

ASTELLER

Family Handbook

Children's Centres

Contents

Our Core Values	3
Acknowledgement of Country	4
Early Learning	5
At Astelier's Children's Centres	6
Our Team	6
Supporting your child	7
Settling in to care	8
What to pack	8
Sun Protection and Clothing	9
Signing in and out of the centre	10
Late Collection	11
Authorised Persons	11
Sustainable Practices	12
Risky Play	13
Environments & Daily Rhythm	14
Our Curriculum	15
Fee Structure, CCS, & absences	16
Keeping Child Safe	17
National Quality Framework	18
Early Years Learning Framework	19
Incidents/Injuries	21
Health & Wellbeing	22
Medication	23
Medication Plans	24
Communication	25
Health and Nutrition	26

Our Core Values

(01)

Trust is our foundation

(02)

People come first

(03)

We strive for excellence

(04)

We succeed together



At Astelier Children’s Centres, we create joyful, safe, and enriching spaces—where children thrive, families feel supported, and our team grows together.

Acknowledgement of Country

Astelier Children's Centres acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our unique and deeply passionate team are committed to creating a safe space for educators to share their knowledge and experiences as well as grow their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's cultures, histories, and contemporary realities.

Astelier Children's Centres acknowledges the Wonnarua people, the traditional keepers of this land with which we learn and play, we pay respects to their Elders, past and present.



Artist: Emma Hollingsworth.
Title: The colours of our youth.

Early Learning

Honouring Curiosity, Connection and Play

Early learning lays the foundation for how children come to understand themselves, others, and the world around them. In the early years, children are not simply absorbing information they are actively constructing meaning through relationships, experiences, and play. A Reggio-inspired approach recognises this time as rich, capable, and full of possibility, where every interaction and environment has the potential to deepen learning and nurture curiosity.

Central to early learning is the belief that children are competent and full of ideas. When we slow down, listen closely, and observe with intention, we begin to see the many ways children express their thinking through movement, mark-making, conversation, construction, and imaginative play. These “hundred languages” are honoured when educators create spaces that invite exploration, wonder, and collaboration, allowing children to lead their learning while feeling seen, valued, and respected.

Early learning is also deeply relational. Strong, trusting connections between children, educators, and families create a sense of belonging that supports wellbeing and confident learning. In Reggio-inspired environments, families are partners, educators are co-learners, and learning unfolds through shared dialogue and reflection. This collaborative approach ensures learning is meaningful, culturally responsive, and grounded in each child’s unique context.

When early learning is approached with intention and respect, it becomes more than preparation for school it becomes preparation for life. By nurturing curiosity, creativity, empathy, and a love of learning from the very beginning, we empower children to see themselves as capable thinkers and active contributors to their world, laying strong foundations that will support them well beyond the early years.




At Astelier Children's Centres

We believe..

- Children are born curious, capable, and full of stories waiting to unfold
- Relationships are the roots that allow learning to grow
- Play is sacred, it is how children make sense of the world
- Nature, creativity, and imagination belong in every childhood
- Families are our partners, walking beside us

We follow the Early Years Learning Framework and honour slow, meaningful, child-led learning.

 Asteliers Children's Centres is a uniquely innovative service, artfully designed to feel beautiful, meaningful and welcoming.

Our Team

Our educators are gardeners of childhood, tending gently, observing closely, and guiding thoughtfully.

They are:

- Warm, present, calm, consistent and nurturing, creating a sense of rhythm and predictability that helps children feel safe and confident
- Advocates of play, honouring play as a powerful language for learning, creativity and wellbeing
- Skilled in listening with both heart and mind. Valuing every voice and meaningful and capable
- Deeply committed to children's wellbeing and wonder. Child led and curious, skilfully following children's interests with intention, curiosity and care, allowing learning to unfold naturally
- Environment curators, thoughtfully designing spaces and environments that inspire wonder, exploration and independence
- Reflective, regularly reflecting on their practice, asking thoughtful questions and growing both independently and together as educators
- Ethical and respectful, upholding string values, professionalism and integrity in all that they do
- Lifelong learners, continuing to learn, question and evolve, staying connected to contemporary research and pedagogy

Each child is known, valued, and cherished.

