

# Parent Handbook

2022

(A guide to inform you more about our ECD Centre)

**We would like to thank you for choosing our ECD Centre and welcome you and your child to the home of 100 Acre Wood.**

## **Our address:**

59 - 61 Forest Drive, Pinelands, 7405

Telephone number: 0613690124

We hope this handbook answers your questions and gives you information necessary to feel comfortable and confident in allowing us to care for your child.

This ECD Centre has been in existence for 15 years which operates under a principal – Shelley Schram. 100 Acre Wood ECD Centre is a licensed establishment with the Department of Social Development and the Cape Town City Council. Registration number: 15/5/13/2/2 C 8140.

## **Philosophy**

We believe that Childcare is an extension of the Family Unit. Each family is important and we aim to support parents in the care and upbringing of their children in a happy and homely atmosphere.

We will provide a safe and nurtured environment in which to encourage, stimulate and develop individual growth.

### **We believe that children should: -**

- Always feel safe, happy and comfortable
- Have opportunities to seek challenges as part of their exploration within a safe environment
- Be given the opportunity to experience a programme aimed at developing the child – physically, emotionally, imaginatively, socially and intellectually
- Have opportunities to express their feelings
- Have opportunities to be involved in activities that develop a positive self-concept and confidence in themselves
- Be able to grow in independence and respect the rights of others
- Develop an appreciation of the wider community through involvement of community, home and our ECD Centre.
- Be encouraged to be involved in the care of the environment
- Be taught to be loving, caring and to respect individual differences

## **100 Acre Wood ECD Centre achieves this philosophy by: -**

- Recognizing that each child is an individual
- Providing a Quality Developmental Programme within the context that learning and play should be fun
- Employing caring, appropriately Qualified and Experienced staff who can meet the varying needs of children
- Providing facilities of a high standard located within a healthy environment
- Ensuring that Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's needs with Staff
- Providing children with nutritional and inviting meals

## **Classes**

We have 8 classes in total.

## **Program**

As we continuously strive to improve your child's experience at the ECD Centre, we have introduced our GROW programme in all of the classes. We implemented this programme in March 2014 and the results have been fantastic.

The GROW programme is a theme-based curriculum tailored specifically to each of your child's everyday experiences. It is a curriculum that is widely used for the foundation years and provides a structured learning approach throughout all the classes. The GROW programme has clearly defined milestones that we encourage all of our children to reach throughout the year.

While this curriculum allows our children to develop naturally, it also provides a very balanced foundation. It allows your child to enjoy the various fun activities throughout the day.

Through play, children learn what no one can teach them. They are able to develop skills such as independence, resourcefulness, curiosity, creativity and responsibility. Play is a child's work!

Our ECD Centre provides age- appropriate areas for dramatic play, arts and crafts, science and nature and discovery, sensory exploration and block play, shelf toys, puzzles, fine motor and books. Our gross motor activities and outdoor play provide opportunities for running and jumping and the development of gross motor skills.

During free play the children can choose their own activities according to their interests. Special field trips and community visitors will be offered. The daily schedule is available for your viewing in each of the classes.

Creative projects are filed in their file. This file gets sent home at the end of the year. We do however send 'masterpieces' home regularly with your child. Please watch for these. Take it home to enjoy with them. They are very proud to share.

Morning ring takes place every morning and is presented in micro-groups. These micro-groups are very beneficial, as they allow our teachers to give more one on one attention to our children. During ring time we focus on our weekly theme, literacy and numeracy. We make these lessons as fun and concrete as possible.

## **Extra-activities**

Extra-activities are offered during the week.

Aqua Crazy - Tuesdays

Dance Mouse (2 – 5 years) – Wednesdays

Music for Mini's (2 – 5 years) - Wednesdays

Sports Hub (2 – 3 years) - Thursdays

Heart Matters (4 – 5 years) - Fridays

## **Staff**

Our staff are trained, qualified teachers accredited in the Early Childhood Education Course with all possessing a Level 4 accreditation and some studying further towards their Level 5. Our manager, Lauren Keyser, is a qualified Foundation Phase teacher with 12 years of teaching experience. All staff are First Aid and CPR Certified. Our ECD Centre supports staff training and development as an opportunity for improving current work performance, providing enrichment, and preparing individuals to meet future organizational needs.

Our staff are trained to deal with any difficulty that may develop during the day. They will help your child explore the world through various activities. They will also help your child learn acceptable behaviour in an atmosphere of warmth and caring. Please feel free to approach the staff with any questions or concerns you may have.

You will also find the Owner/Principal, Shelley Schram, ensuring the smooth running of the ECD Centre. The principal is there to assist and advise staff as well as to help the parents with any questions or concerns.

