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# Karingal

# Handbook

(6weeks – 18 months)



## *Karingal is the Aboriginal name for 'Happy Camp'*

### **The Karingal room would like to welcome you to our room's handbook**

The babies' room changed their name this year to an aboriginal themed name, nominated by educators and parents of the babies' room. The name that was nominated and won was Karingal. Karingal means happy camp, which we believed to be a perfect fit to our room as we want all the babies within our room to feel and be happy and feel a part of a group/ community/ family (like in camps).

This handbook will provide you with important information you need to know about the room your child is starting in at KOQP. This will ensure the best possible start for your baby within the early childcare environment. This is yours to keep and refer to any time you feel you need to so enjoy and please feel free to ask any questions next time you see any of the educators from the Karingal room.

#### **Educators in the Karingal room:**

Room leader: Briar

Assistant Educator: Sandra

Assistant Educator: Blair

Assistant Educator: Mariana

Assistant Educator: Leila

Educator break relief: Sam (Children's Services Diploma Qualified & trained cook)





## **Our Philosophy in the Karingal room**

Babies should be hands on explores, not afraid in getting messy as they explore different activities through play. We believe they should be nurtured to become independent and confident young beings. We believe that the relationships between the babies and educators are central to creating this.

## **A little about the Karingal room and how it works**

The Karingal room has no greater than 12 babies a day, aged from 6 weeks to 20 months, approximately.

In terms of development, this is a vast age range, including many milestones, and as such, we as caregivers and educators aim to be extremely flexible and adaptable in our approach with the children in our care on each given day.

The Karingal room opens roughly from 7.45am to 5.30pm. Between the hours of 6.30-7.45am the babies are joined with the other groups from the centre in the family grouping room, they also join in the evenings from 5.30-6.30pm too.

The experiences we provide each day for the babies are aimed to be safe and inviting to learning experiences, allowing manipulations on different developmental stages to take place whilst playing.

Within the Karingal room we endeavour to make the room beautiful, interesting, stimulating and inviting for the babies within our care. We set up different areas within the room for the babies to explore and play with freely, throughout the day. As well as having set activities for the babies each day. These activities we have set up within the two rooms of the Karingal room. The sleep room (the back room) is mainly our physical room, whereby we have walkers, trikes, large cars and stands within the room along with different large physical focal points (trampoline/ ball pool/ soft play/ climbing frame). As this is our sleep room too, we also have music in here along with our cots that are scattered around the edge of the room. Therefore, we use this room only when no babies are sleeping mainly the start of the day and the end of the day. The main room to the Karingal room (front room) has different sections to the room, we try to cover all areas of the developmental areas with the set up to the room to make the room a great learning environment. We change this layout to the room to suit the interests and needs to the children. Therefore, we have no set time to when we change the toys/ layout. However, if there is a cause of illnesses within the room or the lack of interest within the toys set up we change them sooner rather than later. We also have another little part to our main room which is the bench top area which has a mini fridge and microwave. This is to store pre-made bottles and their afternoon tea for the day (yogurt). We also have another little room to the left of our main room, which is the bathroom. The bathroom has a door and windows all around it, so that all educators can see all parts of the main room whilst in the bathroom. In the bathroom, the Karingal room has the babies' lockers (where you store your babies bags and jackets in), a toilet and sink (for the babies that start toilet training in the babies' room, this has happened believe it or not) and lastly a nappy changing facility.

The Karingal room does not have a set in stone routine as there is no set right or wrong routine for a baby. As long as they are happy, they eat, they sleep and they are safe, we do not mind when these things happen. Therefore, one of great advantage of our Karingal room is that we have a separate sleep room. As all the children, have differing schedules/ routines, this enables us to work around children's different routines. This enables children to sleep peacefully - without being woken by

children who are playing. The Perspex glass enables us to see the children sleeping at all times, whilst playing the children that are awake.

