



JUST 4 TOTS FAMILY DAY CARE PARENT HANDBOOK



I look forward to meeting and welcoming your
family at Just 4 Tots Family Day Care



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Philosophy

Just 4 Tots acknowledges that we play and learn on the lands of the Dharawal people. I pay my respect to Elders, past, present, and emerging.

At Just 4 Tots, I continuously reflect on and adapt my practices to meet the diverse and evolving needs of children and families. My commitment to inclusivity extends beyond cultural acknowledgment and is embedded in every interaction, curriculum choice, and learning environment. I ensure my practices are inclusive of all abilities, family structures, and cultural backgrounds, providing equitable opportunities for every child to succeed.

Just 4 Tots recognises that **children** are unique individuals that bring a variety of knowledge, ideas, beliefs, skills, abilities, and culture to the service. This allows children to be active participants in their learning environment. I recognize that children's rights are paramount. At Just 4 Tots, I ensure that every child feels safe, respected, and valued. Children have the right to express themselves, to be heard in matters affecting them, and to engage in meaningful, active learning experiences. I foster environments that support their rights to participate, play and grow with dignity and agency.

At Just 4 Tots, I believe in the value of collaborative partnerships with **families**, seeing them as co-constructors of their children's learning. Through ongoing discussions and consultation, I align my program with the hopes and goals of families, ensuring their voices shape the curriculum. We actively seek feedback to adapt our practices, ensuring they reflect the diverse needs and desires of the families.

The Just 4 Tots **environment** encourages learning through play and exploration. It is organised in such a way that children are given a wide variety of spaces to play that include opportunities to play with friends and spend time in quiet, independent play. The environment promotes independence not only in providing choice, but also encourages children to independently care for their environment. I view children's learning and development as holistic, encompassing social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth. My play-based approach fosters exploration and interaction with the environment, supporting every aspect of their development. I aim to create experiences that foster resilience, empathy, critical thinking and physical well-being, supporting children to thrive in all areas of their lives.

We celebrate **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities** by embedding meaningful cultural elements into our daily routines, fostering respect, understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives in all children.

We value **community engagement**, providing opportunities for children to connect with their local community through playgroup, excursions, and initiatives that foster a sense of giving back.

Sustainability is an integral part of the learning journey at Just 4 Tots. I foster a sense of responsibility and care for the world by integrating sustainable practices into daily routines. Children are empowered to understand the impact of their actions and make meaningful contributions to environmental stewardship



Our practices are grounded in the National Quality Framework and the relevant **scheme** policies and **regulations**. We are committed to critical reflection and continuous improvement, ensuring the highest standard of care for children. We actively implement the **Child Safe Standards** through a preventative and participatory approach, fostering a culture of trust and safety. By maintaining responsive practices, we ensure each child feels supported to express concerns and thrives in a safe environment. Through effective supervision, regular safety checks, and regulatory compliance, we create a space where children can explore and take necessary risks for their development.

At Just 4 Tots, I am committed to implementing best practices in early childhood education as outlined in the National Quality Framework. I regularly engage in **critical reflection**, considering the latest research, community needs, and feedback from families and children. Through ongoing professional development, I ensure that my knowledge and skills remain up-to-date to provide the highest quality care. Our approach is informed by a range of **child development theories**, which guide our practices and ensure a holistic, research-based approach to early childhood education.

Just 4 Tots is dedicated to fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment where every child is supported to reach their full potential, with respect for their rights, individuality, and the community we all share





Experience & Qualifications

My career in early childhood education began in 2004 with Camden Family Day Care. Since then, I have completed my early childhood teaching degree and a graduate certificate in special education. My life experience includes my greatest achievement being my four children. It is this life experience that allows me to connect with families as we journey together through parenthood.

Apart from Family Day Care, I have also worked in long day care settings for just over 2 years, gaining a broader range of knowledge and expertise. I draw on and put these experiences into practice to ensure that your children are given the best possible start to their learning.

Apart from experience and education, I have a tremendous love for children and place a high standard on learning. I enjoy being with them, celebrating their discoveries and achievements, laughing, and learning with them.

I was named State Educator of the Year in the Australia Family Early Education and Care Awards in 2018 and was named Regional Winner for the Southwest/M5 Corridor in the Family Day Care Educator of the Year Awards for 2013 and 2014.

