
PARENT

HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY

A proud member of the SA Montessori network



SA MONTESSORI
quality early childhood education and care



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.

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.

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GENERAL CENTRE INFORMATION

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. Contact information for The Board is available at www.esb.sa.gov.au/about-us/contact-us

Non-Smoking and Alcohol / Drug Free Environment

The centre, including the indoor and outdoor environment, is an entirely smoke-free and vape-free zone at all times (including outside of operating hours or during holiday periods). Parents must not attend the premises under the influence, or in the possession, of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Philosophy

We encourage all families to read our *Philosophy Statement*, which was developed by our educators, children and families to express who we are, what we do, and why we do it. We review this document regularly and we encourage all families to contribute to shaping this with their own vision and values.

Our *Statement of Principles* booklet complements 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




Students

From time to time the centre provides on the job training for students who are studying a Certificate, 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.

Social Links

We're delighted that you're a part of the SA Montessori community in-person, and you may like to join our virtual community too.

Our Instagram and Facebook profiles share insightful information about Montessori, offer inspiration that you can embrace at home, and help keep you up to date with special events and celebrations.

<p>Scan here or search for @sa_montessori to find us on Instagram.</p>	<p>Scan here or search for @SAMontessoripreschools to find us on Facebook.</p>	<p>We also have a blog on our website which is designed to empower families to learn more about Montessori, as well as sharing news from our community. If you'd like to read our past entries or keep up to date with new ones you can scan here or search for https://www.samontessori.com.au/blog/</p>
		

PREPARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY

Orientation

An enrolment information package will be sent to families prior to your child's first day. The centre recommends that the family attend an orientation visit to the centre before a child's official enrolment commences. Orientations are scheduled by the teaching team and parents will be advised of dates and times once enrolment has been confirmed. Parents are required to stay with their child during this visit.

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. The safety of children is paramount at all times and families are asked to be vigilant when parking, and particularly when reversing out of parking spaces.

Clothing

Echoes Montessori has a uniform that enhances each child's sense of belonging in our community whilst also allowing for 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 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, and when UV levels reach 3 and above outside of those months, 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 that you bring the following items:

- A backpack or bag that your child can carry independently,

- A packed, nutritious **lunch**. Please refer to the information handout titled '*Eating at SA Montessori*' for further details about this.
- 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.
- Water bottles and drinks are **not** required as children are encouraged to drink from a glass to foster independence, motor skills and social courtesy. We discourage the use of water bottles because these can cause confusion and cross-contamination when multiple children have the same type of bottle.

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

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.).

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.

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. We understand that it can be challenging to separate from your child, especially if they seem anxious. We assure you that if your child is upset, an educator will offer comfort, care and support. Be assured the centre will phone you if your child is very distressed and cannot be settled, and if you have not heard from us this indicates that your child has been comforted and is enjoying their time in the classroom.

If you are concerned about your child, you are welcome to contact us to receive an update on how your child has settled. Please remember that we are not always able to immediately attend to the centre's landline phone, since our educators are engaged with the children in the classroom and we do not have a receptionist on site at all times. To check on your child after the morning separation, we therefore recommend that you either:

- 1) send a **text message** to the classroom mobile. *This number will be provided to you during enrolment, or please speak to an educator if you are seeking the number.* (We ask that you only call the classroom mobile in the event of an emergency whilst your child is in attendance at the centre.)
- 2) **email** the centre on echoes@samontessori.com.au.

Contacting us in writing (by text or email) means we can respond to you as quickly as possible without needing to step out of the classroom to attend to a phone call. This keeps our children safe and supported, while still providing parents with the support you deserve too!

For all other non-urgent matters, you are welcome to **leave a message on our landline** answering machine and a team member will respond when possible.

PARENT / GUARDIAN PARTNERSHIP

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.

We also regularly engage with our families and community to inform our practice and decision-making. We take a multifaceted approach to consultation and seeking your input, which may include tools such as online surveys that will be shared with you periodically. We ask you to please keep your eye out for opportunities to engage, and we truly appreciate if parents can please participate. Your perspective is important to us, and by sharing your views and values you can help to shape our centre.

Xplor HomeApp

We use a software system called 'Xplor' for our enrolments, bookings, and payments. This platform has an off-shoot known as 'Home' which is designed for parents and guardians. All of our parents/guardians are required to have a Home account in order to perform important functions associated with your child's enrolment, attendance and fees. Once enrolment is confirmed, parents will receive an invitation to set up an account, and download the Xplor Home app.

