Cuddles

Early Learning & Childcare

Family Handbook

Welcome to Cuddles!

We are so excited to be part of your family's journey and feel incredibly honoured that you've trusted us with one of life's greatest privileges—helping your child learn, grow and thrive.

At Cuddles, we believe childhood should be filled with wonder, laughter, discovery and love. Every cuddle shared, every question explored, every milestone celebrated and every friendship formed helps shape the extraordinary little person your child is becoming. That's why everything we do is guided by one simple philosophy... ***Love Lives Here.***

Our passionate Educators are committed to creating warm, nurturing environments where children feel safe, valued and inspired to explore the world around them. Through meaningful relationships, play-based learning and genuine partnerships with families, we strive to give every child the very best start in life.

This Family Handbook has been designed to help you become familiar with life at Cuddles. Inside, you'll find helpful information about our programs, routines, policies and the many ways we'll work together to support your child's early learning journey.

If you ever have a question, a concern or simply want to share a special moment, our team is always here to help. We believe the strongest partnerships are built on open communication, trust and kindness, and we look forward to getting to know your family.

Thank you for choosing Cuddles Early Learning.
We can't wait to watch your child's confidence soar, their personality shine, and their extraordinary childhood take shape.

Welcome to the Cuddles family!



Cuddles CEO & Founder

Love lives here.

At Cuddles, love isn't found in just the grand gestures. It lives in the hundreds of thoughtful choices we make every single day.

~ The warm welcome at the gate.
~ The cuddle after a wobbly goodbye.
~ The birthday remembered.
~ The favourite teddy waiting.
~ The washed outfit folded with care.
~ The room lovingly prepared for tomorrow.
~ The extra photo sent to brighten a parent's day.

Love Lives Here is more than a motto - it's the philosophy that guides every interaction, every decision and every detail of our day.

It shapes the way we nurture children's curiosity, encourage independence, celebrate individuality and create beautiful environments where every child feels they belong. It guides the partnerships we build with families, the way we support one another as a team, and the care we take in even the smallest details.

Because when children feel deeply loved, they become confident learners. When families feel genuinely supported, they know they belong. And when love is at the Centre of everything we do, extraordinary childhoods take shape.



Your Cuddles Journey

Taking the next step...

Enrolment Process. Here's what to expect...



STEP 1

Enrolment Submission

Complete your enrolment through our online enrolment form and submit any required documentation. Our team will then confirm your child's place and guide you through the next steps.



STEP 2

'Stay n Play' (Orientation)

Before your child begins, we'll invite your family to attend two relaxed orientation visits. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet your Educators, explore your new room, build connections and help your child feel confident and excited for their first day.



STEP 3

Confirm Your Place

Once your enrolment has been confirmed, we'll send you a welcome email with everything you need to get started, including your enrolment confirmation, orientation details and any final information before your child's first day.



STEP 4

First Day of Cuddles!

It's time to begin your Cuddles journey! Our team will be ready to welcome your family, help your child settle in and ensure they feel safe, loved and supported from the moment they arrive.

Orientation

Helping your family feel right at home.

Starting childcare is a big milestone—for children and parents alike. Our relaxed, personalised orientation process is designed to help your family feel comfortable, build confidence and create meaningful connections before your child's first day.

Why do we offer Orientation?

Our orientation visits give you and your child the opportunity to:

- Meet your child's Educators and begin building meaningful relationships.
- Share your child's routines, interests, personality and individual needs.
- Discuss your family's goals, expectations and any questions you may have.
- Explore the learning environments and become familiar with daily routines.
- Help your child feel safe, confident and excited before their first day.

Recommended

2 x Sessions
1–2 Hours Each

What happens during Orientation?

Your first visit is all about getting to know one another. We'll learn about your child while showing you around your new room.

During your second visit, your child can begin engaging with the environment and Educators while you remain nearby. We follow your child's lead, creating a gentle transition that builds confidence at their own pace.

Settling In

Every child settles differently, and that's okay.