The educators in the Karingal room have a relaxed way of relating to the children in their care. We like to interact with them at their level as much as possible. We love to sing and dance with the children and play alongside them.



## Outdoor Play

Here at KOQP, we believe there is no such thing as bad weather to play outside, just bad clothing. Therefore, we ask that all children come to KOQP dressed or have appropriate clothing for all weather in their locker/ bag, whether that be gum boots and a coat or a sun hat/ woolly hat. We try to make sure the children get to go out twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Sometimes children sleep through the morning outside time. Therefore, we make sure everyone gets to go outside in the afternoon to ensure everyone gets fresh air. When it is raining, we wish that you bring waterproof clothing and a spare change of clothes to ensure they can go outside with their friends. To prevent any items of clothing getting lost, we ask that you label all items even socks (as they are one of the worst items).

The babies have their own outside area that is restricted from the older children's outside area. Majority of the babies' area is sheltered, which is great in the wetter months. The Karingal outdoor area consists of two swings, a sand pit and a wooden tee-pee. These are areas to the Karingal's outdoor area that are permanent. The rest of the yard we divide into areas like indoors. Making interesting, inviting environments for the babies to play and learning.



## Program Planning

Every week the Karingal room will have a planner displayed out the front of the room, stating what activities we will be setting up throughout the week. We also have a map explaining the areas of learning that will occur with these activities. The activities that are chosen for the weekly planner are taken from the extension of learning from observations of the babies from the previous month. Two out of the three activities from each child will be chosen for the weekly activities and then divided between all areas of the Early Years Frame Work, making sure all areas of their development is getting developed and focused on. These areas are; Wellbeing, Identity, Community, Communication and Learning. Through the different activities that come out of their observations we try and make sure we focus on the following skills; Cognitive, Gross motor, Fine motor, Sensory, Art, Music and Movement and Language.

The activities that are put in place for the week are not 'set in stone' they can be changed during the week if the Babies aren't interested.

We have a weekly reflection book which is outside the front of the room before you enter. It is divided into sections photos (what we did each day- key points/ great photo), written what went well or not so well this week, what we learnt, National Quality Areas we focused on and finally Practice Principles we focused on this week. This is then filled out at the end of each week to show what the babies have been up. It also shows you whether they enjoyed the activities we have planned for them. If activities were not done that were supposed to have done that day they would be specified in this document.

We also document their progress and achievements on an individual basis by making personal portfolios for every child. This contains photos, art work, learning stories and little personalised documents such as their routines and information sheets suited to their stage of development in that month. These are updated and added to every week and always at reach to look through. The portfolios are on the right as soon as you enter the Karingal room. At the end of every year you are given your child's portfolio to take home and keep!

Within the Karingal room we also really like to encourage parental involvement wherever possible and we know this can be sometimes challenging as one of the main reasons your child is in childcare is due to the case of working. However, any form of parental involvement is great, so we greatly appreciate any that is offered to us! Key days to look out for in our Karingal room are: Mother's day, Father's day, Grandparents day and any days on the calendar that specify your help or input e.g. dress up days, bring book in from home.



### **Communicating with educators**

Within the Karingal room, we believe communication between the parents of the babies and the educators in the room to be a vital role within our care for the children. As much as communication face to face is great. Sometimes this can be a little difficult if your child or another child is crying on drop off or there are a few families dropping off at the same time. Therefore we find having lots of different forms of communication in place to be effective within the babies room.

We have many different forms of communication within the room:

- Communication book
- Reflection book
- Routine list
- Suggestions box

The communication book is a book that is located on the shelf on the right hand side of the room as you walk into the Karingal room. This book is always accessible to all parents and educators at all time. Within this book you can leave any messages you feel you need to e.g. 'Baby A had a bad sleep last night. They might need an early sleep today.' We find this to be a great way to communicate, especially with the parents that drop off early or pick up later in the evening and none of the regularly educators are in the room, as they have not started or have gone home.