Supporting Your Child

On their Journey

We want to ensure our centre becomes an extension of your home life and that the relationships, cultures and experiences that are important to your child are recognised. This helps create an environment where your child can feel safe, secure, and ready to start. By building a strong relationship with us, your child's educators, we can support you to build on your child's learning and development at home.



●
“It takes a village to raise a child.”

– African Proverb

Every child settles in their own rhythm

You may notice:

- Big feelings in small bodies
- Quiet watching before joining
- Clinging hands before brave steps

You can support this by:

- Speaking gently and positively about the centre
- Creating a loving, consistent goodbye ritual
- Sending a family photo for comfort
- Trusting the process and yourself

We will hold your child in care and keep you connected along the way.

Settling in to Care

At Astelier Children's Centres, settling into care is understood as the beginning of a relationship. While children are capable and curious learners, they are also deeply relational, and emotional safety is essential before meaningful exploration and learning can occur.

Strong, responsive relationships with educators provide the secure base children need to engage confidently with their environment, connect with others, and take appropriate risks in their learning.

During the settling process, educators prioritise connection and responsiveness, recognising that relationships come before routines or expectations. Children are supported to settle at a pace that feels right for them, with educators observing and responding to individual cues, emotions, and communication. This approach builds trust, confidence, and a sense of belonging, forming the foundation for ongoing learning and participation.

To support a gentle transition, families are invited to participate in stay-and-play visits prior to commencing care. These visits support familiarity, connection, and trust, while open and ongoing communication between families and educators ensures children's emotional wellbeing is supported throughout the settling process.

What to pack each day

- Clean water bottle, to be taken home each day and washed
- Wide brimmed hat
- A complete change of seasonal appropriate clothes (a few sets if learning to use the toilet or passionate about messy play)

(Excluding a special comforter teddy or blanket, we request that you keep any other toys at home.)

Sun Protection & Suitable Clothing

At Astelier Children's Centres, we view the environment as an active part of children's learning. Time outdoors, sensory exploration, and messy play support children's wellbeing, curiosity, and connection to the natural world. Clothing that allows children to move freely supports children to engage fully and confidently in these experiences.

Please ensure every item is clearly labelled to minimise the risk of misplacement.

Families are asked to provide sun-safe clothing, including a broad-brimmed or legionnaire-style hat, along with extra changes of clothing suitable for outdoor play. Sunscreen is applied in line with our sun protection policy, with children supported to develop understanding and independence around sun safety through everyday routines. If your child requires their own brand of sunscreen or insect repellent you are welcome to provide it to your child's room educators. It must be clearly labelled with your child's full name and is within the expiry date.

Our learning environments invite exploration through paint, water, mud, sand, and other open-ended materials. Providing spare clothing allows children to remain immersed in their play, supporting experimentation, creativity, and inquiry.

Outdoor play continues across a range of weather conditions. To support all-weather learning, families are asked to provide:

- A broad-brimmed or legionnaire-style hat
- A complete set of spare clothes
- A raincoat or waterproof jacket
- Gumboots or suitable closed-toe footwear
- A clearly labelled reusable wet bag for wet or muddy clothing

Being prepared allows children to stay engaged and responsive to their environment, experiencing weather as part of their learning rather than a barrier. Caring for belongings and materials also supports children's everyday understanding of sustainability and shared responsibility. By working together to prepare for varied weather and learning experiences, we create environments where children feel capable, supported, and free to explore.

Signing in & out of the Centre

Each child must be signed in and out of the centre every day they attend. This is a legal requirement and is in the best interest of your child's safety. These records are used in case of emergencies and for the calculation of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).



On arrival at the centre, please ensure you:

- Sign your child into the centre using the OWNA parent portal which will be available to you using the iPads in the foyer.
- (Adult use only)
- Take your child to their room, place their bag in their locker and their water bottle into their assigned drink trolley.
- Ensure your child has their hat and sunscreen on and then take your child to one of their educators where they will support you with your child's morning transition.

