

**WEE CARE**

**RESIDENTIAL SERVICE**

**Emergency Crisis Accommodation for Children**

**and**

**Family Support**



**9 First Street**

**Railway Estate**

**Townsville**

**4810**

**Tel: 47724499**

Wee Care is a program of Althea Projects Incorporated

and is funded by

the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs



**Queensland  
Government**

V3.5



**WEE CARE  
Parent/Carer  
Information  
Booklet**





Should a client wish to access their personal information held by Wee Care they must put this request in writing via a **Formal Request for Information Form** along with the details or list of the documents they wish to specifically view. The request must give a minimum of 1 weeks’ notice.

A client may not view any records until such time proof of identity occurs.

Viewing records is only to occur on Wee Care or Althea Projects property and with the most relevant appointed person to be present at all times. Clients are not permitted to copy or remove any of the original records or take them from Althea’s premises. If required, a client can have a support person or advocate with them.

Refer to **Althea Projects Privacy Statement** for further information. This can be accessed via [www.altheaprojects.org.au](http://www.altheaprojects.org.au), or you may ask for a paper copy.

### **Amendment or Correction of Personal Information**

If an individual believes that Wee Care is holding information which is inaccurate, incomplete, out of date, or misleading, they can notify the Program Manager and request the organisation amend, attach a statement of correction or destroy the information.

Changes to information will not be made where there are grounds under the Information Privacy Act or any other relevant laws to not do so. If changes can occur, the request is to be made through the **Formal Request for Information form**. A copy of this form goes on the clients file and any changes made will be clearly documented and referenced.

### **Disclosure of Personal Information**

Wee Care will only disclose your personal information to another party by your written consent to do so or where it is required to do so by law. However, wherever possible Wee Care uses information in a de-identified form.

If you have any questions about your privacy or personal information then please let us know.

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## **WELCOME!**

Dear Parents,/Guardians

May we take this opportunity to welcome you to the Wee Care Residential and Family Support Program. Wee Care is a program of Althea Projects Incorporated and is funded by the Department of Children, Youth Justice & Multicultural Affairs.

This booklet contains information about our Program and services and to help answer any questions you may have about your child's stay with us. The staff at Wee Care is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and creative environment for you and your children. We welcome any feedback from you or your children in regards to their stay.

Kind regards

Althea Projects– Wee Care Program Manager and Staff

### **Our Mission**

To support and strengthen individuals, families, children and young people so they experience social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing and reach their full potential.

### **Our Values**

- ⇒ Human Dignity & Respect
- ⇒ Fairness & Equity
- ⇒ Cultural Mindfulness & Diversity
- ⇒ Accountability & Transparency
- ⇒ Innovation & Excellence
- ⇒ Partnerships & Collaboration

### **What we believe**

Because of the diversity of children's experiences it is important to remember that each child/young person is different and has different needs and issues. Wee Care is flexible and committed to meeting the needs of individual children, young people, and their families and we believe that every child/young person has the right to feel safe, to be heard, listened to, and believed.

## **Privacy**

Protecting the privacy of children and families is very important. Althea Projects Wee Care program must comply with the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*.

### **Information Collection**

Wee Care only collects personal information about our clients (families and/or children who are in our service) that is lawful, fair, necessary or by consent in which to allow the program and its workers to complete its functions.

### **Information Storage & Security**

Wee Care ensures your personal information is protected against loss, unauthorised access, or other misuse through:

- Having electronic information systems with password protection that can only be accessed by authorised staff members.
- Having IT security systems in place
- Keeping any hard copy personal information in locked filing cabinets when unattended, which can only be accessed by authorised staff members
- Personal information only being stored as long as required for the purposes of carrying out the organisations duties
- Having secure document disposal systems for destruction of any paper copies of client information that is no longer required.

### **Accessing Personal Information**

Families connected to Wee Care have a right, in most cases, to access and read any personal information kept about them except, where access is restricted by law, the privacy regulations allows an individual to request access to their personal information or to amend their own personal information if it is inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading.

Personal information cannot be accessed by others, except if consent is granted or as required by law.

## Wee Care Program & Services

- Office of the Information Commissioner
- Crime and Corruption Commission

### **Human rights based complaints**

*The Human Rights Act 2020 (Qld)* requires Althea Projects Wee Care Program to consider human rights when making decisions. It is unlawful for Wee Care to act in a way that is incompatible with human rights or failing to give proper consideration to human rights. At times the rights of one person may need to be balanced against the rights of others or the broader community however, where Wee Care makes a decision to restrict a person's rights that restriction can be no greater than is needed to achieve a goal.