The Xplor Home App allows parents to have more insight and input into their child's experiences at our centre, and to connect more deeply with your child's learning journey. It offers a range of different functions, from a 'Learning' section that helps you understand your child's participation in our program, to a 'Finances' tab that allows you to have up to date details about your account. Our educators will use Xplor's 'Playground' platform to capture photos, videos and stories that highlight your child's learning, and these will be sent to your Xplor Home App.

If you would like to learn more about Xplor, you can visit their website at www.ourxplor.com.

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/ authorised 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 / authorised 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.

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.

Absences

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.

Holidays

The centre is closed for four weeks over the 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).

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.

Communication

Open dialogue is a vital component of developing respectful, reciprocal partnerships with families. We will regularly share information with our families about our program, your child's progress, special events, practical matters and news from our centre, as well as other helpful information such as articles on Montessori or other resources and support for families. As part of our commitment to sustainability, and for your convenience, we primarily rely on digital

communication via email or your child's portfolio app. You may also notice displays or noticeboards within our centre, and we encourage you to engage with these physical resources too. We also ask families to share information with our educators, as we value and respect your knowledge of your child and your insights help us work towards the best possible outcomes for your child. We encourage you to speak directly to an educator each day when drop off your child to tell us anything we need to know for the day, such as whether your child is well-rested, or if they have expressed any particular interests they'd like to learn more about. You can also comment on observations in your child's digital portfolio to provide your feedback or ideas, and you can always contact us via email with your suggestions, questions or perspectives. 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/>.

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.

Concerns or Complaints

It is particularly important to raise any concerns with the staff or the Director 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.

You can put your grievance in writing via email to the centre Director and/or an appointment can be made to meet with the Director and/or management and/or approved providers. While we have consistent procedures in place to guide our responses to concerns or complaints, we also treat each situation in a personalised manner and will endeavour to provide comprehensive and respectful support to resolve the matter. We similarly ask parents and families to engage in respectful conduct and communication even when relaying concerns, as our leaders and team members have the right to a psychosocially safe workplace.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

Additional Needs

We believe that all children deserve access to a nurturing environment and inclusion in inspiring early learning experience. We recognise 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 their 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.

Allergies

Parents/guardians are required to inform the centre if your child has a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition, *whether or not they have been formally diagnosed*. 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, and to collaborate with us to develop a Risk Minimisation Plan. Where an allergy has been formally diagnosed we request the provision of a completed Health Care Plan or Allergy Plan that has been 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.

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.

Food and Nutrition

Please refer to the '*Eating at SA Montessori*' guide for more information about food and drink provision at the centre.

Snack and lunch times will be as relaxed and enjoyable as possible.

Parents/guardians are required to inform the centre on their enrolment form (or during enrolment, if the condition was not confirmed at enrolment time), 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.

It is the centre policy to encourage parents to consider the 5 Australian Dietary Guidelines 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. We encourage families to read our *Nutrition Policy*, our *Eating at SA Montessori* guide and our *Choking Risk Minimisation* resource to learn more.

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

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:

<p>Diarrhoea or vomiting (eg, caused by Gastroenteritis, rotavirus, salmonella etc)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude until there has not been any diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 24 hours • If the diarrhoea or vomiting are confirmed to be due to norovirus, exclude until there has not been any diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 48 hours
<p>Fever (temperature more than 38.0 °C).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per the Fever Fact Sheet in Staying Healthy 6th Edition, parents are encouraged to keep their child home until their temperature has remained below 38 degrees for 24 hours. This is recommended as best practice for protecting that child’s wellbeing and the health and safety of others. • However, this 24 hour timeframe is not a formal exclusion period. The required exclusion period as per Staying Healthy is until the temperature remains normal (between 36.5 °C and 38.0 °C.), unless the fever has a known non-infectious cause. • If the child has gone home from the service with a fever but their temperature is normal the next morning, they can return to the service. If the child wakes in the morning with a fever, they should stay home until their temperature remains normal. • If a child’s temperature only remains normal with the use of medication, such as paracetamol, this may indicate that the fever is associated with an infectious illness (as opposed to an environmental cause, such as a warm ambient temperature). This suggests that a child is not well enough to attend an early learning setting. If a child is medicated in the morning to bring a temperature down, and their temperature subsequently rises when the dose wears off, parents will be contacted to collect them at that time which can be disruptive to all parties.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your child regularly requires paracetamol or similar to maintain a normal temperature without the presence of an infectious illness, please speak to your centre Director about their health needs so that they can attend • If a doctor later diagnoses the cause of the child's fever, follow the exclusion guidance for that disease
Rash	<p>Children can stay at the service, but should go home if the rash:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops rapidly • is combined with fever or other symptoms (in which case exclude until fever or other concerning symptoms have gone)
Respiratory symptoms (cough, runny or blocked nose, sore throat) (eg caused by cold, flu, bronchitis, croup, pneumonia, RSV etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude until temperature and sore throat has ceased and runny nose is CLEAR. • A person can often have an ongoing cough after they have recovered from a respiratory infection. If their other symptoms have gone and they are feeling well, they can return to the service
COVID-19 symptoms and/or positive Covid test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude until temperature and sore throat has ceased and runny nose is CLEAR (usually 5-7 days) • A person can often have an ongoing cough after they have recovered from a respiratory infection. If their other symptoms have gone and they are feeling well, they can return to the service