When you collect your child, you are required to:

- Come into the room or outdoor space and greet your child.
- Collect your child's belongings.
- With your child, say goodbye to an educator.
- Sign your child out of the centre using the iPads in the foyer.



Late Collection

We appreciate your assistance in complying with our centre's opening and closing times 7am–6pm. We are not licensed to operate outside of these hours.

We ask that you arrive at the centre with enough time, prior to closing time, to collect your child and their belongings and exchange information, to allow the educators to close the centre as per our licensed operating times

Authorised Persons to Collect

It is vitally important that you advise our centre of people who are authorised to collect your child from our centre, and that you keep these details up to date. Your child will only be allowed to leave the centre with authorised persons as identified by you on the enrolment form or as communicated to a responsible person in the centre. Our educators will check the authorised persons details and any person not known by our educators arriving to collect children will be asked to produce photo identification.

Persons collecting your child must be over 18 unless they are the parent. Children are not allowed to be released to older siblings, unless they are over 18 years old and documented as authorised persons.

Sustainable Practices

At Astelier Children's Centres, sustainability is embedded into everyday life rather than taught as a separate concept. Children are supported to see themselves as connected to place, community, and the natural environment through hands-on, meaningful experiences that emerge through relationships, materials, and shared experiences.

Through regular time outdoors, engagement with natural and repurposed materials, and caring for shared spaces, children develop respect for their environment and an understanding that their actions matter. Slowing down to notice changes over time, such as seasons, plant growth and living creatures supports curiosity, empathy, and thoughtful care.



“Nature is a tool to get children to experience not just the wider world, but themselves.”

– Stephen Moss

Children's ideas and questions guide our approach to sustainability. Working with loose parts and open-ended resources encourages creativity, problem-solving, and flexible thinking, while supporting children to take responsibility for materials and the learning they co-construct.

Sustainable practices at Astelier Children's Centres are strengthened through partnerships with families and the wider community. By sharing everyday practices such as reusing, caring for belongings, and making thoughtful choices, children experience sustainability as a collective and ongoing responsibility.

Risk, Challenge & Learning Through Play

At Astelier Children's Centre, we recognise that children are biologically driven to learn through movement, challenge, and exploration. Seeking risk, testing limits, and navigating uncertainty are natural and important parts of how children come to understand their bodies, their capabilities, and the world around them.

Our approach to risk is grounded in risk–benefit thinking. Rather than removing all risk from children's experiences, educators carefully consider the learning benefits alongside potential hazards. This allows children to engage in meaningful challenge within a safe, attentive, and responsive environment.

Risky play may include climbing, balancing, navigating uneven ground, using tools, engaging in energetic play, or interacting with natural elements. Educators remain present and observant, providing time, space, and emotional availability, while supporting children to assess risk for themselves rather than directing or restricting play unnecessarily.

Through these experiences, children develop body awareness, judgement, persistence, and emotional regulation. When trusted to take appropriate risks, children build confidence in their abilities and resilience that supports wellbeing and learning over time.

By approaching risk as a shared responsibility between educators, children, and families, we create environments where challenge is purposeful and children grow as capable, confident learners.

●
“Risky play is really important for kids, all kids, because it teaches hazard assessment, it teaches delayed gratification, it teaches resilience, it teaches confidence. When kids get outside and practice bravery, they learn valuable life's lessons.”

– Caroline Paul

Environments & Daily Rhythms

At Astelier Children's Centres, our environments are designed with intention and care, shaped around how children naturally move, explore, and make meaning. Each space has its own character and purpose, offering children different ways to engage. Whether that's creating, constructing, observing, resting, or working through ideas together. The environment invites children in, rather than directing them, and supports a sense of ownership and belonging.

Children are supported to move between spaces throughout the day under attentive supervision, following their interests and returning to ideas that matter to them. You'll often see children deeply absorbed, revisiting materials, extending play, or shifting between spaces as their thinking evolves. This flow supports focus, autonomy, and deeper engagement, without the day feeling rushed or fragmented.

Learning at Astelier Children's Centres is social and relational. Children spend time alongside others of different ages, learning through observation, imitation, collaboration, and shared problem-solving. Younger children are drawn into experiences in their own time, while older children often take on supportive and leadership roles. These interactions emerge naturally and reflect the way learning happens in families and communities.