We recommend starting with a shorter first day where possible, gradually increasing attendance as your child becomes more comfortable. Throughout those first weeks, we'll keep you updated, celebrate milestones and work closely with you to ensure your child feels safe, secure and supported.

Daily Bag Checklist:

- [ ] BACKPACK
- [ ] BROAD BRIM STYLE HAT
- [ ] WATER BOTTLE
- [ ] SPARE SET OF CLOTHES (MORE IF TOILET TRAINING)
- [ ] STERILISED BOTTLES OF FORMULA/ EXPRESSED BREAST MILK FOR THE DAY (BABIES)
- [ ] CHILD'S OWN SPECIAL NAPPY CREAM
- [ ] SUNSCREEN IS PROVIDED, HOWEVER IN CASE OF SENSITIVE SKIN/PREFERENCES, PLEASE PACK YOUR OWN (CLEARLY LABELLED)
- [ ] CHILD'S OWN COMFORTER, IF HELPFUL FOR SETTLING

All personal items brought into the Service are required to be **clearly labelled** with the child's name. We kindly ask you **not to bring any toys** or **other resources from home**.



Explore our Service

Our Offering

At Cuddles Early Learning, we offer a range of care options to cater to the needs of many families.

Long Day Care (6wks-5yrs)

- Full-Time
- Part-Time
- Casual

Daily Inclusions

- 5 x Delicious Meals
- Nappies & Wipes
- Cows Milk
- Bedding & Linen
- Sunscreen

OSHC (4-12yrs)

- Before School Care
- After School Care
- Vacation Care

*Across each of these service offerings we also offer **Casual bookings** for those that require a more flexible care option.*

Our Rooms

Every stage of childhood is unique, and every child develops at their own pace. That's why at Cuddles Early Learning, our rooms are thoughtfully designed to nurture your child's confidence, curiosity and independence as they grow.



Hippo Room (Babies)

6 weeks - 2 years old

Ratio 1:4

Your child will begin to...

- Build secure relationships
- Gain confidence moving, exploring and communicating
- Discover through sensory play
- Develop independence through everyday routines

Love means...

- Following your baby's individual routine
- Consistent familiar faces
- Comforting every wobbly goodbye
- Daily cuddles, songs and stories
- Celebrating firsts
- Embracing messy play

You'll love...

- Regular photos and updates
- Bespoke Baby menu
- Gentle transitions at drop-off
- Free nappies & full-cream milk



Giraffe Room (Toddlers)

2 - 3 years old

Ratio 1:5

Your child will begin to...

- Build friendships
- Find their voice
- Develop confidence and independence
- Learn through play and discovery

Love means...

- Encouraging "I can do it!"
- Helping children find their voice
- Supporting toilet training
- Embracing role play
- Muddy knees and outdoor adventures
- Exploring emotions together
- Celebrating milestones

You'll love...

- Daily creative experiences
- Lots of outdoor play
- Rich language experiences
- Focus on self-help skills



Zebra Room (Kindy)

3 - 5 years old

Ratio 1:10

Your child will begin to...

- Prepare for school
- Build resilience
- Grow independence
- Develop a lifelong love of learning

Love means...

- Building confidence before school
- Asking big questions
- Taking ownership
- Preparing your child for life, not just school
- Learning through children's interests
- Building confidence before academics

You'll love...

- School readiness program
- Incursions & excursions
- Bespoke Cuddles extra-curricular activities
- Graduation celebrations
- Strong school partnerships
- Community involvement
- A nutritious menu offering five (5) fresh meals prepared daily by our in-house Chef



Lion Room (Schoolies)

Kindergarten - 12 years old

Ratio 1:10

Your child will begin to...

- Develop friendships and social skills
- Further nurture interests and skills discovered at school
- Enjoy a balance of adventure, creativity and relaxation

Love means...

- Starting and ending every school day with a warm welcome
- Giving them the freedom to play, create and simply be kids
- Creating exciting Vacation Care experiences they'll talk about for weeks
- Providing a safe space beyond the classroom

You'll love...