Collective Family Day Care

Collective Family Day Care is committed to providing a high-quality education and care service that meets the needs of the community, families, and children in a home-based environment.

Collective Family Day Care educators and management are guided by professional standards such as the National Quality Standards and the Code of Ethics 2016 in all our practices, interactions, and relationships. Through respecting the diversity, skills, and strengths that each person brings to the service we can challenge and learn from each other, work in collaboration, as well as reflect on our practices to ensure we are always striving for continual quality improvement and the highest possible outcomes for children and families.

For more information about Collective Family Day Care, head to their website www.collectivefdc.com.au





Dropping off & collecting children

Children must be electronically signed in and out every day. All absences, i.e., public holidays, absence due to illness or holidays must also be signed for. At the end of each week, electronic timesheets will need to be approved by the parent/authorised person. If this does not occur, full fee will be payable for that week.

If someone other than you will be collecting your child, please let me know as soon as possible. If the person is someone who has not been to Just 4 Tots previously, identification will be requested before allowing the child to be collected.

Just 4 Tots opens at 700am and closes at 500pm. Please ensure your child is collected on time or overtime rates will be applied. If you are going to be late, please advise as soon as possible.

Please remember that children cannot assess danger like adults. Always hold your child's hand as you walk to and from your car. Driveways are just like roads and need to be treated as such.

What to bring to Just 4 Tots

- Lunch & snacks for the day – preferably including 1 piece of fruit and a yoghurt
- Drink bottle – water only
- Change of clothes – in case of messy play or any accidents. Don't forget socks (especially in the winter)
- At least 6 nappies/pull ups or spare undies
- Babies – enough made-up bottles for the day

If you require me to provide a meal for your child, the following costs will be added to your timesheet:

- \$5 for a sandwich
- \$2 per piece of fruit provided for morning or afternoon tea

Just 4 Tots provides all wipes, sunscreen, sheets, and hats. If you have a specific preference for wipes/sunscreen, please provide your preferred products in your child's bag. Nappy creams/powders cannot be applied to your child unless it has a chemist label with your child's name on it. Please ensure that all items are labelled with your child's name. Also, any toys that your child brings from home will be left in your child's bag. This is to ensure that the toy is not lost or broken. It is encouraged that rather than bring a toy from home, children bring a book that we can read at group time.



Curriculum

At Just 4 Tots I recognise that children are inherently capable of making decisions about what they would like to do, learn about, and play with.

Many fundamental literacy and numeracy skills are incorporated into activities and topics that the children are interested in, helping them to engage, interact and learn more readily.

In addition to their interests, your thoughts and feedback will also provide an important aspect to the curriculum as we build a connection between what your child is learning at home and how we build on this whilst in care.

Skills such as self-help, independence, social and emotional skills are built into the daily routine at Just 4 Tots and children are actively encouraged to develop these essential skills. These include taking their shoes off, independently accessing their drinks, taking responsibility for their own belongings, learning to be good friends (through sharing, turn taking and becoming accustomed to a mixed age group) and listening to and following instructions are encouraged from an early age.

The curriculum also includes visits to other educators, and excursions to a variety of places. These excursions are always carried out with the children's safety, enjoyment, development and learning in mind and have included trips to local parks, shopping centres, and places of interest. On occasions, we have also enjoyed larger scale excursions such as trips to the city via train and visiting exhibitions such as the ANZAC Centenary Exhibition in Darling Harbour in 2017, the Hungry Caterpillar puppet and Room on the Broom theatre performance in Parramatta in 2018 and 2023.

Special visits to Just 4 Tots are organised to coincide with our Tuesday morning playgroups as there are minimum numbers required. However, those children do not attend on Tuesday are always invited and welcome to attend.

All excursions and visits require written parent permission which will be requested before we leave. In addition, risk assessments are completed for each excursion considering all risks that could occur and what educators will do to ensure these do not happen (to the best of our ability and control). These are sent for approval by scheme management and are also available for your information and input prior to the excursions occurring.





Routine

The routine is a guide, and many factors may influence what happens during our day. These factors may include children's choices and decisions, special events, excursions, weather, and visitors.