In order to prevent cross infection, children with infectious disease must be excluded from the centre. **We encourage families to refer to our Illness Policy to ensure they are aware with all the requirements.** 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 notifiable infectious 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 safe, healthy and hygienic environment. Our protocols are updated regularly according to the public health situation, the advice of SA Health and other guiding sources. 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.

In addition to the common causes for concern in the table (listed above), the following table outlines further details of our exclusion periods:

Campylobacter	Excluded until diarrhea has ceased for 24 hours
Chicken Pox	Excluded until all blisters have dried – this is usually at least 5 days after the rash first appeared in non-immunised children, and less in immunised children
Cold sores (herpes simplex)	Excluded if the child cannot maintain hygiene practices (for example, because they are too young), exclude until the sores are dry. Cover sores with a dressing, if possible
Conjunctivitis / Eye Discharge	Excluded until eye discharge has ceased
Diphtheria	Excluded until medical certificate issued following 2 negative throat swabs
Fungal infections of the skin or scalp (ringworm, tinea, athlete's foot)	Excluded until the day after starting appropriate antifungal treatment
Hand foot & mouth	Excluded until blisters have dried
Head Lice	Not excluded, as long as effective treatment begins before the next attendance at the service. The child does not need to be sent home immediately if head lice are detected

Hepatitis A	Excluded until medical certificate is received or at least 7 days after jaundice starts, or if there is no jaundice, until at least 2 weeks after onset of other symptoms
Hepatitis E	Excluded until medical certificate is received or at least 7 days after jaundice starts, or if there is no jaundice, until at least 2 weeks after onset of other symptoms
Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)	Excluded until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 4 days
Impetigo	Excluded until antibiotic treatment has started Cover any sores on exposed skin with a watertight dressing
Measles/Rubella	Excluded for 4 days after rash appears
Meningitis (bact)	Excluded until well
Meningococcal infection	Excluded until the person has completed antibiotic treatment
Mumps	Excluded for at least 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)
Pneumococcal disease	Excluded until person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well
Poliomyelitis	Excluded for 14 days and until medical certificate is received
Scabies and other mites causing skin disease,	Excluded until the day after starting treatment
Shingles (zoster infection)	Excluded until blisters have dried and crusted
Staph infection (Staphylococcus aureus)	Excluded until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well
Streptococcal sore throat	Excluded until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well
Trachoma (Chlamydia trachomatis eye infection)	Excluded until antibiotic treatment has started and appointment with GP obtained
Typhoid and paratyphoid fever	Excluded until cleared by the local public health unit
Whooping Cough (Pertussis)	Excluded until at least 5 days after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment, or for at least 21 days from the onset of coughing if the person does not receive antibiotics

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

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 critical - an ambulance will be called. The centre will not accept liability for any medical or transportation fees incurred.

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.

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 authorised, 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.

Sleep and 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 most 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.

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 50 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 must remain in shaded areas.

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. This is reinforced by the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* (the Act), which specifies that children cannot enrol in or attend early childhood services unless all immunisation requirements are met.

Approved immunisation records from Medicare 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.

CHILD SAFETY

The safety and wellbeing of children is our paramount consideration in all decision-making at our centre. We have many protocols and procedures to ensure that our children are consistently protected and uplifted. All employees hold a current and valid Working With Children Check and undergo extensive child safety training. Our centres currently do not have CCTV, as footage on these systems can be vulnerable to hackers and a survey of our families indicated strong opposition to surveillance due to these privacy concerns. We have supervision plans in place for our indoor and outdoor environments, and robust risk-assessments are conducted for our physical environment and routines to minimise any risk to children. We also have strong food safety and hygiene protocols in place to protect the health of our enrolled children.