# Emotional Development and Child Guidance

Child guidance is maintained through careful, active supervision, setting clear limits and giving age appropriate explanations. Teachers approach discipline in a positive manner, using praise and attention to encourage desirable behaviours. Teachers treat each child as a unique individual and are fair, firm and consistent. We encourage children to accept the consequences of their behaviour and we engage in problem solving alternatives where age appropriate. Methods used include:

1. REDIRECTION: guiding a child into acceptable options
2. LOGICAL AND NATURAL CONSEQUENCES: making the child aware of the results of their actions
3. LIMIT SETTING: teachers develop boundaries for the children, either as a group or individually according to the situation
4. MODELING: demonstrating appropriate ways to the children
5. PROVIDING CHOICES: teachers outline appropriate choices and children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves
6. ANTICIPATING: teachers plan and prepare the environment in such a manner to avoid conflict
7. IGNORING: some inappropriate behavior can be ignored and more attention paid to appropriate behaviour
8. REFLECTION TIME: a child may be removed from a situation that is distressing them for a short period of time

We at Hundred Acre Wood try to stress two main patterns of behaviour – respect for other people and respect for property. As a result we do not allow children to hit or shove other children or verbally abuse them. We also stress that they treat material possessions with respect. There is a difference between playing hard, and using a toy for a purpose for which it was not intended. For example, books are for looking at, not tearing pages out of. Occasionally children do not behave in respectful ways. We first remind them of the proper behaviour. If the behaviour is repeated, a “time out” chair is used. The amount of time a child sits in “time out” varies according to his age. One minute per year of age is the most effective length of time, but this amount will never exceed five minutes, even if the child is more than five years old.

When his/her “time out” is up, we talk to the child (by now he has calmed down) and try to explain why that behaviour was inappropriate. We might ask, “What might happen if we continue to throw toys?” The appropriate answers usually come out – something might get broken – the toy might break, someone might get hit by the toy. If a child still has not calmed down or is really belligerent at this point we try to separate him/her from the other children with a quiet activity (book, puzzle etc). We skip the “reminder” and go straight to “time out” if the offence involves hitting or otherwise physically abusing another child. If a child continues to abuse a certain toy the privilege of playing with that toy may be taken away from him/her for a period of several minutes up to the rest of the day. If the whole group of children is engaged in this, the toy will be considered “closed” for a while. If a child continues to behave inappropriately, we will talk to you about it. Hopefully these two types of behaviours are ones you want your child to adopt, so they will be reinforced at home. If that is the case, we shouldn’t have any major problems!

Children are never punished for lapses in toilet training or for accidents (spilled juice, for example). In the case of the latter, we will have the child help us clean up, if possible, not for punishment, but to help teach responsibility.

**PUNISHMENT THAT IS HUMILIATING OR FRIGHTENING TO A CHILD, SUCH AS HITTING, SPANKING, SHAKING, VERBAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE, WITHHOLDING OR FORCING FOOD OR PUNISHMENT FOR LAPSES IN TOILET TRAINING AND OTHER FORMS OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT ARE PROHIBITED. THESE FORMS OF PUNISHMENT WILL NEVER BE USED, EVEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARENT.**

## Health and Safety

As part of the enrolment process, all children must be up to date with their required immunizations prior to starting. Updates must be given to the principle as immunizations are completed and yearly as required.

To maintain a good standard of health, a Daily Health Check is completed upon each child's arrival at the ECD Centre. Children showing signs of a communicable disease such as pink eye, vomiting, 2 or more bouts of diarrhoea, fever, undiagnosed rash/skin disease, must be kept at home until diagnosed by a physician. Should a child become ill during the day he/she will be supervised away from the other children and the principle will use their discretion in deciding if the parent should be contacted and if the child is sent home.

Should the child need to be sent home it is the parent's responsibility to pick up their child or to make arrangements for them to be picked up. Our ECD Centre is not equipped to attend to the needs of a sick child.

Please notify the ECD Centre if your child has been exposed to any communicable disease whether or not they are showing any symptoms. A sign will be posted to report any communicable disease to the parents.

Accidents and young children seem to go together. Children often fall and always seem to have bumps and scrapes. If your child gets hurt at the ECD Centre a written report will be completed and shown to you for you to sign in acknowledgment and this will then be placed in your child's file. If there is a serious accident that results in the need for medical attention, the ECD Centre will contact you and arrangements will be made for you to pick up your child or meet the staff at the emergency facility. If you cannot be reached, we will contact your emergency contact.

Vincent Pallotti Hospital is a 2 minute drive away. A doctor is available close by for emergencies.

Please note: There are security camera's in each of the classrooms as well as air conditioners and electric fencing around both properties. We also do Fumigation to both properties quarterly.

**Upon registration an emergency contact, other than the parents – MUST be given on the enrolment form. In an emergency staff will always attempt to contact the parents first.**

A random monthly evacuation drill is conducted as part of our program. Children are oriented to the procedure within their first week of attending our program as to ensure their safe retreat. In the event of a building

evacuation we have an assembly point (clearly signed) at the front of the house. Fire drill procedures are situated in each of the classes.

***We ask that you assist us in providing a safe environment for the children by ensuring that your child does not bring balloons (either inflated or deflated), toys with small pieces or anything which may be a hazard to the young children at the ECD Centre .***

## Medication

Please note that no medication will be administered at the ECD Centre unless arrangements have been made with the teacher.

If your child is on chronic medication – parents are to complete the form available at the ECD Centre.