7:00 – 9:00	Indoor play	
9:15 – 9:45	Sunscreen / Handwashing / Nappies / Morning Tea /	TUESDAYS PLAYGROUP
9:45 – 10:45	Outdoor play (including FMS)	
10:45 – 11:30	Handwashing / Programmed activities indoors	
11:30 – 12:00	Language Group Time	
12:00 – 12:30	Handwashing / Nappies / Lunch	
12:30 – 2:00	Sleep / Rest Time	
2:00 – 2:10	Nappies / Pack beds	
2:10 – 2:30	Music Group Time	
2:30 – 2:45	Afternoon Tea	
2:45 – 3:30	Programmed activities indoors	
3:30 – 3:45	Sunscreen / Tidy Up	
3:45 – 4:30	Outdoor Play	
4:40 – 4:45	Tidy Up outdoor area / handwashing	
4:45 – 5:30	Indoor Play	



Fees

As Just 4 Tots is registered under an approved scheme (Collective Family Day Care), all families are entitled to relevant government subsidies. For more information regarding these subsidies, please contact the Family Assistance Office for guidance to what you are entitled to receive.

As per government requirements, parent payments are collected by Collective Family Day Care. Details regarding the direct debit process will be provided by the scheme on enrolment.

The current fees (as of July 1, 2024) are as follows. A full fee schedule including terms and conditions will be provided when you join Just 4 Tots.

Permanent Care: \$137 per 10-hour session (if extended hours are required, these are charged at \$13.70 per hour)

Casual Care: \$130.20 per 6-hour session (if extended hours are required, these are charged at \$21.70 per hour)

Before & After School Care: \$40.00 per 2-hour session for before or after school (if extended hours are required, these are charged at \$20.00 per hour)

Vacation Care: \$160.00 per 8-hour session (if extended hours are required, these are charged at \$20.00 per hour)

Weekend: \$201.00 per 6-hour session (if extended hours are required, these are charged at \$33.50 per hour).

Public Holiday Care: \$201.00 per 6-hour session (if extended hours are required, these are charged at \$33.50 per hour).

Late fees: If you collect your child after your booked time, late fees will be charged at the rate of \$15 for the first 15-minute block and then \$1 per minute thereafter. These fees are charged per child in care and are not covered by government subsidies.



(International Firefighter Day)



Communication

Maintaining the lines of communication is an essential part of the quality service that Just 4 Tots aims to provide to children and families. Just 4 Tots implements various communication tools to ensure that families are given every opportunity to gain insight into their child's learning and participate through feedback, comments and suggestions provided.

A public Facebook allows Just 4 Tots to highlight what the children are learning to the local community and beyond and is used without detailing personal information.

Just 4 Tots uses an online app to record and share your child's learning and development (and many fun things that happen along the way. Storypark allows me to record and communicate learning as it happens by sharing photos, video, audio, observations, and routines within a secure online environment. It provides you with the opportunity to give instant feedback and for me to plan new ways to extend children's unique interests and abilities. Storypark is also how Just 4 Tots shares notices, events, reminders, policies, and messages.

You control your child's digital footprint (Storypark does not own your data) and can decide who has access to their child's information. Your privacy is paramount. No-one can find their account unless you invite them. Of course, if you prefer to not have your child included in group stories, this is also an option.

Anywhere, anytime. Storypark's cloud-based software means family members can just login and get started anywhere in the world.

As an educator, there may be times that I will need to raise concerns with you about your child's learning and development. Alternatively, you may also raise questions or ask for assistance with aspects of your child's development. During these conversations, there may be times where I may need to refer you to other specialists that are better trained and have more experience to assist your child. Examples include paediatrician, speech therapists, occupational therapists. While these conversations can be difficult and confronting, it is important to recognise and remember that we are both working towards the same goal – providing the best support for your child to succeed.

Community Connections

American Jim Rohn said, "giving is better than receiving because giving starts the receiving process." At Just 4 Tots, I encourage the children to recognise how lucky we truly are – we have homes, families, health, and love. Throughout the year we support several charities both local and others by giving back. Food hampers, easter egg hampers, placemats for our local Meals on Wheels, and the coming together with our local community to raise funds for Bear Cottage all encourage the children to develop empathy, appreciation, and gratitude.



Just 4 Tots Playgroup Sessions

In 2017, I began the Just 4 Tots Playgroup. These are held on Tuesdays from 930 to 1130am. This is an opportunity to invite local families and fellow educators to join us for morning tea and play at Just 4 Tots. It encourages new friendships and the opportunity for the children of Just 4 Tots to participate in a large group environment.

