



SA Montessori Pre-Schools

Parent Handbook

July 2023

Welcome

Thank you for enrolling your child at *Echoes Montessori*. We are so pleased to welcome you and your family to our Montessori community. Your child's early years are immensely important and we feel honoured by your choice to trust us to nurture and support these precious years. We value and respect your role in your child's life and we always welcome your input and ideas. We will also endeavour to provide you with support, information and opportunities for participation. We look forward to partnering with you throughout your child's journey of growth, discovery and development.



The following Parent Handbook is designed to help you approach your child's Montessori journey feeling informed and empowered. The Handbook covers areas including our philosophy and programs as well as practical information about our policies and expectations. We encourage you to read this Handbook prior to your child's first day but it is also important that you retain this book so that you can refer to it throughout your child's journey at Echoes Montessori.

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WELCOME

The Director and staff of Echoes Montessori warmly welcome you and your family to our centre. We trust that during your time with us, both you and your child will feel happy and secure. We also extend an invitation to you to take an active part in the centre's activities. Parents are invited to provide suggestions and feedback on our service and policies at any time.

PHILOSOPHY

Our *Statement of Principles* booklet serves as our centre philosophy as it sets out our values and beliefs in relation to the desired outcomes for children and families in our care. It guides the practices in the centre and is reflected in the program. We encourage parents/guardians to familiarise themselves with the *Statement of Principles*, which outlines how we nurture the individual development of each child within a loving and safe environment. A brief summary of our core values are outlined below:

We believe that each child;

- Is special and unique
- Deserves respect and love
- Should experience a happy childhood

As we share time with the children our aim is;

- To develop their curiosity
- To encourage their love of learning
- To help them develop independence and self-discipline
- To allow them to feel valued
- To share in their joy of self-achievement
- To offer comfort and support in an honest and sensitive way
- To provide the best foundation of learning to prepare for future schooling
- To surround them with a secure and happy environment.

Our Goals are:

- To be a centre of excellence in the provision of high-quality care and education for children
- To provide a safe, secure, nurturing environment
- To develop children's understandings, cultural and environmental awareness
- To enhance children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development
- To provide each child with equal opportunities regardless of their race, culture, background, ability or gender
- To provide spacious, aesthetically pleasant environments that allow children the opportunity to explore freely with materials and equipment and to interact with others
- To work in partnership with families to achieve the best outcomes for the children
- To employ professional staff who are experienced, caring, committed, alert and responsive to children's needs and safety
- To encourage staff to continue to pursue excellence through professional development

HOURS

Echoes Montessori is open from 8:00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday.

Parents/guardians are advised that these opening hours mean all families must only enter the premises *at or after* 8.00am. Families must vacate the premises *before* 6.00pm.

Fees are charged on a daily basis, with fees for a *full day* applying regardless of a child's exact arrival and departure time.

Echoes Montessori operates for 48 consecutive weeks of the year. The centre is closed for 4 weeks during the Christmas and New Year break (families will be advised of exact term dates and closure periods throughout the year). Fees are not payable for this extended holiday closure.

Echoes Montessori will be closed on all public holidays. Regular fees remain payable for all public holidays that occur during the 48 weeks of operation.

SESSIONS

Children must attend a minimum of two days each week. *Exemptions may be requested in instances where a child has particular needs that may prevent the child from benefiting from multiple day attendance. Exemptions are not guaranteed and are entirely at the discretion of the Director.*

LICENSING

The centre is awaiting licensing by the *Education and Early Childhood Services Registration Board of South Australia* for an anticipated maximum of 55 children per day.

ABSENTEEISM

It would be appreciated if parents/guardians would inform the centre by 8.30am if their child will be absent. Fees will still be due and payable for all public holidays, absences for sickness and for any other day/s that children are normally enrolled but do not attend.

LATE COLLECTION

Children must be collected prior to our closing time (6.00pm) so that staff can leave promptly at the completion of their shift. Where a child remains after their enrolled closing time a late fee will apply to cover the cost of overtime wages payable to the staff members who remain behind. This charge is \$30.00 for the first 15 minutes (or part thereof) and then \$5.00 for every additional 5 minutes increment (or part thereof). Parents / guardians are requested to contact the centre if they are delayed to alleviate unnecessary concern.

HOLIDAYS

The centre is closed for four weeks over December/January period (exact dates to be advised).

Parents/guardians are kindly asked to notify the centre two weeks in advance of any other holiday periods for which their child will be absent (fees remain payable for holidays/absences when the centre is open).

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (CCS)

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) provides assistance to help families with the cost of child care.

How does it work?

If you are eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), your entitlements will be paid **directly to the service** your child is attending. The service will then deduct CCS from your child's regular fees, leaving you with only a gap to pay for your child's enrolment.

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child. These include:

- the age of the child (must be 13 or under and not attending secondary school)
- the child must meet immunisation requirements
- the individual, or their partner, must meet the residency requirements.

How much will I receive?

Three things will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy:

1. A family's annual adjusted **taxable income** will determine the percentage of subsidy they are eligible for
2. An **activity test** will determine how many hours of subsidised care families can access, up to a maximum of 100 per fortnight, and
3. The **type of child care service** will determine the hourly rate cap.