However, we wish to be transparent with families that even when we enact all reasonable precautions to promote and protect child safety, we cannot create an environment entirely devoid of risk. There are risks inherent in early childhood itself, as children are still developing their physical coordination, social skills and immune systems, and this means there are risks in any setting where children socialise and are exposed to one another and the physical environment, including but not limited to the circulation of infectious illness.

We always welcome parents to speak with us if you have concerns about safety. We also remind families that our team members have a right to a safe workplace, both physically and psychosocially. We ask all parents/guardians to be respectful in their conduct, even when discussing sensitive matters.

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.

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.

Phone / Cameras

While on premises, Parents/visitors are not permitted to use devices to take, transfer or store photographs/videos. We encourage families to leave their devices, such as phones, in their bag or pocket, except where it is required as part of an authorised centre procedure. We discourage the use of 'smart glasses' within our premises and if they must be worn for prescription purposes we kindly ask that the smart functions are switched off while on site. Permission must be sought from the Director or staff prior to taking photographs/recordings during special occasions, and this may be withheld if parents of other children in the group have consented to being photographed.

If a team member has reason to believe that a parent/visitor has used a device for the purpose of taking, transferring or storing photographs or videos then they may request that these are deleted and further action may be required. We ask you to refer to our Digital Device, Photography and Phone Policy for further details.

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. In order to protect the privacy of other families and preserve the intellectual property of SA Montessori centres, photos shared with families that show any child(ren) other than your own - including, but not limited to, annual group photos or images shared through our digital portfolio platform - must not be shared on social media or otherwise publicly displayed and/or redistributed. Consents specific to the use of photography within our centre are gathered on enrolment forms, and are detailed as follows:

Type of Consent	Consent	Examples of use, which include, but are not limited to:	Storage Protocol	Retention Period
Individual photography:	I/we give permission for my/our child to be photographed/filmed, with these images/videos being used for the purpose of documenting my/our child's participation in the program.	Documentation collected by educators for assessment/planning, and sharing via the digital portfolio platform/app for communication with parents/guardians.	Stored locally on service-issued devices (iPads) and uploaded to cloud-based digital portfolio platform. Not transferred between devices and/or otherwise backed up.	Photos embedded into documentation/assessment may be kept for up to 3 years after the child's final day of attendance as per Regulation 183. Photos not embedded into documentation/assessment by the end of each calendar year will be permanently deleted from devices.
Internal (centre) photography:	I/we give permission for my/our child to be photographed/filmed, with these images/videos being shared/displayed/distributed, for the purpose of internal communication within the centre community of educators, families and appropriately authorised personnel.	Centre newsletters shared with families and posts of group activities within the digital portfolio platform/app shared with multiple parents/guardians.	Stored locally on service-issued devices, transferred between devices (eg. iPad to laptop), inserted into programs hosting templates (eg. Word, Canva), shared via email and/or cloud-based digital portfolio platform.	Original images will be deleted at the conclusion of each calendar year, except where they constitute part of a draft or work in progress at that time. Copies of archived parent communication (eg. newsletters) may be kept for up to five years as part of our Assessment & Ratings cycles.
External (community) photography:	I/we give permission for my/our child to be photographed/filmed, with these images/videos being shared with prospective families and the community.	Images featuring on our website, posts on social media channels and inclusion in workshops/presentations for staff training.	Stored locally on service-issued devices and/or uploaded to cloud-based sharing/storage platforms belonging to the individual service, as well as being transferred to/stored on	Stored indefinitely for use in perpetuity.