Playgroup provides fun, laughter and creating new friendships! Of course the larger group numbers also gives me an opportunity to organise special visits that require a minimum number of attendees. In the past these have included a reptile show, bee information session, and a visit by Healthy Harold.

This allows them to continue to develop their social and emotional skills such as sharing and turn taking. Of course, due to venue size there are limited spots available. Bookings can be made via phone, Facebook, or email.

Health & Safety

Children come into close contact with other children during the normal course of the day. It is therefore expected that they will pick up some of the common childhood diseases that are easily spread. If your child is displaying symptoms of common contagious diseases, then you will be asked to keep your child home from Just 4 Tots. Although this may cause problems for some families, rules such as these are there to protect other children (and educators) from becoming ill. If your child is ill at home, please contact me and let me know so that I can watch for symptoms in other children and act accordingly.

Nutrition

Just 4 Tots embeds the “Munch n Move” initiative into our program. This includes discussing healthy food options with the children and developing fundamental movement skills. For information about nutrition and exercise there are fact sheets available from the information rack at our compliance display.

Breastfeeding

Just 4 Tots Family Day Care is committed to the holistic well-being of your child. I recognise and wholeheartedly support the significance of breastfeeding in nurturing your child’s growth and development. Breastfeeding not only fosters a strong bond between parent and child but also provides essential nutrients crucial for optimal health. Just 4 Tots highly encourages and warmly welcomes breastfeeding mothers, offering comfortable and private spaces for nursing sessions. I understand the importance of continuity between home and care environments, and facilitating breastfeeding opportunities ensures that your child receives the best care possible, tailored to their individual needs.



For those who choose to provide expressed breastmilk, I am aware of safe handling practices, including proper storage and reheating techniques, ensuring that your expressed breastmilk retains its nutritional value. I understand the dedication involved in expressing breastmilk and are committed to accommodating your preferences to the best of our abilities, maintaining a seamless transition between home and care settings.

Safe Sleeping

Safe sleeping practices are implemented daily at Just 4 Tots. This includes not using pillows, doonas, soft toys, cot bumpers or lambswool on beds or in cots. Hoodies and thick jumpers are also removed. Jewellery will be removed. It is my preference that jewellery is not worn to care as it can get caught up and cause your child an injury. For more information about safe sleep practices, fact sheets are available from the information rack.

Sun Safety

Sun safety practices are embedded into our routines at Just 4 Tots. Sunscreen (at least SPF30) is applied 20 minutes before going outside. Our routine ensures that we are not outside at the peak UV times (between 11 and 3pm). Just 4 Tots provide hats. Children are required to wear sun safe clothing (shirts with sleeves, longer shorts and clothing that covers as much skin as possible. For more information about sun safety, please take a fact sheet from the information rack.

Mandatory Reporting & Child Safe Standards

As an early childhood educator, I am classed as a mandatory reporter. I am legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities.

Just 4 Tots and Collective Family Day care also adopt the Child Safe Standards that were endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2018. These 10 national principles are considered best practice for all organisations working with children. For more information about the child safety principles head to www.childsafe.org.au

Minor Accidents

Accidents are a normal part of all children's growth and development, and these occur both at home and at Just 4 Tots. In the event of a major accident, you will be contacted immediately. In the event of a minor accident, you will be notified as soon as possible usually via message. When you arrive to collect your child, can expect that an account of what happened, how the accident occurred and what first aid was administered if needed.



Medication

If your child requires prescribed medication, this will need to be in its original container and prescribed in the child's name. The dosage and frequency must also be on the container and the medication needs to be within its expiry date. If the child has not had the medication before, they will not be able to attend care until 24 hours after the first dose. This is to ensure that there is no reaction to the medication.

Panadol or Nurofen will only be administered if the child's temperature reaches 38° and contact has been made with parents. Other measures to reduce your child's temperature such as cold drinks, removing clothing and cold face washers to face and body will also be administered.

When to keep your child at home

If your child has any of the following complaints, please keep them at home until all symptoms have passed. A doctor's certificate giving your child clearance to return is also required.