The government has an online estimator to assist you with determining your expected entitlements. This is available on the Centrelink website (click on 'Payment and Service Finder'):

How to Apply for Child Care Subsidy

In order to apply for Child Care Subsidy, you will need to:

1. Create or sign in to your MyGov account at www.my.gov.au
2. Link your MyGov account to Centrelink
3. Complete a Child Care Subsidy Assessment. You will need to supply details about your situation and finances, and may need to provide supporting evidence.

For further information about applying for the Child Care Subsidy, please refer to the following:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy>

FEES and BONDS

Bond

Attendance patterns are booked upon enrolment by parents/guardians and subject to availability of places. Upon enrolment (or when increasing days of attendance) a **BOND** is required to the equivalent amount due for *two full weeks of fees*. The Bond is held by the centre and may be used to cover any unresolved or unpaid fees during a child's attendance. If the bond is depleted entirely by fee payments the enrolment will be forfeited. If the child's enrolment *continues* after the bond has been depleted (as fee payment has resumed by that point) an additional bond will be collected from the family to secure the ongoing position.

The Bond (less any outstanding payments) will be refunded after a child's last day *only if four full weeks' notice has been given to the centre in advance in writing*. The notice period cannot include the time that the centre is closed. Parents who supply less than the required 4 weeks' notice for a departure will still be required to pay the equivalent total fees of that 4 week notice period regardless of their child's attendance during this time. The bond may be forfeited and used towards a portion of this fee payment. As Centrelink generally does not pay entitlements if a child is absent on their formalised last day, *or any absences immediately surrounding that last day*, full fees (with no Child Care Subsidy applied) may need to be charged for that period of time, where applicable.

Fees

Fees are due at the end of each week of attendance. Fees apply for 48 weeks of the year including public holidays, holiday periods and sick days. Echoes Montessori Preschool uses a direct debit payment system called 'Debitsuccess' to collect fees. This program coordinates payment details with the reporting requirements of the Commonwealth Child Care Subsidy. It is a condition of enrolment that families agree to participate in the direct debit payment system. This involves a weekly automatic withdrawal of fees from your nominated credit/debit card or bank account.

Where a child has more than one legal parent/guardian, and in the absence of Parenting Orders / Court Orders specifying otherwise, SA Montessori centres consider both/all legal parents/guardians to be equally responsible for the financial obligations associated with the provision of care. Families may use their discretion when nominating a specific account for weekly fee deductions, but this does not limit the liability for those fees (and/or any debt accrued due to non-payment) to the individual account holder. Responsibility for the fees/debt is also not limited to the 'Primary Carer' according to Centrelink. We reserve the right to pursue both/all legal parents/guardians for fee payment and/or debt collection.

Payment of Fees: DebitSuccess

Direct debit is one of the safest ways to pay your bills; in fact, 85% of identity theft cases actually occur with *offline* transactions such as lost or stolen cheques, paper bills, or account statements (*Javelin Strategy and Research*). This approach also offers the convenience of ensuring that your Account is paid on time, without the hassle of having to manually process the payment yourself.

Echoes Montessori Preschool has partnered with **Debitsuccess** to provide you with this service. Debitsuccess is a fully compliant Direct Debit service. Debitsuccess is an Authorised Representative (AR 407894) of Transaction Services Holdings Ltd (AFSL 338256) within the Australian Financial Services Licensing Regime. It is compliant with Level 1 PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard) and is independently certified and externally audited. "Debitsuccess" will appear on the statement of those parents who choose the direct payment option of paying through a credit card. "Echoes Montessori Preschool Pre-school" will appear on the statements of those paying from their bank accounts. Payments will be collected weekly in arrears and will incorporate any Child Care Subsidy entitlements.

NB: for families that nominate a credit card (Visa/Mastercard) for account payment, please be aware that an EXTRA SURCHARGE will be charged on each transaction, as specified on the DebitSuccess Form. We encourage all families to nominate Direct Debit from a Bank, Building Society or Credit union Account.

In the event of a failed payment, Debitsuccess charges Echoes Montessori Preschool a Service Fee of \$19.95. This fee is passed on to the family, with \$19.95 being charged by Echoes Montessori Preschool to the child's account for each failed payment. A failed payment means that the attempt to process the weekly fee can not be completed or is reversed. Reasons for a failed payment can include, but are not limited to, insufficient funds in the nominated account on the day of the debit, daily payment limits on the card/account, or the cancellation of a card or closure of account without provision of updated details in time for the next payment date. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that the conditions for a successful payment are maintained. The Service Fee for \$19.95 charged to a family for each failed payment is non-negotiable and non-refundable.

