



Busy Bees early learning Centre,
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Loughboy Kilkenny

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PARENTS INFORMATION HANDBOOK

Busy Bees is a purpose built day care and early learning Centre, meeting all the physical social and emotional needs of the children in our care.

We work closely with the HSE and have been the recipients of Awards for Early Years Training and Development. We have received mentoring (2015) from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, as part of a National Initiative to promote and enhance quality of Early Childhood care and Education for children from 4months to 6 years. We operate an 'open door' policy for parents of children in our care. We hope this handbook assists you with the information you need in respect of your child's care at Busy Bees.

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1. ETHOS AND CURRICULUM STATEMENT

At *Busy Bees* our wish for each child is that they are happy, confident and sociable. To attain this we encourage all children to reach developmental milestones and gain basic life skills by working under framework of Aistear and Síolta.

All Staff accomplish this by communicating with children at their level. Staff actively listen and work in partnership with parents in building caring warm trusting relationships with the children in our care.

The fundamentals we work off are 'respect for each child and their culture'. Busy bees recognises that play is children's work and is shaped by planned and unplanned experiences, which are age appropriate. We identify and expand on the children's emergent interests and develop learning in a fun, interactive and imaginative way. We share these learning experiences with the other children and encourage friendships, and build peer relationships.

Our approach at *Busy Bees*, is inspired by Montessori, agus An Naíonra (Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta) and a play based curriculum influenced by Síolta and Aistear.

Síolta is the National Quality Framework for all Early Childhood Services and encompasses 16 Quality Standards, which all Childhood services should work to.

Rights of the child	Environments	Parents and Families	Consultation
Interactions	Play	Curriculum	Planning and Evaluation
Health and Welfare	Organisation	Professional Practice	Communication
Transitions	Identity and Belonging	Legislation and regulation	Community Involvement

Aistear is used as a guide in planning learning experiences in Busy Bees. Aistear, which, is the Irish word for 'journey', describes learning through 4 interconnected themes:

i.) Wellbeing ii) Identity and Belonging iii) Communicating iv) Exploring and Thinking

Our focus for the children is on continuity though out each stage of development. Designated areas within each room allow children to move from one room to another with ease and familiarity. The areas in each room are a) Home Corner, b) Construction c) Arts and Crafts and d) Chill Zone, with soft matting or seats and books, which are accessible to children at all times. Montessori and Naionra influences are visible at each stage from babies upwards, through the materials and the language we use.

The Emergent Curriculum in Busy Bees allows Children to remain interested, involved and content whilst still attaining a wealth of information, which promotes individuality and independence the children.

We are fully committed to having the best possible start for each child in Busy Bees. We support the children transition to Primary School and minimalise any stress they might feel adjusting to a new setting.

2. ADMINISTRATION/FORM FILLING

Please ensure that all parts of your enrolment form are filled out. This information is required by both *busy bees* and the HSE. It is open to inspection by the HSE Preschool Inspector. Please ensure that you have read this book when you sign that you agree to the terms set out when placing your child in *busy bees*.

If an Accident takes place within *busy bees*, you should sign a particular form indicating that you have been advised of same, and that all appropriate steps have been taken by Staff. If at any time you feel this is not the case, feel free to talk with the Manager.

3. STAFF

Staff, are a valuable asset in *busy bees* and are held in high regard. All Staff have taken part in the 'Better Start Mentoring Programme', and are highly motivated, qualified and caring people. This Programme assisted staff in using self – reflection, and self -evaluation tools to observe the children in their care and use their emerging interests are part of their curriculum.

To promote continuity of care, Staff will remain with the same group throughout the year. This helps towards building trusting relationships between Staff, Children and Parents.

All Staff, are qualified or are studying towards their FETAC level 6, or higher and possess all relevant and up to date Pediatric and First Aid qualifications.

4. FEES

Fees are monthly in advance. Whatever days your child is booked in for, must be paid irrespective of whether your child attends on that day or not. Fees should be lodged directly to *Busy Bees* (Manager has details). Parents may also pay by Visa Machine, or by cheque. Although we prefer not to take cash, we understand that some parents prefer to pay by cash. However, it is absolutely imperative that you sign the Cash Book and are given a receipt, as this is your only proof of payment. If you cannot produce either when questioned regarding outstanding fees, you will remain an outstanding debt.

If you decide to take your child out for the summer period, you must retain a minimum of 2 days payment per week. Bank Holidays, days sick are all to be paid for.