The reflection book is located outside of the Karingal room on the shelf on the right hand side in the nook by the door. Within this book there are photos and little descriptions to what the babies have been doing each day within the room. This is great for those parents that want to see and hear a little more about their child's day.

The suggestions box is located outside of our room, on the right hand side of the door within the little nook area, next to the reflection book. This suggestion box is there for parents/ carers to make any suggestions or requests for our Karingal room to implement. With this be celebrating a special occasion or changing something about the room etc. These suggestions can be made anonymously or named. We find this is great for parental input towards the planning curriculum.

We also welcome any telephone calls to the centre throughout the day to see how your child is doing and please be assured, we will not hesitate to call you if your child is unsettled or unwell.



## Illness

If for any reason your baby has been exposed to any infectious diseases or illness whilst they have been out of care, we ask that you please keep the centre informed of this so that we can take necessary precautions.

We also ask that all babies have medication kept here at KOQP so that if they get sick unexpectedly whilst here at KOQP we can call and administer medication if the parent cannot come and collect. However if the child has a higher temperature than 39 degrees, we do ask that they get collected immoderately for safety reasons. If we have medication at the centre we can give them some medication after getting permission from a parent/ carer. However, they still must be collected even if their temperature goes down from the medicine due to KOQP's policies and procedures.



## Medication

We encourage all children that attend KOQP to have medication that is kept within their child's room, this is to help in case of emergency.

We have a medication book that resides in the Karingal room on the right hand side of the room on the shelf. The medication book is document, where by you can write any medications needed for your child on the day they need it and specify the time in which they need it, this is to make sure the right medication is given, at the right time, to the right child, with the right dosage. Administration of the medication is via two staff members who verify the type and quantity before it being administered. The form is then signed off with the time and signatures of both staff. This then needs to be initialled by the parent at the time of pick up on that day. This is very important that it is sign off by the parent/ carer of that given day. If a child has no medication signed in but the educator feels this might help them as they are unsettled, seem to be in pain or not themselves at all, we will call the parents of that child and see what action they want us to take, whether that is giving them medication or coming to collect them. Therefore, it is a good idea to always have some form of medication on the premises. The educator will then fill out the medication book and ask you to sign it when collecting your child to say you approved the right to administrate medication to your child and everything was correct.

Children cannot be administered prescription medication by staff that is not prescribed by a doctor it must be in their name and with a date on it, so please do not rip of the labels to any prescription medication.

Medication is stored in either the refrigerator in the Karingal room or in the central medicine box. Please do not leave medication in children's locker or bag. We also request that you inform an educator when dropping your child off, if medication is requirements.



## Immunisation

Due to regulations and KOQP's policies and procedures please make sure your child is continuously up to date with their immunisations. Between the ages of 2 and 18 months, children require many vaccinations. Please inform carers when your child has or is being immunised. This will ensure that we are aware of children's sensitivity and special requirements for the day, and also so that we can keep our records up to date.



## Meals/ Routines

Meal times are aimed to be enjoyable and a group experiences for the older babies within the room. We have a small table with small chairs for the older babies to sit at and eat together around the table to eat their lunch and afternoon tea. The younger babies eat their breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea in a high chair, this gives the younger babies the extra support they need to sit and eat their meals. We have a menu that our cook designs every week for the children at KOQP. The menu board is in the hall way outside of the kitchen, visible at all times, for parents to see every day, what their child is eating for lunch. The younger babies have a variety of purees every week for them, to either have on its own or to be added to the main menu to make it a smoother texture. This is all depending on the babies' individual ability and what the parents advise for us to do. Any specific food requirements need to be in writing and notified to Lydia (director) to make sure all procedures.

We have three main meal times;

- Breakfast (cereal and wholemeal toast) roughly between (6:30am-9:30am)
- Lunch (a meal from the menu board) roughly between (11am-1pm)
- Afternoon tea (yogurt or fruit) roughly between (2:00pm- 3:30pm)

We also have wholemeal jam and veggie mite sandwiches every day roughly between 4:00pm-5:00pm.

