

We acknowledge that children will bring to the Centre or carry with them certain personal belongings. This policy outlines the types of belongings that children may bring with them on a regular basis and the level of associated responsibility.

It can be distressing for children to misplace their toys from home and can cause conflict between children. Children often want to share or show other children or caregivers special things from home, but these treasures may be easily broken or lost. To save the upset and heartache, parents are requested to encourage children to leave their toys at home, unless they are essential to a child's emotional wellbeing and/or sense of belonging. We have numerous stimulating and challenging toys and resources for all children to play with and are in numerous quantities, catering to their interests.

- Children are able to bring with them personal belongings for news, including special items from gifts, holiday souvenirs, or items relating to a current interest. News is a great way to encourage children to talk during group time about their special toy or personal belonging. This practice encourages children's social development, enables children to verbalise thoughts, fears and feelings, broaden the cultural and social backgrounds of all children involved in group time activities, assist in the development of language skills and provide an opportunity for development of special interests for the group. Educators will store these items in a safe place throughout the day, retrieving them for news time, and then returning them to safety.
- If families choose to leave belongings in the Centre during the day it is completely at the family's own risk.
- If personal belongings are particularly valuable, fragile, or hold irreplaceable emotional value, it is recommended that the child bring in the item, show it to friends and educators, and then have the parent take it with them. This allows for the child to share the excitement and experience without the risk of loss or damage.
- We will provide appropriate storage for lost property that will be available to children and families at all times.
- Any grievances or concerns related to lost, damaged, or stolen property of the children will be managed in accordance with the grievance and complaints procedure.
- We will take as much care as possible in ensuring that personal belongings are returned to the correct family. To assist us with this we ask families to ensure that any item that can be labelled, either has the child's name on it, or the child's initials (for example, on the tag of soft toys where space is limited). If an item cannot be labelled it is the parent's responsibility to advise an educator that their child has this item in their possession.
- We will encourage children who bring special belongings into care to place them in a special "toys from home" box to reduce the prospect of them becoming lost or broken. For added security this box will be placed in a position that requires the assistance of an educator to access.
- We will enforce a non-violent toy policy in which we seek family assistance in preventing their children from bringing in violent toys from home. Any such toys will be removed from the child immediately and placed in a safe area for parental collection at the end of the day.
- Whilst children may wear dress-up clothes to the centre, we ask that accessories such as guns, knives, swords, or other weaponry is left at home. Such items can encourage violent play and may present a danger to the child and others within our child care environment.
- The staff and educators will take as much care as possible in ensuring that children's clothing items are returned to their correct family. Again, the labelling of all items can help us achieve this. However, we must make it clear that the Centre is not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen items.
- We will actively encourage children to care for their belongings by:
  - Reminding children appropriately when belongings need to be placed in storage. For example, lunch box into bag.
  - Providing suitable storage to keep belongings safe.



- Negotiating a secure and safe position with families for any item or personal belonging that is either special, expensive, or at risk of being damaged but is nevertheless being left at the centre.
- We will inform the family through relevant newsletters and Parent handbook of appropriate personal belongings required at the Centre each day.

*Families will:*

- Be responsible for providing the child with appropriate belongings and property required for active participation in all centre activities and experiences. This property may include (but is not limited to):
  - Enclosed footwear.
  - Weather appropriate clothing.
  - Wide brim hat.
  - Suitable bag (backpack).
- Ensure all personal property and belongings are clearly named or labelled.

### Comfort Toys

Many children have a 'security' item that soothes them and helps them to cope throughout a busy day. Security items may include things such as a special blanket, dummy, soft toy, or even a strip of satin ribbon from a blanket etc. We recommend that if children have a comfort toy or security item that it is labelled (if possible) and brought to the centre each day. When not required or in use we will ensure that it has a designated storage space that is known to the child.

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**Source:** Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014), Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015, ECA Code of Ethics, National Quality Standard.

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National Quality Standard – NQS		
Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
Quality Area 5: Relationships with children		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