5. OPENING HOURS

Busy Bees is open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. We are closed all Bank/National Holidays, you will be charged for these days. We close half day Christmas Eve, and open again between Christmas and New Year. Any changes will be on updated on our Webpage or Facebook page. Our Calendar for the year ahead will be updated at the end of August of that year.

6. SERVICES / COST AND TYPES OF CARE PROVIDED

In Busy Bees we accept babies from 5 months up. Our Groups are then divided into age group and stages of development, as listed under number 8.

The following hours are offered :

Full Day	- 8am to 6pm	€32.60 and €35.00 (Babies)
Sessional	- 9am – 12noon	Free (Montessori/An Naíonra)
	2pm – 5pm	Free (Montessori/An Naíonra)
Part Time:	- 9am – 12.30pm	€18.00 (€2.00 dinner optional)
	2pm – 5.30pm	€18.00 (€2.00 Tea, optional)
Extra Hour or part thereof		€ 5.00
Extra half hour for ECCE Children		
12noon to 12.30 or 5.30 to 6pm		€ 5.50
Afterschool club		€18.00 per day
		€16.00 per day (if 5 Days per week)
School Drop or Collect		€ 3.00
School Drop or Collect		€ 5.00

(Fees set for 2015/16 are subject to change)

7. SETTLING YOUR CHILD IN

At *Busy Bees* we recommend the following settling period for you child, bearing in mind each child is different and some may settle easier than others.

The Manager will recommend the settling in time (billed on an ad hoc basis). To start, it will normally be for an hour the first day, coming in around 10am. This will gradually build up over the week. It is a much better option if your child stays for a shorter period to start and goes home happy. You will be told what to bring in specifically for each room, but with regard solely to settling in you may take in a comforter, or toy to start with. If your child has siblings, friends or cousins we can leave them with in their company for a little time to assist in adjusting to a new environment. Each child will have a family box/folder and you will be asked to bring in photographs of family, friends, in fact anyone or anything familiar or important to your child. For Babies, toddlers please bring in your routines, a list of likes and dislikes when they are settling.

8. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

We value the relationships we have with parents, as this promotes a positive atmosphere and a trust that carries through until your child leaves. We would ask if you have any issue to raise, that you do so with the Manager and if you prefer we can schedule an appointment for you. We are happy to provide photographs of your child in crèche via your email, as this often reassures parents when they are at work.

9. CARE GROUPS

BabyRoom : 5 – 12 months Ratio : 1:3

Our Baby Room is designed to aid your baby's developmental and nurturing needs. This is a large bright room, with items of interest in various sections of the room, which together with textural and natural materials aids movement and development. Babies have their own Kitchen and Sleep room promoting a quieter calmer environment. Babies are taken for walks in the double buggies, weather permitting. The influence of Montessori and An Naíonra can be seen in this room with little hands moving towards dexterity, numeracy and literacy. The Treasure basket of natural materials is taken down and supervised by staff member.

What do I bring in?

- Breakfast, dinner, tea, and whatever food they require during the day.
Formula,
- Bottles, juice cup
- 2 changes of Clothes,
- Bibs,
- Nappies, Wipes, Nappy Sacks,
- Sudocreme, or whatever you use, a
- Comforter.
- Calpol/Nurofen/Any cream used for moisturizing.

Calpol and Nurofen are important to have if your baby is teething

You may bring whatever suits for baby in bulk, such as nappies, dried food formula and they will labeled it for you. As things are getting low You will be advised either by word or in your feedback book so that, you might have time to get items replenished.

Please note we do not put drops in Babies eyes, so if your child has a weepy eye and needs eye drops, do not bring them in. We do not allow car seats, buggies, or baby equipment with wheels in the baby room.

You will receive a feedback book for your baby, which remains in the bag, if you need to give instruction to the staff and might not get to see them when you are dropping baby in the morning, feel free to include it in the feedback book. This book will contain information on Sleep, nappy changes, meals, and baby's form.

We will commence observations on each baby in September of 2015. This is being piloted in the Baby Room, but will eventually include every child in *Busy Bees*.

Please drop your baby into the baby room each morning. There may be children of differing ages there until 8.15am each morning, after which they go to their own rooms as their teachers come in to work.

Routines here allow for the individual needs of each baby. Although nappy changes take place at specific times, if your baby needs changing at any time in between, this is done without question. Soothers are used for soothing and we will put them away when not required.