If you would like your child to have an alternative, we ask that you do this in writing to Lydia and supply the alternative in some cases.



## Sleep time

As previously stated above we have a separate room within our Karingal room whereby the babies sleep in cots or on mattresses on the floor. Our room has 7 cots in, which the babies can share. We try to ensure each baby gets given the same cot on a regular basis to make the sleeping process more familiar and comfortable. Every baby gets their own bed bag, in which, bed sheets are located in. Therefore, when they are going to sleep in that cot we put their bed sheets on the cot or mattress. When they are not in use, we put their bed sheets in their bed bags. We wash all the babies' bed sheets once a week, if the child is sick or the bed sheet gets dirty we will clean them sooner. As the sleep room is separate to the main room, we can be extra flexible with sleep times and as every baby is different and has different routines, we can aid to these different sleep times as much as possible. Within our sleep room we have blinds that get closed for sleep and a CD player that plays soft rhymes/ melodies to help the babies sleep.

Therefore, we endeavour to communicate effectively with parents to make sure the babies go to sleep when the parent / baby needs too. As every baby is different we like to use the first few days at KOQP to figure out what works and what doesn't work for sleep time (as sleeping in a loud, busy environment can sometimes be challenging for some babies at the start). Therefore, we ask all parents for any tips or comforters to please be provided for sleep. Sleeping bags, teddies, dummies even a certain CD/ song they like to have sung to them before sleep is very helpful.

## What to bring to KOQP on your first day / each day



We ask that parents please bring in the following:

- 5 nappies (each day)
- nappy rash creams/powders – named; these are to be left at KOQP (when we are running low we will inform you so that you can replace it)
- Recent family Photo - for our family photo wall (which can be used any time your child is sad, they can have a look or hold their family photo)
- 2 changes of clothing to accommodate for outdoor and messy play – (making sure these items of clothing are labelled and weather appropriate)
- 1 sun hat for outdoor play and 1 winter beanie – (both labelled and left here so that your child always has a hat for outside)
- Clearly labelled bottles, formula and dummies. Formula can be brought in daily with the amount scooped into a container. If you child has a dummy, please provide a named plastic container for it to be housed to prevent any germs being passed onto it
- Any ‘security’ items that your child may like, to feel settled during the day (teddy/ blanket)
- A drink bottle for water – to be left here (please make sure this is labelled)
- Shoes for outdoor play – soft soled ones for children not yet walking to make it more comfortable for them

Please label all items of clothing and belongings, including: tops, pants, socks, vests, jackets, coats, shoes, hats, bags, creams, drink bottles, formulas, dummies etc.

## Karingal to Omaroo – The Big Move

When it is time for your child to move up to the Omaroo Room, both the Karingal and Omaroo room educators work together to integrate the child into their new room as smoothly as possible. We start by making sure the child is in the Omaroo routine (sleeping just once a day and is happy and confident walking). This is because without these two key elements, it would be very difficult for the little one to move up to the Omaroo room and feel a part of the room and routine in that room. We also start transitioning the babies to sit at the table (not the high chairs) for meal time and encourage them to feed themselves within the Karingal room, as when they move to Omaroo room they do this. We also start encouraging the older babies to sleep on mattresses on the floor (instead of cots) in the Karingal room too, as when they go across to the Omaroo room this won't be a shock to them and they will be used to this.

