

SDN Beranga

Autism Specific Preschool



Family information handbook



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We believe that we live in an inter-dependent world, where we all belong and are enriched by each other's contributions.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and this notion lays the foundations for our approach to children's education and care, and for how our centres interact with their communities.

Our vision for the world

Our vision is for an equitable world where all children thrive.

Our purpose

We're here to promote and enhance the wellbeing, learning and development of children in inclusive environments.

Our values

In carrying out our mission we commit ourselves to being:

- ▶ trustworthy and reliable
- ▶ inclusive and respectful
- ▶ creative and innovative.



Welcome to

SDN Beranga

Autism Specific Preschool

We hope that this is the start of a long and happy relationship between SDN, your child and you.

This booklet will give you some basic information about SDN Children's Services, and the standard activities that you and your child can expect at SDN Beranga Autism Specific Preschool.

The staff at SDN Beranga are all early childhood professionals with specific qualifications in educating and caring for children with autism, and are looking forward to getting to know you and your family. The Preschool Director is the best person to talk to if you have any questions about the information in this booklet, or if you have any concerns.

You can of course find useful information on our website www.sdn.org.au, and all of our policy documents can be read there or at your centre.

We look forward to a happy and rewarding association with you, and welcome you at any point to SDN Beranga to spend time with your child.



All in a day — important information



Arrival

Children must be signed into and out of the preschool by an adult over 18 years old. Signing in and out is very important to ensure all children are accounted for in case of any security checks or emergency evacuations.

When you drop off your child, we ask that you bring them into SDN Beranga so you can be greeted by a staff member, who will be able to share information with you and let you know about daily happenings.

Departure

At the end of the day children can only be taken home by a person who has been nominated on the enrolment form. If an unauthorised person arrives to collect your child they will not be able to take your child out of SDN Beranga. Please tell staff in writing if someone else will be collecting your child on a certain day.

Sensory and emotional awareness

SDN Beranga's staff are fully aware that children with autism often have a range of sensory sensitivities. You can be assured that any and all sensitivities will be fully catered for, such as audio sensitivity, where we can provide noise-cancelling headphones and quiet areas for your child.

If your child experiences emotional overload, SDN Beranga's teaching staff are all trained and experienced in helping your child express themselves and regulate their emotions.

Emergency contacts

Please make sure your emergency contacts are reliable, are close by and that their phone numbers are up to date so that they can be contacted quickly in an emergency.



Your child's routine



Structure

SDN Beranga's days follow a set timetable, so children learn to know what to expect. For example, there is a 15 minute morning language group each day as well as set times for outdoor play, where the individual goals of each child are worked on. Look on the opposite page for an outline of the structured routine your child can expect at SDN Beranga.

Please also make sure that your child has put on sunscreen before they arrive. Sunscreen is re-applied at a set time each day, and this part of your child's day is always introduced to with SDN Beranga's enjoyable sunscreen song.

Nutrition and food

As part of your child's routine, SDN Beranga provides a variety of nutritious, allergen-free meals and snacks for morning tea and for lunch. There is also a regular food session called Crunch and Sip, which emphasises the sensory elements of food.

SDN Beranga also offers play based opportunities for children to investigate and explore food without having to eat it. This often provides children who are generally uncomfortable with consuming food an opportunity to explore food in a fun and stress-free way.

SDN Beranga has published a cookbook designed to assist parents, carers, and families who have children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. It's also useful for children who are fussy eaters or have food allergies. *Mealtimes: cooking and sharing meals with your child on the autism spectrum* can be downloaded for free from the SDN website.

An example of SDN Beranga's routine for four year old children

Inside	9.30 – 10.00am	Arrival and free play
	10.00 – 10.45am	Morning group
		Scheduled activities
		Pack away
		Sunscreen song and sunscreen
Outside	10.45 – 11.15am	Progressive morning tea
	11.15 – 11.30am	Morning language group
	10.45 – 11.55am	Outdoor play targeting individual goals
Inside	11.55 – 12.00pm	Toileting
	12.00 – 12.30pm	Intentional activities
	12.30 – 12.45pm	Pack away
		Music group
		Wash hands
	12.45 – 1.15pm	Lunch
	1.15 – 1.45pm	Rest, beds and quiet space with quiet play box
	1.45 – 2.15pm	Free choice
		Toileting
Pack away group — sunscreen, shoes, hat		
Outside	2.15 – 3.15pm	Movement group
		Outdoor play
Inside	3.15 – 3.45pm	Crunch and sip
		Toileting
		Goodbye group



What your child needs to bring

We recommend a small to medium sized back pack, so that all belongings remain together.