Rest time is in cots in our baby sleep room. Cots are dressed in clean sheets before baby goes to bed. Babies might use the same cot during the day but never ever the same sheets.

WOBBLER ROOM

12 – 18 months Ratio 1:5

This is where your baby moves to around the 1year mark. This age difference is a guide and moving will depend on your child's overall development.

Your baby's file will move on with them from the baby room (Piloting Sept 2015) We tend to move Babies on for a few hours each day, before they actually make the big move, in order to avoid any stress. Also we find it works well to move at least 2 babies on together and this pairing and strategy continues throughout their time in Busy Bees. A Daily schedule is set out, for morning and afternoon, with sleeps, meals and nappy changes included.

Activities which they partook of in the baby room are continued, and built upon in the wobbler room, such as story time, music, treasure baskets, with more emphasis on your little wobbler being able to access what it is they wish to involve themselves with, be it coloring, home play, construction, dress up.

The Small garden area, at the back, with the soft surface, cut off the from the older children's big garden, is an ideal spot to embark on movement out of doors.

What do I bring in?

At this stage your baby / wobbler should be eating our food, but if not, that is not an issue.

- Breakfast, dinner, tea, (but only if they are not eating our food)
- Bottles and Formula
- Juice cup
- Bibs
- 2 changes of clothes
- Nappies, wipes, nappy sacks
- Sudocreme, or whatever barrier you use.
- Comforter
- Calpol/Nurofen

TODDLER ROOM

18months – 2 years ratio 1: 5 or 1:6

Our Toddler room is really an extension of our wobbler room. It is a larger room allowing more activity, as your toddler has grasped the power of walking and no longer crawls. The basic principles from Baby Room up are again built upon, with the introduction of a greater use of language skills and comprehension.

The specially designated areas are here again, reinforcing, continuity and familiarity for your toddler. This is the age of discovery, which should be encouraged, where real friendships are formed. It is also the age where your child may become frustrated, in that they know what they want, but communicating this might be an issue. We use visualization techniques. Pictures of the garden, or break time, or sleep time, which reinforces the language we use.

Biting, scratching, pushing, pulling something from another child is always dealt with in a way that your toddler, knows, there is a better way of expressing themselves. However, sometimes Staff are unable to get to the scene of the crime in time. Eventually, your toddler understands that when they want or need something, they just need to ask, in the manner they have learned, Allowing them to access materials themselves prevents triggers for frustration and keeps your toddler content.

Rest time is in cots in our Toddler Sleep Room. Each toddler has their own cot, or own clean sheets before they go to bed. Cutting Sleep to once a day after their dinner is our aim here and we will work with parents and keep them informed through our feedback book

PREMONTESSORI GROUPS 1 AND 2

Age 2 years to 2½

Ratio 1:6

Moving on from toddler groups, we have two Pre Montessori rooms. The room at the end of the semicircular hallway, is for our younger group, whilst the big room just of reception is for the older of this age group.

What do I bring in?

- Any snacks the child wants in addition to the food we provide.
- Bottles and milk (if required)
- Juice cup
- 2 changes of clothes (very important particularly around the time of potty training)
- Nappies, Wipes, Nappy Sacks, Barrier cream (if used)
- Comforter
- Calpol/Nurofen

At this stage, children will have formed little alliances, and love to play in groups, Role play is a huge part of their work, and materials are accessible at all times to allow this to take place.

From Baby room onwards, Children will be familiar with natural materials, such as real telephones, real pots and pans, oven gloves, play dough that doubles as anything from a cake to a fire engine, and it is with this group that these materials take a life of their own, where 3 course meals are served whilst sitting on a makeshift bus. It is a wonderful thing to see a child's imagination take over where they are lost in a world of make believe.

For this age group Language Skills, and vocabulary is growing at an enormous rate and it is important to harness this ability to learn. Teachers use circle time to check emergent interests and to focus the children on their listening skills. Irish words are used, which will support them moving through to An Naíonra. Also descriptive language and a focus on seeing actual activities through, from start to finish. Activities are planned but staff are constantly checking for emerging interests which they can then develop to include all the children. Children are like sponges at this age, and it is our wish to harness this learning ability in a playbased, social happy manner. Children are also a lot more energized at this age so it is vital that they are kept stimulated and busy.

Rest time, just after dinner, is on a child size bed, which is stored away when not in use. Not all children will sleep at this age, and if they do not, they remain with their teacher in a different room.