Daily rhythms provide a gentle structure to the day. Care moments such as meals, rest, and transitions offer predictability and comfort, while educators remain responsive to children's energy, emotions, and needs. This balance allows children to feel secure while giving them the freedom to stay with their play, follow curiosity, and engage deeply in learning.

Alongside our indoor environments, children regularly engage with extended outdoor spaces, including The Woods. These spaces offer opportunities for movement, challenge, collaboration, and connection to the natural world, enriching children's experiences and supporting learning that unfolds over time.

Our Learning Suites

Luna Bambini	0-12mths
Stella Bambini	12-24mths
Piccolini	2-3 yrs
Bottega	3-4 yrs
Aria & Tale	3-4 yrs
La Via	4-5yrs



Our Curriculum

Here at Astelier Children's Centres

Quality education is at the centre of everything we do at Astelier Children's Centres. Each day your child is present at Astelier, the educators will share the learning that has occurred throughout the rooms through a daily snapshot posted on OWNA. Your child's educational progress will be documented through observations which may be weekly, monthly or termly. These observations will outline your child's learning in connection with the Early Years Learning Framework. The educator's will prepare an engaging experience to extend your child's learning. This, in turn, will be documented after the experience has occurred. Additionally, your child will have three goals the educators are supporting them to achieve; a goal set by their family, a goal set by their educator and a goal that they set for themselves. Educators keep you updated with achievements as your child progresses toward completing their goal.

Our child-led learning will be presented in our dynamic programs. This program may be presented in a range of forms, such as a floor book, a template, a mind map or another method to best support the delivery of quality education.

Each suite's program will be on display for you to peruse and provide any input or feedback. The program will include experiences based on the children's interests, goals and follow-up activities from previous observations. It will be critically reflected upon and adjusted to best support the needs and learning of the children. The program will be changed when necessary and this may be on a weekly, monthly or termly basis.



Fee Structure



Daily Fees

0–2 Years \$166 per day
2–3 Years \$162 per day
3–5 Years \$158 per day

At Astelier Children’s Centres your fees will be direct debited weekly. Remember, if you’re entitled to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), a percentage of your fees will be paid direct to our centre, so you only need to pay the balance, each billing cycle.

If your account dishonours there will be a dishonour fee automatically applied. If your account regularly declines and fees are not paid your care may be suspended or postponed.

Allowable Absences

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from a session of care they would normally attend for up to 42 days per child, per financial year. If you exceed the 42 days in absences you will be charged full fees until the new financial year.

Keeping Children Safe

At Our Centre

To support child safety, wellbeing and meaningful engagement, digital devices are not permitted in our service learning spaces. This policy helps ensure our learning environments remain respectful, secure, and focused on children. We thank families for supporting this shared commitment to creating safe and attentive spaces for all children.

The safety and wellbeing of every child is at the heart of all we do. We are committed to creating a secure, nurturing environment where children feel protected, respected, and confident to explore and learn.

We maintain active and attentive supervision at all times, with educators positioning themselves intentionally to support children's play, interactions, and movements across the environment. Our learning spaces are thoughtfully designed to balance safe boundaries with opportunities for exploration and risk-aware play.

To support physical health and wellbeing, we follow strict health, hygiene, and safe sleep practices, including handwashing routines, safe food handling, illness guidelines, and regular cleaning of environments and resources. All educators are trained in approved safe sleep and first aid procedures.

Our service follows clear child protection and safeguarding policies, with educators trained in mandatory reporting and respectful, professional conduct. Entry and exit procedures, sign-in systems, and visitor protocols help maintain a secure environment for all children.

We value open communication with families and believe safety is strengthened through partnership. Families are encouraged to share relevant information about their child and to speak with educators if they have any questions or concerns.

Through shared responsibility and trust, we work together to ensure every child feels safe, supported, and cared for throughout their time with us.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework is a government initiative that sets a National Quality Standard creating greater consistency for early childhood education and care services across Australia.

