be free of nits and eggs and checked by an educator on returning to the service.
<b>Oral Herpes (cold sores)</b>	Excluded while a lesion is weeping and until scabbed over.
<b>Impetigo</b>	Excluded until appropriate antibiotics have commenced for 24 hours and all sores covered with a waterproof dressing. If sores are unable to be covered, then exclusion until fully healed. Doctor's clearance required to return.
<b>Measles</b>	Excluded for at least four days from the onset of the rash. Doctor's clearance required to return.
<b>Meningitis (viral)</b>	Excluded until well.
<b>Meningococcal Infection</b>	Excluded until appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed.
<b>Mumps</b>	Excluded for nine days or until swelling has gone. Doctor's clearance required to return.
<b>Ring Worm</b>	Excluded until all evidence of infection has disappeared, and the child is no longer infectious. Doctor's clearance required to return.
<b>Rubella</b>	Until fully recovered. For at least four days after the rash appears,
<b>Tonsillitis</b>	Excluded until antibiotics have commenced for 24 hrs.
<b>Vomiting</b>	Until all symptoms have cleared and normal diet has resumed for 24 hours
<b>Whooping Cough</b>	Excluded until five days after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment or for 21 days from the onset of coughing. Doctor's clearance required to return.

## 11c. Immunisation

When enrolling a child in OMCC, an immunisation history statement must be supplied, or a medical exemption will be provided in compliance with the NSW Public Health Act. The new requirements prevent OMCC from enrolling children unless immunisation history statements certificates state that they are fully immunised, have a medical exemption, or on an approved catch up plan. If families have not provided OMCC with an up to date immunisation history statement and there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease in the service, and your child is considered "at risk", they will be excluded from the service until it is declared safe to return. During a child's absence, fees are still payable. Unvaccinated children will be excluded from the service in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease for their protection.

## 11d. Medication

It is our policy that we will administer medication (prescription and non-prescription) according to the doctor's/ pharmacist's instructions on the dispensing label. To administer medications, parents must complete a "Medication Record" following the dispensing label instructions. Medication forms are in each room. Medication will only be administered if the medication is:

- In the original packaging
- Labelled with the child's name
- Is within the current expiry date, and
- A medication record has been completed.



Any medication to be administered must be handed to an educator for appropriate storage. No medication is to be kept in a child's bag. OMCC will not take responsibility for any medications left in a child's bag, nor will the medication be administered. First aid certified educators administer all medications. Non-prescribed medication (e.g. teething gels, nappy rash powders and cream) will only be administered to children if they have a dispensing label. When a child is teething or for other requirements determined by a medical practitioner, paracetamol will be administered according to the label and letter from your child's doctor. All medications are required to have a dispensing label from a pharmacist. Children are required to be kept away from the service until three doses or 24hrs have passed when commencing new medications.

## 11e. Accidents



All injuries that occur at OMCC will be treated by educators in regard to cross infection. Educators will record the incident and notify the parent (even for a minor scratch). On arrival to collect your child, parents will be asked to read and sign an incident report prepared by educators. This report details the incident and the medical procedure carried out by educators. In the event of a serious incident where a child requires medical treatment, the Nominated Supervisor or delegate will contact the parents. If parents are unable to be contacted, the nominated emergency contact will be notified. In the event of being unable to make any contact, the Nominated Supervisor reserves the right to call a medical practitioner and receive their verbal authorisation to take further action. It is fundamental that parents ensure emergency contacts are reliable and available.

## 12. Food and Nutrition

### 12a. Food and Nutrition for Children under two



Sterilized bottles for children to be fed formula or breastmilk are to be clearly labelled with the child's name and are to be supplied by the families. OMCC will be supplying the following formulas:

1. S26 Gold Alula Newborn 0-6 months
2. S26 Gold Alula progress 6-12 months

Children over one year of age will be provided with cow's milk. If a child does not drink the formulas supplied by OMCC, parents need to supply the formula that their child would consume while in care. Educators will wash the bottles per child after use for the families to collect in the evening. Bottles will only be sterilised when required to be used again during the day by the educators.

When solids are introduced to children, each time a new food is added to the diet, the new food item must be consumed at home first in case of any allergic reactions. As food items are added to your child's diet, please advise educators so the items can also be consumed at the service in accordance with the national infant feeding recommendations.



## **12b Food and Nutrition for children over two**

Old MacDonald's Child Care provides a nutritional menu for all meals based on the Nutrition Australia and Eat for Health guidelines. Breakfast is served between 7.00am-7.30am. The last breakfast will be served at 7.25am. If you are arriving after this and you would like your child to have breakfast, you are more than welcome to bring breakfast with you.

All meals provided throughout the day are prepared on site by our cook in accordance with our displayed nutritionally balanced and designed menus. Meals and snacks include fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products, lean meats and alternatives. Foods will be high quality, locally sourced and fresh ingredients where possible. Children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day and in accordance with the Nutritional guidelines. The food will be adequate in quantity and in accordance to the growth and development needs of children.

## **12c. Allergies**



We will have some children that are enrolled with severe allergies to some foods.