- Safe school drop-offs and pick-ups
- Action-packed Vacation Care excursions and incursions
- Healthy morning and afternoon snacks
- Plenty of outdoor play
- A relaxed, home-away-from-home environment where friendships flourish

Cuddles OSHC Explorers

At Cuddles, our commitment to childcare extends beyond the preschool years. We understand that modern family life is full and fast-paced. That's why our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) program is designed to give families peace of mind, while giving primary school children (aged 4 to 12) a place they love to be.



Before & After School Care

Our dedicated and fully qualified team delivers engaging and safe before and after school care, ensuring children begin and end their day in a supportive, stimulating environment, enriched with activities that cater to their individual interests and developmental needs.



Vacation Care

Our Vacation Care program transforms school holidays into exciting adventures! Children enjoy an engaging mix of on-site activities and memorable excursions aboard our beloved Cuddles Bus, making each holiday period special.



Safe & Reliable School Drop-Off & Pick-Up

Our Before & After School Care includes convenient pick-up and drop-off services to and from selected local primary schools*, aboard our Cuddles Bus!

**Pick-up and drop-off services vary by location. Please contact your local Cuddles Centre for details and availability.*



Dedicated OSHC Space & Resources

Every OSHC space is decked out with the things we know school-aged children love: a Nintendo Switch (strictly only the active games that get them moving and grooving), Lego and construction, a dedicated arts & crafts corner, chill-out zones, and more. They also enjoy full access to the outdoor yard, where they're encouraged to run, play, and make the most of their time with us.

Connection Starts with Communication

At Cuddles, we know that leaving your child in someone else's care is one of the biggest acts of trust a family can make.

That's why we believe communication is more than sharing updates—it's how we build genuine partnerships, celebrate childhood together and help you feel connected to your child's day, wherever you are.

Daily Updates Through Our Parent Communication App

Our parent communication app gives you a window into your child's day.

From learning moments and milestones to photos, meals, sleeps and daily observations, you'll be able to follow your child's journey as it unfolds.

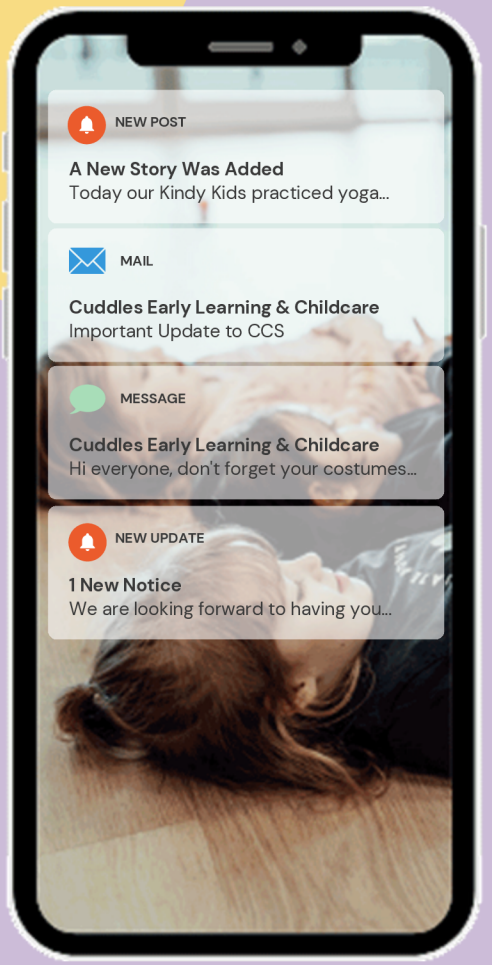
You'll also receive important room and Centre updates, with direct messaging available should you ever need to reach our team.

Because we know that sometimes, one little update or photo can brighten your whole day.

Email, Texts & Phone Calls

From time to time, we'll also keep you informed through email, SMS, phone and official Letters.

Whether it's important Centre updates, upcoming events, reminders or helpful information, we'll always aim to communicate clearly, thoughtfully and only when it matters.