The babies are given vast amount of opportunities to go and play for an hour or more to the Omaroo room, before they go up for the day. We find this helps familiarise the children with the educators in the other room, making the transition process run smoothly. At the end of each of these visits educators evaluate how the child/children responded to the change of rooms, and if they are ready to move up or if they require a longer orientation period or ways they could make the transition to the Omaroo room less upsetting or difficult for the child. Each child's transition is unique and as such, differs in time frames. Children are not moved up to the Omaroo room unless both parents and staff agree that the child is comfortable in the room and there is a place available in the room for all the days they attend KOQP. We also take them up to the Omaroo yard in small groups with their friends and an educator from the Karingal room (for security) when the Omaroo are outside for them to transition for an hour in the morning or afternoon. This gives the babies a little more support with transitioning up to the Omaroo room, that extra comfort with having familiar faces with them.

## **Growing from Babies to Toddlers – What to expect**

The period for birth to eighteen months is a time when the infant learns a great deal. They learn to use their senses of touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing to make sense of the world.

We endeavour to help and nurture your baby in their growth and developmental milestones.

Here is some basic useful information for you to know what to look out for or to expect:

\*Three and four month old babies- you can expect babies to have periods of wakefulness where they will play for a short time alone and then fuss for attention. Dangling toys intrigue them. They begin to notice their own hands. They will pay attention to people and move their head to see where a sound is coming from. They have learnt that a rattle can be sucked, looked at, grasped and listened to, that is, they are now coordinating their senses.

\* At six months- babies like to touch their own mouth. They watch their hands and reach and grasp for objects. They will enjoy playing with their toys alone for a short while and can now transfer things from one hand to another. At about this age they will become fussy when they need companionship that is they usually demand more from the person who feeds them and they are now weary of strangers.

\* At eleven months- babies like to feel, touch, chew, grasp, poke, bend and squeeze. They like to put things into containers of all types. They can hold two toys at the one time and will most definitely put them into their mouths and chew them.

\* At twelve months- babies can pull themselves up and reach up to furniture. They'll stand and may even walk alone. They crawl on their hands and knees so they can explore, and they might walk holding onto someone's hand.

\* When a baby begins to walk, we refer to them as a toddler. This is normally around thirteen months- they are busy, energetic and they explore everything, often without any apparent purpose. They delight in carting materials from one place to another.

\* Around fifteen months- they like to put things in and out of containers. They tip things out of containers but generally put them back.

These are just estimations of what a baby will do at each month's progress.

Every baby is an individual; therefore this guide does not suit all babies.

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We understand that each child's routine is unique, but we also ask that you recognise that as the children grow into the toddler age, there is a need to participate into a group routine. As such, we have a general guide of our day's activities below:

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### **Karingal Room Daily Routine**



**6:30am - 7:45am**

Children arrive, educators welcome the children to the group/family setting in the Kindergarten room. Activities are suitable for all age groups. Breakfast is served based on each child's morning routine.

**7:45am - 8:00am**

Babies move to their own room and participate in the mornings' activities. Breakfast is still available if needed.

**9:00am - 9:30am**

Bottles/morning tea/drinks are served depending on each child's requirements. (In this time younger children also sleep if necessary) morning nappies will be changed.

**10:00am - 11:00am**

The babies go outside to play. A morning activity will be arranged indoors or outdoors. Any of the children that wake up from their morning sleep have their bottle and then go outside for a little play.

**11:00am - 11:15am**

Lunch is served – the item listed on the weekly menu board will be served to the older children and a variety of pureed vegetables and/or rice for the younger children. Children are encouraged to feed themselves but are happily assisted when required.

**11:45am - 1:30pm**

Sleep time for the older children whilst the younger children have playtime.

Wake up nappies are done and afternoon bottles are given.

**1:30pm**

Afternoon play activities and outdoor play is encouraged.

**2:30pm - 4:00pm**

Afternoon tea is offered. Home nappies are changed.

**4:00pm - 5:00pm**

Play activities outdoors is encouraged and sandwiches are given.

**5:30pm - 5:45pm**

Join with toddler, pre-kinder and kinder in the family grouping room or outside.

**6:30pm**

Centre closes.

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The daily routine is subject to change depending on the weather, group dynamics and celebrations.

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