This initiative aims to improve educator-to-child ratios in services, increased skills and qualifications, national regulations and a quality ratings system that will help you to make informed choices about the education and care you choose for your child.

For more information about the National Quality Framework, please speak to our centre manager or visit www.acecqa.gov.au



Early Years Learning Framework-EYLF

EYLF Explained

At its core, EYLF is built around three key concepts: Belonging, Being, and Becoming. These ideas emphasize that children develop best when they feel connected to their community, are allowed to explore their identity, and are supported in their growth and learning.

The framework is structured around five learning outcomes:

1. **Children have a strong sense of identity** – They feel safe, secure, and confident in their abilities.
2. **Children are connected with and contribute to their world** – They learn about relationships, diversity, and fairness.
3. **Children have a strong sense of well-being** – They develop emotional resilience and physical health.
4. **Children are confident and involved learners** – They engage in problem-solving, creativity, and exploration.
5. **Children are effective communicators** – They express themselves through language, symbols, and various forms of communication.

EYLF also highlights principles and practices that guide educators in fostering a rich learning environment. These include learning through play, intentional teaching, cultural competence, and building strong relationships with families.



Understanding The EYLF Principles

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is built on five key principles that guide educators in supporting children's learning and development. These principles emphasize the importance of relationships, partnerships, high expectations, respect for diversity, and ongoing learning.

1. **Secure, Respectful, and Reciprocal Relationships** – Children learn best when they feel safe and valued. Strong relationships with educators and caregivers help build confidence and emotional security.
2. **Partnerships with Families** – Parents and caregivers are a child's first teachers. Working together with families ensures children receive consistent support in their learning journey.
3. **High Expectations and Equity** – Every child is capable of learning and growing. Educators should believe in their potential and provide opportunities for success, regardless of background or ability.
4. **Respect for Diversity** – Children come from different cultural and social backgrounds. Recognizing and celebrating diversity helps them develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for others.
5. **Ongoing Learning and Reflective Practice** – Educators continuously improve their teaching methods by reflecting on their practices and adapting to children's needs.

The EYLF practices focus on how educators implement these principles in daily interactions. This includes learning through play, intentional teaching, cultural competence, and building strong relationships. Play-based learning encourages curiosity and creativity, while intentional teaching involves guiding children's learning with thoughtful strategies. Cultural competence ensures that all children feel represented and included, and strong relationships create a supportive environment for growth.

Understanding The EYLF Practices

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) practices guide educators in creating meaningful learning experiences for children. These practices ensure that early childhood education is holistic, inclusive, and responsive to children's needs. Here's a deeper look at the key EYLF practices:

1. **Holistic Approaches** – This practice recognizes that children's learning and development are interconnected. Educators support physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth by integrating different types of activities, such as sensory play, outdoor exploration, and creative expression.
2. **Responsiveness to Children** – Educators observe and respond to children's interests, strengths, and needs. By adapting activities based on children's curiosity and engagement, they create a learning environment that fosters independence and confidence.
3. **Play-Based Learning and Intentionality** – Play is central to children's learning. Educators use intentional teaching strategies to guide play experiences, ensuring that children develop problem-solving skills, creativity, and social connections.
4. **Learning Environments** – The physical and emotional environment plays a crucial role in children's development. Well-designed spaces encourage exploration, collaboration, and a sense of belonging.
5. **Cultural Responsiveness** – Recognizing and valuing diverse cultural backgrounds helps children develop respect and understanding. Educators incorporate cultural traditions, languages, and perspectives into learning experiences.
6. **Continuity of Learning and Transitions** – Supporting children through transitions, such as moving between age groups or starting school, helps them feel secure and confident. Educators work closely with families to ensure smooth transitions.
7. **Assessment and Evaluation for Learning, Development, and Well-being** – Educators document and reflect on children's progress to tailor learning experiences that meet individual needs.

Incidents/ Injuries

At Astelier Children's Centres children are encouraged to engage in active, hands-on play, both indoors and outdoors. As children explore, move, and test their capabilities, minor injuries can occasionally occur. These experiences are part of how children learn about their bodies, limits, and the world around them.