Fees & Bonds in the event of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Dispute Resolution

If a 'Dispute Resolution' is activated by a family to challenge charges to their account this causes Centrelink to immediately suspend Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments to the centre. Until the dispute is resolved the centre reserves the right to **charge the full amount of the fees** to the account nominated on your Debitsuccess form in order to maintain your child's enrolment. Where sufficient funds are unavailable, or where parents otherwise revoke access to that account, **fees owing will be taken from the bond**. If the bond is depleted entirely by fee payments the enrolment will be forfeited effective immediately. If the child's enrolment *continues* after the bond has been depleted (as fee payment has resumed by that point) an **additional bond** will be collected from the family to secure the ongoing position. During the dispute resolution period the centre will work with the family and Centrelink to identify and rectify any confusion or issues. Following that process we will work within the individual context to reconcile the account fairly for all parties.

CHANGES TO YOUR CHILD'S REGULAR ATTENDANCE

We are pleased that our centre has a thriving and loyal community, which results in our sessions tending to be 'full' most of the year. This means that, most of the time, *we are operating at our legally mandated maximum capacity*.

Occasionally we are approached by families to accommodate changes to their child's current placement. Changes are not easily made once the centre is at capacity and therefore families are asked to understand that requests for change cannot always be accommodated. Every early childhood service operates under strict licensing requirements, with the number of licensed positions in a centre depending on a range of factors that are externally enforced and regulated. We are legally obliged to ensure that no more than the maximum licensed number of children are enrolled or attending on any given day. Therefore, despite our desire to meet the needs of families, we cannot add children to a different day if our sessions are already full. If you need to change your child's attendance pattern, please let us know in writing, giving as much notice as you can, and you will be placed on our *Internal Waiting List* until such time as we can accommodate your request.

Internal Waiting List

If our centre is operating at maximum capacity we cannot grant a change to one child's enrolment until another family vacates a position or requests a corresponding swap. If you do wish to change your child's current attendance, you can let us know in writing and we will add your request to our *Internal Waiting List*. We do prioritise the requests of our current families before we consider children from the Waiting List. Please note that **all changes to enrolment are subject to availability**.

Cancellation of days

A minimum of **four weeks'** notice is required prior to either permanently withdraw a child from a *particular day* of enrolment, or to *completely* cancel their enrolment altogether. The notice period cannot include the time that the centre is closed. Failure to supply four weeks' notice of withdrawal from a day or

cancellation of enrolment will incur regular fees during that four-week period. If your child is completely departing the centre, please note that if he/she does not attend his/her **last day** of enrolment (as identified by your notice of withdrawal), Centrelink will not provide subsidy entitlements for that last day, or any absences immediately surrounding that day, and parents will be charged the full fee.

Extended periods of absence

We realise that some children may experience extended periods of absence for a variety of reasons, such as family holidays, health concerns and so on. We do kindly ask that you inform the centre of any anticipated periods of absence so that your child's Focus Teachers can plan around this accordingly to support your child's learning experiences and their transition back into the classroom.

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer a reduction in fees during extended periods of absence. **This is primarily because your ongoing fee payments secure your position in the long-term.** Fees also remain payable as the overall costs associated with operating our high-quality service do not decrease when a single child is absent. We cannot, for instance, allocate our staffing roster according to the varying levels of attendance on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis, and must therefore cover the wage costs associated with having our highly qualified team of educators present each day of the year.

Families wishing to avoid incurring fees during an extended period of absence have the option of formally giving notice that they are *vacating their enrolment*, with a request to re-enrol upon their return date. Please note, however, that any children on the Internal/External Waiting Lists will be offered enrolment to that vacated position and so *we cannot guarantee that the original placement will be available for re-enrolment at the nominated date.* We will certainly prioritise the re-enrolment of any returning children, but we are still limited by our legal requirements, and so parents must accept the risk that vacating a position in order to avoid fees may also result in a loss of that placement.

Casual placements

We do not offer casual placements for children who do not already have an ongoing enrolment with us. Enrolled families wishing to request casual placements (occasional or irregular attendance) in *addition* to their regular enrolment are advised that this is a *highly uncommon* occurrence in our centre due to the fact that our sessions are ordinarily full and that sporadic attendance can undermine the pedagogical integrity of our learning program. We are not legally allowed to place an additional child into a session that is enrolled to its maximum capacity. Casual placements are therefore only available during periods where we have ***predictable, ongoing vacancies*** in a session, and requests will be considered in relation to the impact this may have on the dynamic and delivery of our learning program. Parents are welcome to email to enquire about casual attendance for a particular date, but we ask for your *understanding and respect* if we are unable to fulfil your request due to the restrictions placed on us and/or our obligation to deliver high quality care and education to the children who are enrolled in permanent positions.

Emergency support

In exceptional circumstances, and only if our capacity and regulatory requirements allow, we may be able to assist families in a one-off situation where the family needs *emergency support* which requires an irregular day of care. This is a highly uncommon occurrence in our centre due to the fact that our sessions are ordinarily full. However, we reserve the right to use our judgement and discretion to assist families who are experiencing emergency situations. We will always endeavour to support the needs of families who are coping with crisis. Our top priority is the welfare and well-being of the children in our care, and this will be our primary consideration in determining how to provide aid in emergency situations.

SIGNING IN AND OUT

Parents/guardians must sign the child in upon arrival and sign them out when departing at the end of the day. This forms the legal basis of when our 'duty of care' to a child begins and ends.