## Sun Protection

Please ensure sun protection is put on your child before he/she comes to school during the warm weather. Parents are encouraged to supply a hat each day. Please see list of requirements.

## Nutrition

Wholesome, nutritious lunches and snacks (morning and afternoon) are provided for the children. Menus for the current week are posted on the notice board at the entrance to the classrooms. Needs and allergies of your children should be discussed with the teacher/principle prior to enrolment. Please do not send sweets, gum and other junk food to school with your child. Think healthy. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.  
**PLEASE DO NOT SEND FOOD ITEMS THAT CONTAIN NUTS OR MAY CONTAIN TRACES OF NUTS**

## Clothing and Possessions

***If your child isn't dirty at the end of the day, give them back to us because they haven't played hard enough to learn anything!***

Playing and learning is hard dirty work. Here are some clothing tips to help your child play and learn:

- make sure your child knows it is ok to get dirty. Children often refuse to take part in a messy activity because they are afraid they will get dirty
- dress your child in comfortable, washable clothes

- make sure your child has a change of indoor and outdoor clothing in their locker at all times, in case of accidents.
- please help keep your child safe by removing strings from your child's clothing (jackets/hoods etc.) to prevent choking/ strangulation
- label all clothing so they can be easily identified, all items without a label will be placed in the "lost and found" and after a period of time unclaimed items will be donated.
- send your child with clothing that encourages independent dressing and are easily laundered
- SHOES – please avoid sending lace up shoes to school – this makes getting ready for activities quicker for the teacher.

## Hours of Operation

This ECD Centre is open year round and operates Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. to 5:15p.m. Children must not arrive at the ECD Centre BEFORE 7:00 a.m.

The ECD Centre closure dates for 2022 can be found on our website or in any of the classrooms.

(2022 Calendar provided to all parents)

## Arrival and Departure

Children must be brought directly to the classroom in the morning. Under NO circumstances should a child be sent into the ECD Centre alone and expected to find their classroom. Parents must ensure that a staff member is aware of the child's arrival. Make your presence known to the teacher, if your arrival hasn't been acknowledged.

Children must be picked up by 5:15 p.m. If anyone other than the person authorized on your application will be picking up your child, please let the teacher or principal know in advance. We will only release your child to persons you have advised upon. In the event of custodial disputes we must have legal documentation regarding child custody arrangements.

The ECD Centre assumes no responsibility for children once they are picked up by a person authorized by the parent (i.e. relative, an emergency contact, child care provider, etc.)

## Enrolment

Many children are able to enter a childcare facility with little or no complications. However, this transition can be difficult for some children. Our staff will do everything they possibly can to help both the child and the parent/guardian overcome the anxiety of separation. It has been our experience that children will quickly calm down and begin to explore their environment once the parent has left. We also welcome



parents' calls at any time throughout the day to discuss their child's day and to assist in reassuring the parent their child is adjusting.

**An enrolment form must be completed and returned and the registration fee paid prior to the child attending.**

## **Fees**

A non- refundable placement fee of R2800 is required upon registration.

Fees are paid in advance and on the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month. If fees are not paid by the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month a 2% interest fee will be applied. Payment can be made via EFT.

**Two months written notice** is required when you wish to withdraw your child from this ECD Centre.

If you wish to take your child out of this ECD Centre within the last quarter of the year, you may do so on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> October. (I remind all parents of the 2 month notice period) If you choose to take your child out after the 1<sup>st</sup> October, you will still be liable for November and December full fees.

We have found over the last couple of years that parents have opted to take their children out just before we commence the December month, as this is a short month. This does affect the teacher's holiday pay and since we are open throughout the year, we feel that it is only fair that we safeguard our teacher's end of year pay-out and holiday. Which I am sure you will agree is very well deserved.

If your child is absent or sick or you are taking a family vacation during the year you will still be liable for the full fees for the month.

## **Communication and Parent Participation**

It is our goal as an ECD Centre to maintain an "OPEN DOOR" policy. We feel it is important to have open communication with the parents and families. Parents are always welcome at the centre at any time during the day to visit with their child without giving prior notice, and please feel free to call at any time to check on how your child's day is going. We ask that you advise us of any changes or events at home that may affect your child's behaviour. Our staff are committed to providing an environment which fosters co-operation between the home and centre. It is very important that both the parents and the teachers work together to help your child reach their full potential. Daily contact with parents is encouraged at drop off and pick up time. Feedback and suggestions are welcome at any time. Electronic surveys are sent out periodically. Reports are given at the end of Term 2 and Term 4. We will also provide an opportunity for all parents to sit down at scheduled times during the year and discuss their child's progress with the teachers and principal.

A yearly calendar will be in the classrooms indicating themes for the year and the associated activities etc.

Field trips – parents will be notified of any field trips and off- site activities through the monthly calendars as well as postings. Parents are encouraged to come along with their child on these outings.

Fundraising- parents are asked to assist the ECD Centre with our fundraising throughout the year. Fundraising helps us in keeping our childcare fees down by assisting us in purchasing numerous program supplies, such as new toys, gross motor equipment and educational games.