Your child's safety is at the heart of everything we do. Our experienced Educators create secure, nurturing environments where children feel safe, confident and supported every day. We maintain high standards across supervision, hygiene, nutrition, sleep routines, risk management and emergency preparedness, while working closely with families to ensure every child's individual needs are understood and supported.

Safe Digital Practices

Protecting children's privacy is part of how Love Lives Here. Across all Cuddles Centres, personal mobile phones are securely stored away while Educators are caring for children, and photos and learning stories are captured only on approved Cuddles devices using secure childcare software. Images are stored safely and never shared from personal devices or personal social media accounts. Where installed, CCTV supports the safety and security of our Centres and is never located in bathrooms, nappy change areas or other private spaces. We also ask families to respect the privacy of all children by avoiding photographs or videos that include other children without permission.

Ways we keep your little onse safe

- ✔️ Secure PIN Access
- ✔️ Centre-Wide CCTV
- ✔️ Daily Safety Checks
- ✔️ Active Supervision Plans
- ✔️ Qualified First Aid Educators
- ✔️ Child Protection Trained Team
- ✔️ Safe Educator Ratios
- ✔️ Extra Educators on Excursions
- ✔️ Hi-Vis Cuddles Excursion Vests
- ✔️ SunSmart Practices
- ✔️ Compliant Soft-Fall Surfaces
- ✔️ Secure Outdoor Fencing
- ✔️ Faceless Social Media
- ✔️ Phone-Free Learning Environments
- ✔️ Healthy Chef-Prepared Meals
- ✔️ Feed Australia Approved Menus
- ✔️ Individual Medical & Allergy Plans
- ✔️ Safe Sleep Practices
- ✔️ Safe School Transport Procedures
- ✔️ High Hygiene Standards
- ✔️ Emergency Evacuation Drills
- ✔️ Continuous Staff Training



Learn. Play. Grow.

Explore Our Program

Love Lives Here - Our Educational Philosophy

When children feel secure and valued, they become curious. Curiosity inspires exploration. Exploration builds confidence. And confidence creates lifelong learners.

That's why at Cuddles, ***Love Lives Here*** isn't just our philosophy—it's the foundation of the learning environment, experiences and programs we create.

What Learning Looks Like at Cuddles



L

Learn through play.

Children explore, discover and develop through meaningful, hands-on experiences.

O

Open hearts & minds.

Every child is respected, heard and encouraged to be curious.

V

Value every child.

We celebrate each child's unique strengths, culture, interests and abilities—using them to help shape our curriculum every day.

E

Encourage lifelong learning.

We nurture confidence, independence and resilience that lasts far beyond childhood.

Our Extra-Curricular Activities

At Cuddles, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to discover what they love. That's why our thoughtfully designed extra-curricular experiences are included for every enrolled child aged 0–5 years, at no additional cost. From movement and mindfulness to music, sport, creativity and cultural experiences, each program is carefully chosen to nurture confidence, curiosity and a lifelong love of learning—all through the joy of play.



Let's Squiggle



Messy Play



Jolly Phonics



Junior Goals



Shake 'n Bake



15 Mins Mindfulness



Language & Culture Day



Optional Extra: Happy Feet Fitness

Sustainability

Our Centres have strong sustainability programs that are embedded in our daily routine, including:

- Recycling
- Gardening
- Energy conservation
- Water conservation
- The use of natural resources in all indoor spaces (shells, logs, leaves, rocks etc)

Where possible, the resources in our service are chosen from manufacturers using materials derived from sustainable sources. Plastic toys are kept to a minimum.

Our membership with ***Remida*** allows us to source natural and recycled materials for art & craft and endless play.





Nutrition

At Cuddles, we partner with feedAustralia to fuel the growing minds (and curious tastebuds) of our tiny food critics.

With a seasonal Winter and Summer menu on a four-weekly rotation – we're serving up five nutritious, delicious and nourishing meals, prepared fresh onsite daily by our trained and certified Chefs!