Our centre uses the Xplor HomeApp to record a child's arrival and departure. Parents/ guardians/ authorized persons (as indicated on the Enrolment Form supplied by the parent/guardian) should sign their child in and out each day by either accessing the HomeApp through an iPad prominently displayed on a stand, or on their mobile phones via the App. Parents / guardians / authorized persons can access the Xplor HomeApp by entering their phone number and following the prompts. The HomeApp system records the time of arrival and departure, and delivers requests to acknowledge absences or attendance data if this has been previously neglected.

Parents/guardians must never drop off or collect a child without informing a staff member. When arriving please ensure that you accompany your child to a position where the teachers are present and ensure that you have notified a staff member when you are leaving so that they are aware that you are no longer present to supervise your child.

When departing please ensure that you follow the collection procedures advised by the teachers and do not ever remove your child from the classroom/premises without actively alerting a staff member. *Please note that whenever parents/guardians are on the premises they accept full responsibility for their child's safety and supervision.*

RELEASING AND COLLECTING CHILDREN

Children will only be released to the enrolling parent or those authorised persons nominated on the enrolment form. If those who are nominated are not known to staff, identification may be requested. Unknown or unauthorised persons seeking to collect a child will be refused. Should parents call during the day to advise staff of collection by a person not already authorised, that person's name and contact details should be given so that staff can verify this upon collection of the child. Please note that any person collecting your child should carry photo identification.

Late fees (after 6pm) will be charged to cover staff overtime if applicable, at the rate of \$30.00 for the first 15 minutes (or part thereof) and \$5.00 for every additional 5 minutes increment (or part thereof).

CUSTODY AND ACCESS

On enrolment, parents/guardians must provide information regarding any guardianship, custody and access details. Any change to these details during the child's time at the centre must be provided. Requests for information about a child from a non-custodial parent will first be discussed with the custodial parent. Where a court prohibition order stands, and the centre has been informed of this, contact will be refused.

CHANGE OF DETAILS

It is essential that the centre is notified when any of the following details change:

- Change of address
- Change of phone numbers – work, home and/or mobile
- Change of name
- Changes to custody/access aspects
- Changes to emergency and authorised persons

Please email any change of details to the centre's email address. Without updated information we may not be able to contact parents in an emergency.

EDUCATORS

All staff working at the centre are required to hold a current criminal history clearance authorizing them to be suitable for work with children. We employ skilled professionals who hold appropriate ACECQA recognised qualifications in early childhood education and care. All staff at our centre complete an In-Service Training Course and all permanent staff are required to study the Montessori philosophy. Educators maintain current first aid qualifications including Asthma and Anaphylaxis training. All staff are mandated notifiers of suspected abuse and neglect and will act according to legislation to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Throughout the year staff will need to take time off for holidays or illness and wherever possible our regular relief staff will be used during this time.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS & FAMILIES

We respect the significant role of the family in a child's life. We acknowledge that a child's growth, well-being and learning outcomes are best supported by a reciprocal partnership between the centre and families. We encourage the regular exchange of information and we encourage parents/guardians to feel valued in expressing their thoughts, ideas or suggestions. It is particularly important to raise any concerns with the staff or a member of the leadership team immediately. Problems or concerns can only be solved or answered if they are raised in an open, direct manner. All decisions will be guided by the centre's policies and regulations. The centre has formal grievance procedures in place. A grievance form can be requested from the staff and an appointment can be made to meet with the leadership team if needed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All records are the property of the centre and are kept secure and private in accordance with our Confidentiality Policy. Access to information by staff is on a need-to-know basis, as authorised by the Director. No private information will be shared with other parties except where regulations/legislations demand (such as in the case of mandated notifications) or where the parent/guardian has consented (such as when sharing observations about the child with specialists). The centre may provide statistical information to relevant government departments to meet our legal obligations.

ORIENTATION

An enrolment information package will be sent to families prior to your child's first day. Parents are able to request a visit to spend time meeting staff, other children, and to become familiar with the centre prior to the child's first day of actual attendance. Parents are required to stay with their child during this visit.

SEPARATION

Initial separation can sometimes be challenging for parents and children. When leaving your child we recommend the following (*unless an educator has worked with you on an alternative strategy based on the individual needs of your child*):

- Always leave your child with a staff member
- Always say goodbye to your child
- Tell your child when you will return relative to a recognizable event e.g. "I'll be back after Music Time"
- Do not prolong the goodbye. Say goodbye and leave
- Try not to let the child see your distress; if you have a calm, positive demeanour it will be reassuring to your child.

Most children do not remain upset for very long and a child is usually able to calm much more quickly *after* the parent has left as they are no longer sensing the parent's anxiety. If your child is upset a staff member will offer some comfort and support. Be assured the centre will phone you if your child is very distressed and cannot be settled. If you are concerned about your child you are welcome to phone the centre to check on him/her, but please remember that we do not always answer the phone during school hours so you may need to leave a message on the answering machine. You will receive a return phone call to provide information about your child's well-being as soon as possible. If you are calling with an urgent notification or concern while your child is in attendance, and you therefore need to reach a staff member immediately, you may call our **emergency mobile** on **0449 724 839**. Please remember that this number is for emergencies only, not general queries, and parents can only call this number while their child is in attendance at the centre.