Educators support this learning through thoughtful risk-benefit decision-making, remaining close, attentive, and responsive. Rather than removing all challenge, educators consider the value of an experience alongside potential risks, allowing children to explore with confidence while feeling safe and supported.

If an accident or illness occurs, educators respond promptly and calmly, providing appropriate first aid and reassurance. Families are informed and provided with documentation, so they understand how their child was supported.

In situations requiring further medical attention, families will be contacted immediately. In an emergency, a familiar educator will remain with your child until they are reunited with a family member.

Health & wellbeing

When your child is unwell, rest is a gift.

Please keep your child home if they are:

- Feverish or contagious
- Vomiting or unwell
- Too tired or distressed to engage comfortably.
- Showing signs that they are generally unwell.

This protects the whole community.

Children cannot attend if they have been given paracetamol or ibuprofen in the morning before arrival at the centre. If your child becomes ill while at our centre, we will contact you and require you to collect them.

If you are uncontactable, an alternate authorised person will be contacted. This is to ensure your child receives the care they need and to minimise the risk of infection to others. Children who have had a contagious illness, or suspected contagious condition, will require a letter from a medical practitioner stating they are fit and clear to return to the centre.

In the event your child develops an elevated temperature, 38°C or higher, throughout the course of the day, our educators will take measures to try to reduce the temperature. However, if these measures are unsuccessful at bringing down the temperature, you will be notified and requested to collect your child.



Medication

If your child requires medication while in care, a medication record will be filled in and signed using the OWNA app by parent/caregiver including the previous time and date of dose.

The information you provide on the medication authorisation form must match that of the dispensing label.

Only medication with a clearly legible dispensing label will be administered and must contain the following details:

- Your child's name
- The name of the medication
- The dosage and dosage instructions
- The doctor or pharmacist's name the date issued (if your child has not had this medication, your child will be excluded for 24 hours to monitor adverse reactions)
- Expiry date (Within expiry date)

Medication must be handed to an educator and will be stored safely out of reach of children.

Under no circumstances is any type of medication to be left in children's bags.

Please refer to the Medication Policy for further information.

Medical Plans

If your child has a medical condition such as asthma, anaphylaxis or dietary requirements, you must supply emergency medication to the centre along with their plan. The medication must be labelled by a chemist, in date and labelled with their name. You must complete the Astelier Children's Centres medication form and return it to the centre. If your child's emergency medication is not in the centre, they will not be permitted to stay at the service.

Communication

At Astelier Children's Centres, we believe strong partnerships with families are essential to supporting each child's learning, wellbeing, and sense of belonging. Clear, respectful, and timely communication helps us work together in the best interests of your child. To support this, educators are available to speak to you at drop-off and pick-up but in addition, we use OWNA as our communication platform.

OWNA is used for a range of important communications, including:

- Daily updates such as meals, sleep, toileting and general wellbeing
- Learning stories and photos that highlight your child's experiences, interests and development
- Centre announcements and reminders, including events, newsletters and important notices
- Direct messaging between educators and families
- Sign-in and sign-out records and attendance information
- Families are encouraged to use OWNA to communicate non-urgent information, such as:
 - Changes to routines (e.g. sleep, drop-off or pick-up times)
 - Messages about your child's interests or experiences at home
 - Questions or general feedback

For urgent matters (such as late collections or changes to authorised nominees), we kindly ask families to contact the centre directly by phone or in person.

For sensitive or complex discussions, we encourage families to speak with educators or the centre leadership team in person or arrange a meeting.

While OWNA is a valuable communication tool, some conversations are best had face-to-face to ensure clarity and understanding.


Health & Nutrition

Children need energy to get the most out of their day. To give them the nourishment to achieve that energy, Astelier Children's Centres are using Kids Gourmet Food to cater for meals throughout the day. There are a range of healthy meals from a range of different cuisines to excite the tastebuds of intrepid learners.





**Educational Excellence
& Genuine Care**

 admin@astelier.au

 285 Anderson Dr, Beresfield
NSW 2322

 02 4070 9242

Follow us on our learning adventures
[@AstelierChildrensCentre](#)



Head Office
503/653 Hunter Street

ABN 89 109 035 421