- Fever of 38° (Children can return 24 hours after the fever has subsided)
- Vomiting (children can return 48 hours after their last episode)
- High temperature
- Head lice
- Tonsillitis
- Scabies
- Chicken Pox
- Diarrhoea (children can return 48 hours after their last episode)
- Cold Sores
- Infectious hepatitis
- Impetigo
- Ringworm
- Measles
- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Whooping Cough
- Excessive discharge from eyes, nose, ears
- Productive Cough (mucus)
- Severe skin rashes/infection
- Conjunctivitis
- Hand, foot, and mouth disease
- Rubella (German Measles)



Before Commencing Care

Before your child's first day of care at Just 4 Tots, please ensure you have done or addressed the following:

- Contact Centrelink to apply for and obtain a Customer Reference Number for your child and have it linked to one of the child's parents or caregivers. Both parent and child need separate CRNs which are then linked by the Family Assistance office. Check that all your details are correct with Centrelink. This process can take 6 weeks or more, so it is advised that it is started as soon as possible to ensure your Child Care Subsidy comes through to the scheme in time for when your child starts care, otherwise full fees apply until it is confirmed.
- You will receive an email from Collective Family Day Care (it will come from "Redbourne") for you to approve your enrolment. You will also receive a pin number. This number is what you will use to sign your child in. Everyone listed on your enrolment form (parent and authorised person) will receive a pin. They will need to use it if they drop off or collect your child from care. I suggest adding it to my name in your contacts, for example "Nadia – XXXX" so that you can carry it with you
- Label all your child's belongings – clothes, containers, bottles, cups, lunchboxes, dummies, and anything else that may be brought to care. This helps me return your belongings to you.
- Complete all relevant forms provided by Just 4 Tots. It is important that all forms are correctly completed in case of emergencies and for administrative processes to run smoothly.
- Access the Collective Family Day Care Parent Portal and view the policies that are in place. While I understand that this may take some time, it is important that parents and educators are on the same page regarding expectations and the way that the service routine, business, and administration operates
- Please make sure you have thoroughly read and understood the fee and payment schedule and booking hours. These carry financial penalties for late or incorrect payments and early or late pick up or drop off.



Your child's first day in care

All children will react to being left at Just 4 Tots very differently. However, it is ideal to prepare yourself that your child may find separation difficult. For more information about separation anxiety, please head to my website: www.just4totsfdc.com/information-sheets (printed copies are also available from the information rack)

What to expect

- Be positive about starting. If you are apprehensive about leaving your child, they will be apprehensive too. Children often notice their parents' feelings and magnify them
- Let your child bring in something comforting from home such as a favourite stuffed animal or blanket or even something of yours (large bangle, hat, scarf) in the early days of care
- Allow 5 minutes to settle your child. Linger too long can build up anxiety
- Establish a routine for dropping off your child. Say goodbye at the door or give a special goodbye signal such as blowing a kiss or a high five. Try them out along with other ideas you have, to see what works best.
- Always say goodbye to your child and let them know you'll see them at pick up time
- Allow the educator to guide you. When the educator gives cues such as "give mum/dad a kiss and a cuddle" or "it's time for mummy/daddy to go to work now," it's probably a good time to go so the educator can move on with the day's activities
- Leave quickly and smoothly once you have said goodbye. If you have forgotten something, please ring or SMS rather than returning and going through the separation process again
- While separation can be hard, children almost always settle down and begin to play with some toys or interact with the other children within a few minutes. I use various strategies to help your child settle in the care environment. I will keep you informed (mostly by message) as to how your child is coping. Rest assured that if I believe that your child is genuinely having a difficult time settling into care in that instance, you will be contacted to discuss further strategies or to collect your child. As a rule, "no news is good news" and it is likely that we are busy having a great day together.
- Be aware that children can get what I like to call "second day blues" or "second week blues." Sometimes, the initial day or few days of care go without incident but then the novelty of a new educator, friends and



environment wears off and the “blues” kick in. The child realises that Just 4 Tots is a regular and permanent thing and while that is not inherently bad, they get upset that the separation from the parent will be happening on a regular basis. This is common. Most children end up realising that Just 4 Tots is a fun environment and can’t wait to come back. Children often go through phases and different ways of thinking.

Please do not be offended if your child does not immediately say hello to you upon arrival at pick up time, or if your child shows resistance to going home. Children in new environments are still distracted, exploring, and having fun. It is nothing personal.