MONTESSORI PROGRAMS

The centre implements a Montessori curriculum, which reflects the belief in the child as the creator of his/her own development. Each child is a unique individual and our Montessori approach nurtures and responds to each child's unfolding readiness and respects their sensitive periods for acquiring new skills. The child's environment is an essential component in facilitating the learning process. The Montessori learning areas are carefully prepared with resources and learning experiences that empower children with responsibility, choice and freedom to explore, discover, problem-solve and create. For children to flourish and grow in self-esteem they need to engage in purposeful activities that promote independence and concentrated effort.

The Montessori programs meet the developmental needs for each child. Programs will ensure that your child's physical, cognitive, social, emotional and language development is enhanced. Observations will be kept on each child, which allows for an individual focus. Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress, either informally at the conclusion of the day or by making an appointment for a longer discussion at a mutually convenient time.

Parents' suggestions, comments and participation in all our programs are welcomed. Please refer to the Parent Information Station for more guidance about how you can offer your input or feedback.

We also value parent donations of cut flowers for our classroom and fruit and vegetables for the children to use in their kitchen.

PARKING

Short-term parking is available in the basement carpark underneath our building, with access from the basement to the centre via the elevator or stairs.

PARENT INFORMATION

We pride ourselves on empowering parents/guardians with information and inspiration. Please check your 'Family Pocket' (pigeon hole) regularly for correspondence directly from the centre. You are also invited to take pamphlets, articles, publications or other resources from our displays and parent information areas. Many of our important documents, forms and policies are available from the 'For Our Families' section of our website, located at: <https://www.samontessori.com.au/for-our-families/>. We also advise families to regularly check their child's digital portfolio (please speak to your teachers for further information).

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The centre may access, or connect families with, other support services such as inclusion support, speech pathologists and other specialists. Please let a member of the leadership team know if you have any concerns about your child's development or if you require their collaboration with other professionals.

NEWSLETTERS

The centre issues regular newsletters with updates on the activities and events in the centre. We also share other helpful information such as articles on Montessori or other support for families. As part of our commitment to sustainable practices, we will provide these resources digitally via email.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Staff will take photographs and conduct video filming regularly during activities at the centre and on outings. Parents are required to provide (or withhold) consent upon enrolment for their child to be included. Photographs and film are used primarily for parent communication and maintaining records of each child's development but may also be used for advertising, professional training and presentations. Professional photographs (group and individual) are taken annually at the centre and are available for purchase but there is no obligation to buy and some children choose not to participate in this process.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations are treated as a reflection of a child's journey through the years. If your child wishes to celebrate their birthday please let the staff know in advance. Parents are encouraged to send photos of the child showing each year of their life for our special "Around the Sun" ceremony that focuses on how the child has changed over time. This is a special time for the birthday child and does not rely on gifts or food. Please **do not** send cakes or any other treats or toys.

ITEMS FROM HOME

We request that children do not bring items from home as they may become broken or lost. We also discourage children from wearing dress-ups or clothing that may inspire aggressive or disruptive fantasy play (such as Superman, Spiderman etc.).

NON-SMOKING

The centre, including the indoor and outdoor environment, is an entirely smoke-free zone at all times (including outside of operating hours or during holiday periods).

NUTRITION

It is the centre policy to encourage parents to provide nutritious, well-balanced and varied food. **Due to the high incidence and severity of nut allergies we ask parents to never send food containing nuts or nut products.** We also encourage parents to either avoid sending eggs or communicate to staff if cooked egg is an ingredient in your child's snack or lunch. Snacks should have low salt and low sugar content. Items that are high in sugar, salt and/or saturated fats may be politely removed from your child's meal prior to consumption so that we can comply with our regulatory requirements to promote nutrition.

Water is available for the children to drink throughout the day. Snack and lunch times will be as relaxed and enjoyable as possible. Parents are required to inform the centre if their child has any allergies or dietary requirements. A completed health care and/or action plan will then be required to address any allergies or medical conditions.

The children may engage in food preparation or cooking experiences during their time at Echoes. During these activities we follow safe food handling practices, hygiene procedures and adhere to our policies relating to allergy and nutrition.

Children should have breakfast before attending each day.

REST

The centre will endeavor to meet the individual needs of each child. Children will be allowed to rest or sleep as desired, however, it is anticipated that children of pre-school age will not require a regular sleep during the session. Children will not be made to sleep or rest if they are not showing the need to do so, nor will children be woken from sleep for arbitrary reasons.

VACCINATION / IMMUNISATION

It is a policy that all children enrolling into this centre must be vaccinated according to the Australian National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule. Vaccination records will be required on enrolment and again throughout the time the child is at the centre to ensure ongoing participation in the vaccination program. Please note that failure to maintain (or provide evidence of) your child's immunisations in line with the NIP will result in forfeiture of your enrolment at our centre.