Type of Consent	Consent	Examples of use, which include, but are not limited to:	Storage Protocol	Retention Period
			local devices and cloud-based platforms belonging to management/ownership and to any relevant party associated with the promotion/content as authorised by management.	
Professional photography:	I/we give permission for my/our child to be photographed/filmed by a professional photographer engaged by the centre for the purpose of taking individual shots and 'class photos' to be made available to parents. I understand that this means the images will be captured and stored by the professional photographer off-site, not subject to the individual centre's internal data storage procedures.	Individual posed photographs, class photographs, sibling or cousin group photographs (where relevant) available for purchase by parents.	Not stored by the service. Stored according to the protocols of the professional photographer engaged. SA Montessori takes no responsibility, and accepts no liability, for data protection or security in relation to this data.	Not controlled or determined by the service. Data is retained/removed according to the individual photographer's policies and protocols. SA Montessori takes no responsibility, and accepts no liability, in relation to the retention of this data.
Media photography:	In the event that a special event or opportunity arises that may result in broad media coverage, we will approach individual families to identify if they would like their child to be involved and, if so, to seek consent specific to that context, which may include the provision of release forms from relevant outlets.	Newspaper or magazine articles, social media posts, television or online video segments.	Stored according to the protocols of the photographer/outlet/organisation associated with the event. Copies may be stored by SA Montessori as per our External (Community) photo protocols. SA Montessori takes no responsibility, and accepts no liability, for data protection or security in relation to this data.	Stored indefinitely for use in perpetuity.

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.

Releasing and Collecting Children

Children will only be released to the enrolling parent(s)/guardian(s) and or those authorised persons nominated on the enrolment form. An Authorised Person must be over 18 years of age*. 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).

* If you wish to nominate an Authorised Person under the age of 18, please apply in writing to your centre regarding the individual, their relationship to the enrolled child and the circumstances. Requests will be considered by management and written approval will be granted if the circumstances satisfy our duty of care and child protection obligations.

EDUCATION & LEARNING

Educators

All staff working at the centre are required to hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC) 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.

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.

Flying Start Preschool Program

We are proud to offer a government endorsed Flying Start Preschool program within our centre. We provide all the benefits of a government preschool (or "kindergarten") and the additional advantages of our Montessori curriculum. This means that your child can enjoy their 3 and 4 year old kindy years right here!

What is the Flying Start Program?

Flying Start Preschool Programs are supported by the state government to provide eligible 3 and 4 year old children with eight terms of high-quality preschool for 15 hours each week. They must be guided by the Early Years Learning Framework and delivered by a Bachelor qualified Early Childhood Teacher.

Benefits of the Flying Start Program

Flying Start government funding assists our centre to employ qualified, highly skilled teachers and educators and resourcing to deliver quality learning and assistance for children registered in the program. It also provides our centre with a curated 'Preschool Boost Menu' of over 100 evidence-based supports, including allied health therapies and educator upskilling, to improve early learning and development. This allows us to select specific programs and resources tailored to the needs of our 3- and 4-year-old children, their families and communities, in the areas of physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication skills and general knowledge.

Fees for the Flying Start Program

There are no additional fees associated with the Flying Start Preschool Program. Your child can be included in this group within their usual daily fee thanks to funding from the South Australian Government. The funding also supports professional development and links our service with the 'Preschool Boost Menu' to access allied health services to enhance our teaching strategies and provide personalised support. This government funding does not reduce your current fees, as the Flying Start Funding Agreement prohibits services from passing on a discount to families.

Registration in the Flying Start Program

As your child nears the age of 3 and 4, we will provide you with further information about Flying Start, and provide you with the opportunity to register in this program.

If your child is attending more than one long day care service that is a 'Flying Start' partner, you can choose which centre will receive the Flying Start Preschool education funding that the government has allocated for your child. (Please note that not all long day care centres provide eligible Flying Start partner programs.)

You might also be considering a government preschool (commonly referred to as "kindy" or "kindergarten") for your child's year before school. Please also remember that government preschools are open for shorter hours than a long day care setting, and they operate only during school terms and generally do not provide holiday care. It is important to consider whether that schedule suits your family's needs, especially if you are considering reducing your child's sessions in long day care to attend a government preschool.

Most families value the opportunity to provide continuity of learning for their child, and therefore choose to stay at our centre for the one to two years leading into school commencement.

Montessori Programs

The centre implements a Montessori curriculum, which reflects the belief in the child as the creator of their 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.

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

ENROLMENT ARRANGEMENTS

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 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 or if adding children would mean we were no longer working within the mandated educator-to-child ratio. 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 and/or at ratio 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'** written 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

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 since 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, ratios 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.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

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

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?

Centrelink will consider the following points to 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. Families with **more than one child aged 5 or under in care** can get a higher subsidy for their second child and younger children.
3. All CCS eligible families can get a '**3 day guarantee**' of subsidised child care of at least 72 hours per fortnight, regardless of work or study hours. Some families may qualify for up to 100 hours per fortnight, subject to a test around you and your partner's levels of **recognised participation** (e.g., work, study, or volunteering):
4. The **type of child care service** will determine the hourly rate cap.
5. If you have a **CCS overpayment**, Centrelink may use some of your CCS each fortnight to pay this back.