We also aim to cater to all dietary requirements, including daily vegetarian meal options, sugar-free purée options for our early eaters, and Halal meat options for families who require it.

Should you have any specific dietary requirements, our team will always do our very best to meet your needs.

Bon appétit!

Find our Current Menu displayed within our Centre



Staying in the know

Your Quick Guide to Everyday Policies

Daily Practices

Everyday at Cuddles

Extra Booking Requests

- Casual extra bookings requests must be made via the Parent Communication App. Note a booking is not confirmed until it has been accepted by the Service
- Permanent booking request (change of days) must be made with the Centre Manager, who will review Centre availability and finalise booking changes.

Signing In and Out of the Service

- Children must be signed in and out each day using the approved attendance system.

Authorised Collection

- Only authorised people listed on your enrolment may collect your child.
- Photo identification may be requested.
- Changes must be provided in writing.

Court Orders

- Copies of parenting or court orders affecting collection arrangements must be provided. Without a court order we cannot stop an authorised person from collecting a child.

Accidents, Incidents & Injuries

- If your child is involved in an accident, injury, illness or trauma while in our care, we will notify you as soon as possible. All incidents are documented, including any first aid provided, and families will be asked to review and acknowledge the incident record.

Birthdays

- Celebrating birthdays is a special part of life at Cuddles, and families are always welcome to join us. Decorations & party bags are welcome, however outside food and treats are not permitted. Please speak with your Centre Manager beforehand.

Personal Belongings

- Clearly label belongings.
- We ask that you do not bring any toys or resources from home unless requested.
- Comforters are always welcome.

Baby Essentials

- Unlimited full-cream milk and nappies are provided.
- Please provide sterilised bottles, infant formula and/or expressed breast milk, clearly labelled with your child's name.
- If required, please provide a clearly labelled, in-date nappy cream for our Educators to apply with your authorisation.

Sun Safety

- Our SunSmart program includes sunscreen, protective clothing and shaded outdoor play.
- Please pack a SunSmart hat, such as:
  a. legionnaire hat or bucket hat with a deep crown and minimum 5 cm brim; or
  b. broad-brimmed hat with a minimum 6 cm brim.
- Sunscreen is provided for all children. If your child requires a specific sunscreen due to sensitive skin, allergies or family preference, please provide a clearly labelled sunscreen for our Educators to apply.

Excursions

- Written permission is required before children participate in excursions.

Outside Food & Drinks

- We ask that families do not bring food or drinks from outside the Service unless approved by the Centre Manager. Any required dietary, cultural or medical needs will be catered for in partnership with your family.

Photography

- Photos of your child may be taken for daily learning updates and displayed within the Centre, in accordance with your family's consent preferences and our **Safe Use of Digital Technologies Policy**
- In line with our **Safe Use of Digital Technologies Policy** identifiable images of children are never shared on our social media channels.

Working Together

Family Partnerships

- We value strong partnerships with families and encourage open communication, involvement and feedback.

Feedback & Complaints

- We are committed to resolving feedback and complaints promptly, fairly and confidentially. All concerns are assessed objectively, with each person given the opportunity to be heard before decisions are made. Formal complaints are managed in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Respectful Behaviour

- We are committed to providing a respectful, safe and inclusive environment for children, families and Educators.

Ending Enrolment

- Where enrolment conditions or safety requirements are not met, Cuddles reserves the right to suspend or terminate an enrolment in accordance with our policies and applicable legislation.

Health & Safety

Emergency Contacts

- Families are responsible for keeping emergency contacts current.

Emergency Drills

- Regular evacuation and lockdown drills are conducted throughout the year.

Immunisation

- Children must meet current Australian immunisation requirements unless an approved exemption applies.

Health & Illness

- Children should remain at home if they are unwell or unable to comfortably participate in the program, including with a fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, a contagious illness or other symptoms that may place themselves or others at risk. If your child becomes unwell during the day, families will be contacted to arrange collection.
- Children should not attend within 24 hours of:
  - A fever requiring Panadol or Nurofen.
  - Starting a course of antibiotics.
- Please advise Educators if your child has received medication and check with the Centre if a medical certificate is required before returning after an illness.