Please refer to www.immunise.health.gov.au or speak to your doctor for more information.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

The Director and staff members make every effort to ensure a safe environment for your child. Staff members will implement first aid procedures where *minor* accidents occur and will seek medical advice should more urgent incidents arise. In the case of a severe accident or a medical emergency, staff members will make every reasonable attempt to notify parents. Where the parents are not contactable - or if the centre deems the situation to be urgent - an ambulance will be called. The centre will not accept liability for any medical or transportation fees incurred.

INFECTIOUS ILLNESSES

If your child becomes unwell at the centre you will be contacted to have your child collected as soon as possible. We will 'err on the side of caution' by sending children home if they appear to be unwell during their time at the centre. This will occur if there is the presence of some or all of the following indicators:

- A child appears to have a fever
- A child is complaining of feeling unwell
- A child has a runny nose (or sneezing) with yellow, thick mucus
- A child has a chesty cough or a particularly persistent dry cough
- A child is lethargic and lacks energy
- A child has diarrhea or vomits

Some of these are enough on their own (such as the thick runny nose) but others (such as lethargy) are not sufficient alone to prompt us to call a parent and would need to be present in combination with other factors. The most common causes for concern are:

- Cold like symptoms, including temperature, runny nose with green or yellow mucus, phlegmatic cough.
ACTION: Exclude until temperature has ceased, runny nose is CLEAR, and cough has cleared.
- Gastroenteritis (diarrhea and/or vomiting).
ACTION: Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion and/or vomiting for 24 hours.

In order to prevent cross infection, children with infectious disease must be excluded from the centre. A medical certificate may be required to before a child can return after an infectious illness. Please notify the centre when your child is away due to ill health. When illnesses are present in the centre a notice will be posted for all parents. Strict hygiene practices such as hand washing, use of gloves, and disinfecting equipment are implemented at the centre to reduce the risk of infection.

Our centre strives to provide a Covid-safe environment. Our protocols are updated regularly according to the public health situation and the advice of SA Health. Please check with the centre directly for information about current restrictions, procedures and advice. Our centre reserves the right to refuse entry to a child and/or adult displaying symptoms of Covid and/or to request a *negative Covid test* before allowing the attendance of a child who has experienced symptoms associated with Covid.

Please refer to the following table for further details of our exclusion periods:

Campylobacter	Excluded until diarrhea has ceased for 24 hours
Chicken Pox	Excluded until fully recovered or 5 days after the eruptions first appear, blisters dried
Conjunctivitis	Excluded until eye discharge has ceased
Diphtheria	Excluded until medical certificate issued following 2 negative throat swabs
Hand foot & mouth	Excluded until blisters have dried
Hepatitis A	Excluded until medical certificate is received or 7 days after the onset of jaundice/illness
Impetigo	Excluded until treatment underway. All sores must be covered.
Measles	Excluded for 4 days after rash appears
Meningitis (bact)	Excluded until well
Meningococcal infection	Excluded until well, antibiotic treatment
Mumps	Excluded for 9 days or until swelling subsides
Poliomyelitis	Excluded for 14 days and until medical certificate is received
Ring worm, Scabies, Lice, Trachoma	Excluded until treatment obtained
Streptococcal Infection	Excluded until antibiotics are taken for 24 hours and until well
Whooping Cough	Excluded for 5 days after treatment starts

Any other illnesses will be checked with the relevant health authorities.

MEDICATION

Single course medication (such as antibiotics) can **only** be administered by staff when a doctor has provided clear instructions on the type, time and dosage of the medication (either in the form of a detailed prescription label and/or a letter or medication plan). Parents should ensure that:

- the medication is in the original container
- the medication is clearly labelled
- the medication has not expired
- the medication is prescribed for the recipient
- the prescription / medication plan clearly outlines the dosage and when/how it is to be administered.

Staff members will record the administration in a medication log in accordance with our Medication Policy.

Please note that we are not authorized, under any circumstances, to administer the **first dose** of a medication. This is due to the possibility of children having severe adverse reactions to new substances. It is therefore a requirement that a child has already successfully ingested at least one dose of a new medication at home (or under a doctor's supervision) otherwise it will not be administered in the centre.

Over-the-counter medication (eg. paracetamol) will **not** be administered unless a medical health professional has prescribed it to the individual child with specific dosage instructions.

ONGOING MEDICAL OR PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Where a child requires regular medication or treatment to sustain their health and well-being, a doctor's letter detailing the condition, treatment and emergency action is required. A completed Health Care Plan will be required from a medical practitioner. Families will need to supply the relevant medication and are responsible for updating this prior to its expiry date. Families are asked to proactively update the centre if/when the condition and/or treatment procedures change.

ALLERGIES

Parents/guardians are required to inform the centre of any known allergies / sensitivities that a child experiences *whether they have been formally diagnosed or not*. We encourage families to err on the side of caution by informing us even if an allergy is simply suspected, such as where minor reactions have been observed in the past but the condition has not yet been medically confirmed. Families will be asked to provide details about the cause/trigger of the allergy, the symptoms/effects of a reaction and any treatment that will be required. Where an allergy has been formally diagnosed this information will be communicated in a completed Health Care Plan or Allergy Plan developed by a medical professional. Families will need to supply the relevant medication and are responsible for updating this prior to its expiry date. Families are asked to proactively update the centre if/when the allergy and/or treatment procedures change.