To ensure the safety of all children enrolled at OMCC all parents need to work together to protect these children. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated, as the allergies these children have are life threatening and if this was your child, you would like other parents to cooperate for the greater safety of others.

When a child is enrolled with severe allergies (anaphylaxis), the allergen will be listed in the foyer. If your child consumes any of the notified allergens before arriving at OMCC, please ensure that they have washed their hands and face, as any traces of these items that come into contact with these children is enough to cause a severe reaction where their throat constricts, and they are unable to breathe.



## **13. Other Information**

### **13a. Safe Sleep and Rest**

Time is set aside each day for rest and sleep. Educators will look for and respond to children's cues for tiredness and have open communication with families in regards to the children's need for sleep and rest during the day.

Rest time is for the children to relax after the morning activities and for their minds and bodies to be fresh for the afternoon curriculum. During rest time, a relaxing, calm and tranquil atmosphere is created for the children to be guided through meditation, yoga or auditory stories for 20-30 minutes. After this time, children will participate in quiet and calm experiences while other children sleep.

When age appropriate, children will assist make their beds using a cot sheet provided from home. Sheets are to be brought to the service on your child's first day of each week and at the end of the week, the sheets need to be taken home and washed. A blanket can be brought in for rest time in the cooler months.

For children 0-2 years sheets are placed in the child's bag at the end of rest time. The children in the 2-5 years, the sheets are placed in an individual sheet and hat basket labelled with each child's name.

Security blankets may be brought from home. However, they should remain in the child's bag until rest time. Only items approved by RED NOSE will be placed in the cots for children 0-2 years.

## **13b. Family involvement / Volunteers**

We value the contribution of volunteers to OMCC. The educators here at Old MacDonald's Child Care would like to encourage our families to become more involved in their child's day while at the service. Families are encouraged to suggest interesting aspects of their family or working lives, as family contributions enrich the children's experience. Sharing family cultures, experiences, skills and knowledge enrich the lives of all the children, educators and families that attend our service.

Special activities are arranged during the year to encourage all family members and other members of the community to participate in the services activities, e.g. Mother's Day, Easter, Father's Day and Christmas.

When a family member enters the service to spend time with their child, they are required to enter their name and times on our visitor's register located in the foyer.

Parents are also required throughout the year to complete parent surveys, policy suggestions, and evaluations, these documents are an important process for the service, as they allow us to include parent feedback, opinions and suggestions. It is important to have input from all aspects of our community.



## **13c. Birthdays**

Food items for special occasions such as birthdays are encouraged, as they help children celebrate a special occasion with their friends. Individual items such as fruit waffles, banana pops, mini muffins or doughnuts are preferred as this minimises the cross infection when candles are blown out. If you are making any food, please ensure that you provide a list of ingredients, and for purchased food items, the ingredients will be on the container. If the service is not supplied a list of ingredients, the food item will not be shared with the other children. (Note- please ensure there is adequate food item for the number of children in each room) If you would like to bring anything else, please discuss this with your child's educators before the items are brought in.



## **13d. Emergency Evacuation**

Here at Old MacDonald's Child Care, we practise emergency procedure drills approximately once a month. The drills practised are either lockdown or evacuation.

In the case of a situation when an evacuation or lockdown is required, the person discovering the situation raises the alarm according to the situation and notifies the Responsible Person on duty.

Depending on what drill is occurring will determine if the educators and children are evacuated or relocated to the designated lockdown area. For an evacuation, once the alarm has been raised, one educator per playroom will assemble the children, by using the evacuation rope. The other educators will collect the rolls, emergency contact folders, medication bags; check the storerooms, bathroom, change area, hallways, kitchen and foyer. All power points and lights will be turned off, all doors and windows to be closed where possible, and the keys will be taken to the service. When required all children will be evacuated to the emergency assembly point located in the rear staff car park. All children will be assembled in the staff car park while one educator marks the rolls, and the other educator will do a head count. All educators will reassure the children, and attend to first aid while waiting for professional assistance. The Responsible Person on duty will call 000, remain calm and report the situation.



### **13e. Lost Property**

Any item that is found not labelled will be placed in the lost property baskets in the sign in cupboards in each room. Lost property will be sorted every two months. Any item that remains unclaimed will be donated to a local charity or placed in the spare clothing containers for the service.

### **13f. Parent and Educators Communications**

We recognise that to provide quality care and education for children; there needs to be a partnership between parents and educators. By developing a relationship with your child's educator it allows for the exchange of information and experiences with your child and assists us to support their growth and development.

We understand that parents are busy people and have many demands on their time. We know as educators we are also kept busy meeting the demands of a high-quality service. However, we will always make time to talk. Some of the other forms of communications used at OMCC include:

- Notice boards
- The child's 'file' - for art and any other items that cannot be emailed.
- Parent meetings and social occasions at the service.
- Posters and pamphlets
- Sign in and out kiosks
- ChildCarers
- Newsletters



**In the parent library is our policy and procedure folder; this folder contains information on how, what and why we do things here at Old MacDonald's Child Care. If you would like to discuss any of these issues, please feel free to talk to the Director or Educators.**

**The parent library contains a variety of information and documents for families to read. Please sit, relax and read the many documents on offer.**

Childcare is Fun!