Please be aware that:

- ▶ a sun hat (legionnaire style, bucket or wide-brimmed) is required for outdoor play all year round
- ▶ elasticised pull on pants are suggested to encourage your child's independence — they're easier to manage than buttons, buckles and belts
- ▶ practical shoes are important for your child's mobility — wearing thongs inhibits running and climbing
- ▶ a few changes of clothes is recommended in the case of unpredictable weather changes and/or wet clothing

Celebrations

You might want to celebrate your child's birthday or a special occasion at SDN Beranga. Please discuss these events with your child's educator or Preschool Director. We look forward to sharing special occasions with friends, however preschool staff must carefully monitor foods and treats that come in to ensure the safety of all children and staff.



SDN Beranga processes



Keeping you in the loop

Daily communication is encouraged through discussion with educators about your child's day. We will also communicate with you through:

- ▶ documentation of children's learning and development through StoryPark, which is a free app
- ▶ parents meetings
- ▶ emails
- ▶ daily records. This is where you will find photos and details about the day's program, displayed in SDN Beranga's sign in area.

Late collection

All children must be collected no later than SDN Beranga's specified closing time. We do however appreciate that on occasion families may run late. Please contact the preschool immediately should this be the case. A late fee will apply for repeat occurrences. This is applied at the Director's discretion.

Complaints management

SDN is committed to the fair and effective resolution of customer complaints. Please refer to relevant SDN policies. All SDN policies are available for families to view at SDN Beranga.

We encourage constructive feedback from families. If you have a concern regarding anything at SDN Beranga or your child, please do not hesitate to discuss it with the Director.



Meetings

Meetings will be offered throughout the year. This is so families and staff can meet, and to provide a forum to discuss the educational components of our programs.

Health

SDN is committed to ensuring SDN Beranga keeps the healthiest environment possible. Read on for a few important ways you can help.

Immunisation

Before enrolling at SDN Beranga you must provide a copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement to ensure that your child is up to date with their vaccinations. You can get a current copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement by calling the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809, by linking Medicare to your MyGov account online, or by visiting your local Medicare office.

In NSW, if your child is not fully immunised due to medical reasons, or has missed a vaccination but is on a recognised catch up schedule, your doctor must complete the relevant documentation before we can accept your child's enrolment.

Please bring your child's updated Immunisation History Statement to SDN Beranga to ensure our records are kept up to date.

If there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at the centre, and your child is not fully immunised, they may be excluded from SDN Beranga for the duration of the outbreak or as advised by the Public Health Unit.

Sick children

To provide a healthy environment for all children and staff, and to reduce the risk of cross infection, please do not bring your child in when they are sick. Sick children require the care and comfort of home.

Medication

- ▶ a medication permission form must be completed for any medication to be administered by staff
- ▶ all medicine must be in its original packaging/container with the attached pharmacy dispensing label or registered medical practitioner's written instructions in English, clearly showing the child's name, dosage and frequency to be administered.
- ▶ medication must not be left in your child's bag or locker, but must be given directly to a staff member
- ▶ non-prescribed medicine will only be given if accompanied by a letter from your child's doctor giving the details as mentioned above
- ▶ should any details on the original Medication Permission form change, a new form is to be completed
- ▶ children who require antibiotics must not return to the preschool for at least 24 hours after the first dose
- ▶ children with a medical condition must have a Medical Management plan in place.

Non-smoking environment

All SDN centres and preschools are non-smoking environments. Smoking is not permitted in or on the premises or in view of the children.



Treatment of fever

The normal temperature of a child is up to 38°C. If your child has a temperature over 38°C and is generally unwell, you or your emergency contact will be called to collect your child. While waiting for you to arrive, your child will be comforted and offered plenty of fluids. Paracetamol will not be administered as a standard first aid strategy or as a standard response to a fever.

Fees and charging



Bond payment

Families are required to pay a bond equivalent to two weeks' full fees on confirmation of enrolment. The bond is payable before a child starts. SDN reserves the right to offer the place to another family if the bond payment has not been received before the start of care.

In no circumstances is the bond able to be used to offset overdue fees for a child continuing in care.

Fees payment

SDN Beranga is funded through the State Preschool funding and therefore families cannot claim Child Care Subsidy with SDN Beranga.

SDN Beranga offers two-day placements for 4–5 year olds, and one-day placements (on a Wednesday) for 3 year olds, with special rates for those with a pension card.

Any additional days are charged with no funding support. Please talk to your Preschool Director for the current fees.

Fees are payable by direct debit from bank or credit card accounts or by Centrepay deduction. For the safety of staff and children in preschools, and to avoid loss, SDN does not accept cash payments.