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

We believe that all children deserve access to a nurturing environment and inclusion in inspiring early learning experience. We recognize that this journey is unique for each individual, particularly where a child has identified additional needs. Our team is always willing to partner with parents and professionals to ensure that a child's well-being is supported and his or her needs are being met to the best of our ability. When we welcome an individual with identified additional needs we will approach parents to request the appropriate information and advice, particularly regarding health care plans for those with physical or mobility difficulties. The centre and play spaces are accessible to children and adults with mobility difficulties and appropriate toileting facilities are provided.

CLOTHING

Echoes Montessori has a uniform that enhances each child's sense of belonging in our community while also allowing for the flexibility and freedom of self-expression. A school shirt is required which bears our logo and centre name. This can be purchased prior to your child's first day. Children are required to wear this shirt while in attendance but the remainder of their outfit can be chosen by the child and/or parents to display personal preferences and adapt to the weather conditions.

We do recommend that parents carefully consider the clothing that children wear each day to ensure that it is appropriate for the experiences that a child will encounter at Montessori. For instance, clothing may be stained or marked as a natural result of creative art activities or sensory play experiences. *Please do not dress children in clothing or accessories that are precious or irreplaceable.* Please also provide appropriate footwear that supports and protects the child's feet.

A sun hat is also required between 1st August and 30th April, in accordance with our Sun Protection Policy. During this time, all children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, and we therefore offer an Echoes hat that fulfils these protective principles and forms part of the uniform.

Please also provide a complete change of clothes each day and several sets of underpants (or pull-ups). All clothing, bags and footwear must be clearly labelled with your child's full name. The centre accepts no liability for loss or damage. Please check the lost property regularly. The centre keeps a minimal supply of spare clothing for emergency use by children. Where the centre's spare clothing is used, parents are required to launder and return it to the centre as soon as possible.

WHAT TO PACK

When your child comes to Echoes each day, we recommend you bring the following items:

- An Echoes bag* that your child can carry independently,
- Your child's snack box and lunch box* with nutritious food,
- A complete change of clothes (please update this as weather patterns change),
- Appropriate headwear (protective sunhat in Summer / Autumn, warm beanie in Winter / Spring),
- Several changes of underpants (or pull-ups/nappies and wipes),
- Protective clothing to suit the weather – such as gum boots and a warm jacket in winter.

****Echoes bags, t-shirts, hat & lunch boxes are available to order as part of your orientation process.***

All of your child's personal belongings should be clearly labelled with your child's full name.

Water bottles and drinks are **not** required as children have continuous access to fresh, cool water.

SUN SAFETY

The centre believes strongly in protecting children from the harmful effects of the sun. As per our Sun Protection Policy, which can be viewed at the centre or is available from the 'For Our Families' Resources on our website, we use a combination of sun protection measures for all outdoor activities between 1 August until 30 April and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above at other times. At these times SPF 30 or higher, children should arrive wearing sunscreen. Broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen is also available for staff and children's use and children are supported to apply sunscreen before going outside. If the centre's sunscreen product is not suitable for your child you will need to supply your own labelled sunscreen. When outside, children are required to wear loose fitting clothing that cover as much skin as possible. During 1 August and 30 April, when outside, all children and staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears. Each child's Echoes hat must be clearly labelled with your child's name and taken home each day. Children who do not have a hat will not be allowed outside of shaded areas.

TOILETING

Where possible the centre prefers that children are independently using a toilet or in the process of acquiring this skill. We respect, however, that each child will meet this developmental milestone at his or her own individual time and therefore it is not a prerequisite for enrolment. Where children are not yet in

control of their toileting, pull-up style nappies should be worn so that assisted toileting can be done in a dignified way for the child and independence can be encouraged. Parents must supply additional spare clothing during the time the child is preparing for independent control and spare pull-up nappies should be provided. Parents and the centre should be working towards the same goal of facilitating the child's independent toileting control.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Every child and adult in the centre has a right to feel safe and to enjoy positive experiences. We have developed several policies which aim to ensure this outcome. Our Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy outlines our approach to managing and supporting the behavior of children. Where necessary, staff members will liaise with parents to ensure continuity of behaviour guidance between the home and Echoes. We expect all members of our Echoes Montessori community, including staff members, families and visitors, to role model the safe, respectful, inclusive and positive behaviours that we ask the children to emulate. These expectations are outlined in our Ethical Conduct Policy, Inclusion and Bias Policy and Parent Communication Policies. These policies are available from our office for parents to read.

STUDENTS

From time to time the centre provides on the job training for students who are studying a Certificate IV, Diploma, Bachelor of Early Childhood or are high school students on Work Experience. This is a vital part of their training and we closely supervise and monitor the placement. At no time are students left alone with the children. You will be advised when a student is present.