Please speak with Staff, or Staff will speak with you regarding Potty training.

Children will continue with their feedback books at this age.

PLAYSCHOOL

Age 2½ - 3 years

Ratio 1:8

Playschool Group is our little group, which has graduated from Premontessori. They no longer need nappy changing, nor sleep time, but they are not ready for the work involved either in An Naíonra or Montessori. As the children, here will not be going to school for another 2 years, they have plenty of time to work at play, and incorporate the influences of the Montessori materials which are available to them, as are the aids for numeracy and literacy.

Feedback books are still available but will not contain as much information now they are out of sleeps and nappies. Other observations and comments regarding friendships should be included here.

As your child moves on from Group to Group, and teacher to teacher, they display a confidence in adjusting to new situations and a hunger for further exploration and more challenging learning situations. Their ability to converse is more refined as are their cognition skills. By the time they move to Montessori or An Naionrai they are more than ready for their year ahead.

FREE PRESCHOOL YEAR AN NAÍONRAI AND MONTESSORI

Age 3 years to school going

Ratio 1:11 or 1:8

Children are entitled to 183 days or 38 weeks of free childcare, for 3 hours per day for 5 days a week. In Busy Bees children may avail of this through the medium of Irish in our Seomra Naíonra or English in our Montessori Room. We also use the Montessori equipment in An Seomra Naíonra.

This is the age at which your child will absorb every experience encountered irrespective of who they are with, or where they are. The Rooms again are divided into the 4 key areas: Construction, Home Corner, Library, Arts and Crafts. These are further subdivided into areas of:

Practical Life,

Where a child learns a skill, such as polishing, or twisting lids, zipping zippers, whilst refining the child's gross/fine motor skills, concentration and independence

Sensorial

It is really important at this age that children have access to materials and equipment that encourage the refinement of the child's senses and enables them to be more aware of the world around them. They enhance visual discrimination, auditory awareness and prepare your child for later language and mathematical work.

Language and Arithmetic

Earlier work with practical life and sensorial exercises will have indirectly prepared your child for basic linguistic and numeral challenges.

“The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in the US emphasizes that young children need play-based opportunities to develop and deepen their conceptual understanding of mathematics. From a social-constructive perspective, learning is more likely to occur if adults or more-competent peers mediate children's learning experiences. Emphasizing both the developmental and the curricular perspectives”

Cultural Activities

As our world becomes increasingly smaller it is important for children to understand the diversity of the human species. Biology, geography, zoology and science will be exposed to them. Our Multicultural Society is something they will understand through working and learning about the people they meet in every day life

Creative Activities

Every Child's creativity and imagination is something wholly personal to them, and should be promoted and encouraged. In doing things, such as their end of school play, or sharing their stories at circle time, or displaying their arts and crafts only reinforces and encourages self awareness, confidence, self esteem and a positive self image.

We help prepare children for school, as transitioning, from preschool to primary school is a significant one. As Class numbers jump considerably, many of the

children will have the basic skills required to see them on the road to further development in primary school.

AFTERSCHOOL CLUB

After a long day in School, our Afterschool Club offers the perfect mix of play , downtime, arts and crafts and homework.

We provide a school drop and collection service to and from most of the town primary schools. Children are taken in the *Busy Bees* 15 Seat Minibus, which is correctly insured and RSA maintained. The Bus Driver is always accompanied by a staff member to assist the children,

Busy Bees, although located in town, is surrounded by fields and horses and has a huge play area, with hills into which one of the playground slides is built. The Children have their own vegetable garden, and huge sand pit. The outside space is wonderful for children who have been cooped up in school all day. Children are provided with Dinner or tea, whichever they, or their parents prefer. On days where Schools close early, such as, in service training days, we will collect your child at school closing time, and they may avail of dinner and tea at no extra charge. On school holidays, you may avail of full day care for your child.

If your child is attending *busy bees* Afterschool club, the Manager will need to know their days in advance, so she may issue your fees. Once your bill is issued, do not change it, as this leads to problems with fee/statement reconciliation. Bring it to the Manager's attention and she will amend the bill for the following month.

10. MEALS

Meals are cooked in *busy bees* by a qualified chef. A 3 weekly menu is on view on the notice board for parents to see. We aim to make this menu as healthy as possible while still allowing the children to enjoy their food. We have a 'healthy eating policy' which we would ask parents to respect. If your child has special dietary requirements please speak with the Manager who will include our Chef in the conversation to get the possible outcome for dinners for your child.

11. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

In busy bees we recognize the importance of promoting acceptable behavior within the childcare setting. Children model themselves on adult behavior. They learn by example so it is extremely important that staff handle situations in a positive clear manner. Once staff are happy that unacceptable behavior is not as

a result of frustration due to the inability to be understood, tiredness or illness
The situation is dealt with as follows:

Staff get down to the child's level. Explain in short very clear sentences what is, unacceptable, and why. Most children will react to this in a very positive manner, others will need time to come to the realization that negative behaviour will be ignored, and positive behaviour will be praised.

Reinforcing positive behaviour by setting out each room in the following manner reduces the possibility of problems occurring

- Allowing enough space around each activity
- Having each area clearly defined
- Allowing access to a range and choice of equipment and materials
- Providing age appropriate materials for each activity
- By providing ancillary materials for each activity, such as, cars being with the garages, dolls and furniture beside the dolls house, food cartons and recyclables beside the kitchen. Jigsaws, not missing pieces.
- Providing activities that require cooperation and teamwork, rather than competition, promoting qualities such as taking turns, sharing, trust, listening and compromise.

In the case of persistent inappropriate behaviour, parents will be involved and in this way work together with staff to find a resolution for the child in question.

12. ILLNESS

By far the greatest downside for anyone placing their child into creche is the possibility of their child getting sick and the Centre not accepting them. So you end up having to make alternative arrangements with sometimes very short notice.

Unfortunately there is no other way of dealing with illness in a crèche environment. *Busy Bees* must protect the children who are healthy and not allow the contagion to spread.(this could be your child we are protecting). It is therefore very important, that you have support when your child is not well enough to attend crèche.

The Upside is that by the time they go to primary school their immune systems should be strong enough to tackle infection in the bigger classroom situation.

The symptoms, which might suggest the presence of a communicable virus, are,

- Fever: a temperature over 98.6 particularly if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea or rash.
- Diarrhea in the previous 24 hours
- Vomiting in the previous 24 hours
- Eye mucous
- Severe Nasal mucous

- Swollen glands or sore throat
- Skin discoloration, rashes, sores etc.

Head Lice (is a big issue in primary school and can be passed on to crèche settings) This is not in any way indicative of poor hygiene, as lice seem to favor clean hair and jump from one head to another. Any incidence in your home from school going siblings should be addressed and the child going to crèche, should be treated in the same manner. For Girls with long hair, a preventative measure, which may work, is to keep your child's hair tied up. Another, is to leave conditioner in your child's hair all day, when it is tied up. If we see that a child has head lice, the parent will be immediately contacted to come, collect their child and to treat accordingly.

Medication.

Medication will not be administered to your child unless prior written consent on our forms has been given.

Children on antibiotics are requested not to attend the crèche for 24 hours after the course has commenced. Please produce a covering note from your doctor, stating your child is well enough to attend crèche.

Please inform staff when your child receives their vaccinations to allow the crèche to take special precautions, and to understand why your child is off form.

Busy Bees does not allow children into crèche with an eye infection, as this will spread like wildfire. We will phone you if we see the start of an eye infection, Washing of hands is of absolute importance in the case of eye infections. We do not administer eye drops.

Bumps and Bruises

All possible care is taken to ensure your child's safety. However, we would ask parents to appreciate that there may be the occasional bump or bruise as there would be at home. Bumps and bruises which resulted whilst your child was in *busy bees* will be notified to parents via the accident/incident report, which they should sign when they come to collect their child.

Other more serious incidents, or where staff feel the need, parents will be contacted immediately.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is all around us today and is a hugely important method in how we share information. At *busy bees* we would like all parents to give us their email addresses so that we may set up a group newsletter and also to pass on photographs of their children at work/play in busy bees.

Busy Bees has a Website and Facebook page, which will hold information relevant to parents of children in *busy bees*.

Busy Bees Facebook page, is linked to our Website and is accessed solely by the owner of *busy bees*. No other person can add photos to this face book page. On your enrolment form you will have been asked to give permission for your child to be featured in groups or by themselves on *busy bees face book* page. If you did not agree, we will exclude your child or distort their image.

If you did give permission, it is a lovely way to see your child enjoying their day with their peers. Either way it is up to you as parents to make that decision for your child, and we respect your decision.

I have read the *Busy Bees Parents information book* and agree to the terms set out in this handbook

Name of Parent :

Name of child:

Signature of Parent.....

Date