Fees are payable for all booked days of care. This may include absences for any reason including family leave, public holidays and illness. Please check with your Director.

Fees accounts must be paid up to date. Continuation of a child's place at SDN Beranga will be contingent on the family's account being up to date.

Financial hardship

Where there is financial hardship, a payment plan may be negotiated and will need to be in place before fees are in arrears to avoid the child's place being withdrawn. Agreement to a payment plan is at SDN's discretion and must be supported by a direct debit or Centrepay authority to pay the agreed amount.

Withdrawal

Four weeks' written notice must be given. Withdrawal is defined as the cancelling of any or all of the child's enrolled days at the preschool.

NDIS and our children's therapies team

Even though you can't use your child's NDIS package to pay for their preschooling, you can still access additional therapy through SDN Beranga's onsite therapists. You can use your child's NDIS package to pay for this, or pay fee for service. Our therapists will work hand-in-hand with you and your child's educators to ensure that their therapy takes place within the preschool program or in the family rooms with you onsite.



Our therapists

Our team of occupational therapists and speech therapists specialise in working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and can help your child develop skills so they can do the everyday things that they want or need to. We support children to improve the ability to look after themselves, establish healthy mealtime routines, develop social skills and take part in tasks at preschool, school or home, and enjoy leisure activities like swimming or sport. We can also help your child to find the best way to communicate their needs, including through signs, gestures, and other forms of assisted communication, and help your child if they have trouble swallowing food or drink.

Your SDN Beranga team

The staff at SDN Beranga have a diverse range of qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience.



University qualified early childhood teachers lead the team, many with specific qualifications in studies on children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. They are committed to creating a rich learning experience for your child, and are fully aware of the specific rewards and challenges that teaching and caring for children with autism can bring.

Children's wellbeing, learning and development

SDN believes that experiences in the first five years of life are critical for laying the foundations for lifelong learning.

Children's wellbeing, learning and development is supported and extended through high quality educational programs. These programs involve both intentionally planned and spontaneous interactions and experiences. A key component of a high quality educational program is using observations to help better understand and respond to your child's needs and interests.

SDN creates calm and safe indoor and outdoor environments. The indoor and outdoor environments at SDN Beranga have all been purpose built for children with autism.



Transitions



Transitioning out of SDN Beranga

SDN Beranga is a transition service. Our main goal is for children with autism to be in mainstream child care services.

However, we know that sometimes families need extra support to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child. Because of this, we have a family resource worker who supports families to access services and build a team around you so when the time comes for your child to leave us, you have the team of professionals already around you to support you to move on.

We have a professional development program where we run workshops for educators in mainstream child care services

on how to include children with autism. As a result, we have information about mainstream child care centres that may be able to support your child. If you already have a child care centre, we can offer them some support in helping them to include your child.

Supporting the transition to school

For some of you, your child may stay with us until school. As your child progresses towards transitioning to school, our family resource worker will help with this process to ensure it's as smooth as possible.



About SDN Children's Services



Who are we?

SDN Children's Services is a not-for-profit organisation that has been delivering quality early childhood education and child care, disability services, and family support services since 1905.

We are proud of our long history of working with children and their families, working with communities, and supporting the development of practitioners and children's services. With more than 600 staff across 30 sites in Sydney, regional NSW and the ACT, we are one of Australia's most respected children's services organisation.

What we do

SDN provides the following services:

- ▶ Early childhood education and care for children from birth to six years, across 30 centres
- ▶ therapies for children from birth to transition to high school, including services provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- ▶ family support services to help children thrive in safe and supportive environments
- ▶ professional learning, supporting professionals in our sector through practical workshops



What we believe

We believe that every person and every living thing has inherent worth, and is owed respect and care.

We believe that we live in an inter-dependent world, where we all belong and are enriched by each other's contributions.

We have always believed, since our beginnings in 1905, that the world can be a better and more equitable place, and that we can help to make it so.

We believe that potentials and possibilities are realised when everyone offers and experiences care, connection and challenge.



86–90 Bay Street Broadway NSW 2007

PO Box 654, Broadway NSW 2007

t 1300 831 445

sdn@sdn.org.au

www.sdn.org.au

SDN Beranga edition May 2019

Privacy: SDN Children's Services is committed to protecting the privacy of its children and families. The specific legal obligations we have when collecting and handling your personal information are outlined in the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* (NSW), and in particular in the Australian Privacy Principles and Health Privacy Principles found in those Acts. For more information please refer to the SDN Privacy Policy available at your preschool. This content is correct at the time of publishing but may change.