PHONE/CAMERAS

The use of photo phones/cameras/videos or recording devices by parents or visitors is not permitted whilst in the centre. Permission must be gained from the Director or staff prior to taking photographs during special occasions.

EXCURSIONS / INCURSIONS / SPECIAL EVENTS

The centre believes in the value of community activities, whether this involves going out to visit our local area or inviting special guests to contribute to our classroom activities. As part of the Enrolment process parents/guardians are given the opportunity to consent to their child participating in short walks/outings in the area immediately surrounding the centre. These local outings may occur spontaneously without advance notice being provided to parents/guardians. All other excursions will require notification from the centre to parents/guardians regarding details including: Date and times, Destination, Costs (if applicable), Transport arrangements, Staff attending.

Parents/guardians have a right to decide on their child's participation for excursions/incursions or events that incur additional costs or occur outside of our regular learning program.

Parents / guardians accompanying the centre on an excursion will need to comply with staff directives and act in accordance with centre policies.

Intergenerational engagement with the residents of Encore Apartments is considered part of our regular learning program. Parents will therefore not be advised of every individual instance of engaging with our elders unless it involves a special event (such as an excursion) or deviates from our usual routine. Risk assessments are conducted prior to any form of intergenerational engagement and Echoes staff members are always present to closely supervise all interactions.

TERMS OF ENROLMENT

- 1) I/we have viewed the premises and consent to the enrolment of my child.
- 2) I/we have received and read the Parent Handbook.
- 3) I/we agree to comply with centre policies, and government requirements in relation to the centre and its service (eg. Signing in/out, health regulations).
- 4) I/we have viewed the centre Fee Schedule (provided in the enrolment documentation and available on the centre website) and:
 - a. I/we agree to the amounts and terms and conditions outlined within the Schedule.
 - b. I/we agree to pay the Program Fees on a weekly basis.
 - c. I/we agree pay the Service Fee for any failed payment.
 - d. I/we understand that a Penalty Fee will be charged on top of the Service Fee in the event of recurrent non-payment and/or a pattern of late payment.
 - e. I/we agree to pay for all time booked – for public holidays, absences for sickness and non-attendance days for the period of my child’s enrolment.
 - f. I/we agree to provide four weeks’ notice of cancellation of care for my child. I/we understand that the four weeks’ notice cannot incorporate the centre’s End of Year and New Year closure period. I/we understand that if I/we supply less than four weeks’ notice of departure, I/we will still be required to pay the equivalent total fees of that four week notice period regardless of my child’s attendance during this time. My/our bond on file may be forfeited and used towards this fee payment. I/we understand that full fees will be charged if Centrelink does not pay Child Care Subsidy on outstanding fees.
- 5) I/we are aware that fees may be adjusted annually on July 1st or at other times with due notice given by the centre.
- 6) I/we understand that the centre will be closed for four weeks over the End of Year and New Year period. Fees will not be charged during this closure.
- 7) I/we understand that where a child has more than one legal parent/guardian, in the absence of Parenting Orders / Court Orders specifying otherwise, Echoes Montessori considers both/all legal parents/guardians to be equally responsible for the financial obligations associated with the provision of care.
- 8) I/we are aware the centre reserves the right to terminate enrolment when it is considered in the best interests of the centre (eg.non-payment of fees).
- 9) I/we agree to pay late fees (after 6:00 pm) to cover staff overtime should I/we be late collecting my child at the rate of \$30.00 for the first 15 minutes (or part thereof) and \$5.00 for every additional 5 minutes increment (or part thereof).
- 10) I/we agree to make alternative arrangements when my/our child cannot be in care due to infections or illness.
- 11) I/we are aware of the centre’s policy regarding immunisation. I/we verify that my/our child is currently fully immunised in accordance with the nationally recognised schedule. I/we are aware of my/our responsibility to maintain the immunisation status of my/our child throughout his/her attendance and will provide appropriate evidence accordingly, with failure to do so resulting in immediate forfeiture of the enrolment.
- 12) I/we are aware that staff at the centre will seek emergency help in the event of an accident or illness requiring emergency medical treatment and I/we agree to pay all costs incurred.
- 13) I/we are aware that staff at the centre will administer basic first aid treatment to my child if the need arises and they will seek assistance from an ambulance (at my/our cost) in emergencies and/or situations deemed beyond the scope of first aid training.
- 14) I/we are aware that staff at the centre will supply sun block to my/our child in accordance with the centre Sun Protection Policy.
- 15) *For parents who receive the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), or who intend to apply for the CCS at any stage during enrolment:*
 - a. I/we understand that I will need to confirm the Enrolment Arrangement (outlined within this Enrolment Form) on MyGov once it is available, in order for any CCS to commence via Echoes Montessori.
 - b. I/we accept that, where CCS is applicable, it is my/our responsibility to be aware of, up to date and compliant with all associated Centrelink conditions and requirements.
 - c. I/we understand that CCS entitlements are determined directly by Centrelink. I/we acknowledge that I/we must liaise with Centrelink directly regarding any issues relating to CCS.

***Please feel free to talk to staff or the leadership team
about any questions or concerns you may have.***

We look forward to a rewarding partnership with you during your time with us.