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.

Towards the conclusion of the enrolment, the primary carer* will be asked to nominate a preferred account to receive any bond refund available following the child's departure, after all conditions are met. In situations where separated parents each hold a CRN associated with the child's enrolment to split fee costs between the two parties, both account holders will be contacted and each will receive a share of the Bond Refund proportionate to their respective percentage of weekly fee liabilities. In the event of a Parenting Agreement or Court Order specifying financial agreements relating to the child, the centre will be guided by the terms of the Order or Agreement even if these differ from our standard protocol.

**The 'primary carer' is defined as the parent/guardian registered with Centrelink in this capacity, whose individual CRN is linked with the child's CRN. The centre does not determine the 'primary carer' by any means other than this definition.*

- *In the event that no parent/party is identified as a primary carer by Centrelink, the parent/party who provided the receipt for the Bond payment upon enrolment will be contacted to authorise an account for any Bond refund owing at the conclusion of enrolment*
- *Where the primary carer regularly utilises support from another individual for the purpose of translation or other communication assistance, the support person may be included in any communication directed to the primary carer and a response from the support person may be considered as representative of the primary carer's approval*
- *In the event that the primary carer is incapacitated or otherwise unavailable, an application can be made to the centre by the other parent or party detailing the circumstances and requesting authority to approve the Bond refund. These applications will be considered by the Director and owners/management in line with our ethical and legal requirements.*

Fees

Fees are due at the end of each week of attendance. Fees apply for 48 weeks of the year including public holidays, school 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.

Statements

Statements will be sent to the person in our system who is listed as the Primary Caregiver on a fortnightly basis via email. They will also remain accessible at any time via the Xplor HomeApp. This dual approach ensures that all families are proactively provided with convenient access to comprehensive information about your fees, enrolment, absences and CCS entitlements. We recommend that you navigate to the Finances tab of your HomeApp for the most accurate and up to date information about your fees and entitlements, particularly for your current week's sessions and fees due at the end of each week. However, the step of sending these via email ensures that there are no barriers for families who may encounter technical issues with the app. Please be assured that the statements are simply sent as a record of sessions, entitlements, attendances and transactions from the previous two-three weeks. They do not indicate a payable invoice, simply a reflection of this history. Parents do not need to take any action upon receiving these statements.

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.

Default Fees

In the event of a failed payment, Debitsuccess charges Echoes Montessori a Service Fee (please refer to the Fee Schedule). This fee for each failed payment is then passed on by Echoes Montessori to the child's account. A failed payment means that the attempt to process the weekly fee cannot 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 that is charged to a family for each failed payment is non-negotiable and non-refundable.

Fees may also apply in the event of Late Collection (as outlined in the 'Late Collection' section of the Parent Handbook) and also for recurrent non-payment of fees. A surcharge amount will be applied to direct debit payments according to the payment method nominated by the parent/caregiver. Please refer to the 'Default Fees' section on our Fee Schedule for further details about Default Fees.

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.

Terms of Enrolment

- 1) I/we have had the opportunity to view the premises either in-person or remotely, 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 to pay all additional fees that may apply to our account in the circumstances outlined in the Fee Schedule, including Service fees, Penalty fees or Surcharges.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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 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).
- 8) 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 reserves the right to consider both/all legal parents/guardians to be equally responsible for the financial obligations associated with the provision of care.
- 9) 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).
- 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 understand and accept that while the Provider and service personnel take reasonable precautions to promote and protect child safety, there are risks inherent in any setting where children socialise and are exposed to one another, including but not limited to the circulation of infectious illness.
- 15) 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.
- 16) I/we understand that staff members have the right to a physically and psychosocially safe workplace, and that any parent/guardian undermining this right (eg. through harassment, or engaging in disrespectful, aggressive or intimidating behaviours) may result in the immediate cancellation of an enrolment.
- 17) *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.
- 18) I/we understand that the personal information I/we provide to the centre will be disclosed to other authorised organisations/entities (such as the Department of Education or Services Australia) where this is necessary for reporting, operational, legal or regulatory requirements, or as a condition of funding agreements.
- 19) Where a child has more than one legal parent/guardian, it will be taken that all relevant parties are in agreement with these enrolment terms, and/or that the person who completes this form is legally authorised to consent to these terms.

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