Infectious Diseases

- We follow current health authority guidelines regarding exclusion periods and management of infectious illnesses.

Allergies, Asthma & Other Medical Conditions

- Families must advise us of all diagnosed medical conditions at time of enrolment, before care commences.
- Medical Management Plans, Risk Minimisation Plans and Communication Plans will be developed where required.

Medication

- Medication will only be administered with the appropriate written authorisation and in accordance with medical instructions. Medication must be supplied in its original packaging and must never be left in children's bags.

Additional Support

- If your child has a diagnosed disability, developmental delay or additional support needs, please let us know during enrolment. This allows us to work with your family to understand your child's individual needs, plan appropriate support strategies and, where eligible, explore available Government support such as Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS). While we are committed to creating an inclusive environment wherever reasonably possible, enrolment and ongoing care are subject to Cuddles being able to safely meet your child's needs within our Service, available resources and regulatory requirements.

Fees & Bookings

Before Commencing Care

- Your bond and any applicable upfront fees must be paid in full before your child's first day of care.

Fees

- Fees are payable one week in advance and are collected via your nominated direct debit account.
- Fees apply for all booked days, including approved absences and public holidays, in accordance with your Enrolment Agreement.
- Current fees are available on request and through our Family Resource Hub.
- Fees are reviewed periodically. Families will be provided with a minimum of two (2) weeks' written notice of any fee changes.

Public Holidays

- Fees remain payable for booked public holidays. Where eligible, families may access a Swap Day in accordance with the current **Fee & Booking Policy**.

Family Holidays

- Fees continue during booked holidays. Eligible families may access discounted holiday days in accordance with the current **Fee & Booking Policy**, subject to required notice periods and annual entitlements.

Allowable Absences

- Fees remain payable for all booked days, including absences. Where eligible, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) may continue to reduce your fees for up to 42 allowable absence days per child, per financial year, in accordance with current Government requirements. Once these allowable absences have been used, families are responsible for the full fee unless an additional absence is approved under CCS rules. Public holidays that fall on a child's usual booked day also count as an absence.

Additional Casual Days

- Additional casual bookings are subject to availability and will be charged at the applicable rate under the current Fee & Booking Policy.
- Additional casual booking requests must be submitted through the Parent Communication App. Please note that a booking is not confirmed until it has been accepted by the Service and is subject to availability.

Booking Changes

- Permanent booking changes should reflect an ongoing change to your care requirements and must be discussed with your Centre Manager. All changes are subject to availability and the current **Fee & Booking Policy.**

Casual Booking Cancellations

- A minimum of 48 hours' notice is required to cancel a casual booking. Cancellation timeframes are calculated in accordance with the current **Fee & Booking Policy.**

Direct Debit

- Fees are collected via direct debit in accordance with your Enrolment Agreement.
- Families are required to maintain a valid direct debit authority throughout their enrolment.

Dishonoured Payments

- Dishonoured payments, failed direct debits and overdue accounts will be managed in accordance with the **Fee & Booking Policy**, including any applicable fees or recovery processes.

Late Collection

- Late collection fees may apply where children are collected after closing time.
- Where families cannot be contacted, legislative procedures will be followed.

Notice of Withdrawal

- Written notice is required when ending your child's enrolment. Please refer to our current **Fee & Booking Policy** for applicable notice periods and withdrawal conditions.
- Fees remain payable until your child's final booked day, including throughout the required notice period.
- Your child must attend their final booked day of care. Under Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rules, if your child does not physically attend their last booked day, your CCS may be cancelled or adjusted from their last day of attendance, and you may be liable for the full fees for any remaining booked days.

Withdrawal Before Commencement

- Where a family withdraws after accepting a place but before commencing care, applicable holding fees or deposits may be retained in accordance with the Enrolment Agreement.

Love lives here

FAMILY RESOURCES & POLICIES

BOOK A TOUR

ENQUIRE TODAY

cuddlesearlylearning.com.au