Where a client of our services believes a decision made by us is not compatible with their human rights they may make a human rights complaint. Where a human rights complaint is made this must first be made to Althea Projects. Althea Projects has 45 days in which to provide an outcome to this complaint. If the complaint is not dealt with or resolved to a client's satisfaction within that 45 days then a complaint can be made to the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC).

The QHRC can be contacted on 1300 130 670 (Toll Free) or (07) 4421 4000. The following web address can also be accessed in which find out more information about the 23 human rights and to make an online complaint to the QHRC. <https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/your-rights/human-rights-law>.

**Refer to Althea Projects Complaints Policy Statement for more detailed information on making a complaint. This is a public document and a copy can be requested at any time or it can be located on Althea Projects website at:**

[www.altheaprojects.org.au](http://www.altheaprojects.org.au)

### **Residential Service**

Althea Projects Wee Care program is funded to provide residential family support services to families in need of emergency or short term respite care for their children aged 0-11 years in Townsville and surrounding areas. Emergency respite is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and planned day and/or overnight respite is available a minimum of five nights a week. Other services can make respite referrals on behalf of parents or parents can self refer by directly contacting our service.

Wee Care follows a daily routine which includes a rest/quiet time after lunch each day. Children and young people are encouraged to choose television shows that are age appropriate. The service has a large variety of suitable DVD's, CD's and games on IPads. Children and young people generally watch a DVD during quiet time and after dinner. Outdoor play is encouraged in the cooler part of the morning and afternoon. Children and young people are also supported to complete any homework or projects that are required.

The staff at Wee Care will, wherever possible, adapt a routine to suit any particular child's needs.

Meals are creatively prepared by the staff and children and young people receive a balanced diet during their stay. If there are any special dietary requirements these will be met. Children and young people generally have separate bedrooms. However, family groups do share the same room if they wish. Bedtime is dependant on the age of the child. Generally though, bedtime occurs between 8-8.30 pm during school days and may differ on weekends. Wee Care offers transport to and from school for children and young people during their stay.

Phone contact and visits to Wee Care while your child/young person is here is encouraged. It is a good idea to let us know before you visit in case we have taken your child/ren on an outing. Outings are often arranged on the weekends and during school holidays depending on the number of children in care. Outings may include visiting: Billabong, the Museum, the Strand, and Parks. If for any reason you do not wish your child to participate in outings please let us know at admission.

## Family Support

Some families may require ongoing respite beyond their initial crisis/emergency or request additional support from Wee Care. In this situation the Program Manager will consult with you about engaging in and developing a Family Support Plan. This support plan would be developed in collaboration with you and be based on a needs assessments undertaken with you and where you would set the goals of the plan. Entering into a Family Support Plan is completely voluntary however. The Family Support Plan is to be used to help support and build a family's capacity and networks. Support will continue until the goals have been met, your family needs have improved, or the you no longer wish/need to engage with Wee Care. The Family Support Plan is reviewed annually (or sooner if requested by you).

## Play Group

Wee Care provide a free Play Group session every Thursday morning (excluding school holidays) from 9.30 – 11.30 a.m. This is for children aged from 0-5 years. Families are encouraged to participate and actively engage with their children during play. Families are asked to bring a piece of fruit for sharing at morning tea. A gold coin donation is also appreciated to help cover the cost of arts and crafts supplies however is not mandatory for attendance.

## First Steps Family Support program

This is a mums and new bub program which was co-designed by Althea Projects and the Department of Children, Youth Justice & Multicultural Affairs. This program aids in the prevention of newborn infants being removed from their mother at birth by Child Safety. Althea's team hope to develop opportunities for the mother to develop safe parenting skills so that the mother is able to take her child home with her.

## Family Contact Service

This service provides supervised visits in a neutral and safe environment for Parents/carers of Children on Child Protection orders.

## Do you need to pay for our services?

No. There are no fees involved for any parents/carers accessing any of our services. You are quite welcome to make a donation to the service if you wish, and of course this is greatly appreciated, but is in no way necessary in which to receive service. 6

## Feedback & Complaints

You can provide feedback (whether positive or negative or just a suggestion) at any time and you can make a complaint through any of the following methods;

- Directly to your support/community worker, or their line manager
- Putting the complaint in writing via email
- Via an advocate or support person
- Through the completion of a feedback form

You can request a **Feedback Form** at any time or you can do this electronically through our website at [www.altheaprojects.org.au](http://www.altheaprojects.org.au).

You have the option to remain anonymous, but by doing so we will be unable to notify you of the outcome of your complaint.

All complaints will be considered and dealt with appropriately.

Acknowledgment of a complaint will occur within 14 days upon receipt of the complaint.

An investigation will be conducted and depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint various actions will be considered in which to resolve it.

You will be informed in writing of the outcome of the complaint within 60 days (45 days if it is a human rights complaint).

If you are unhappy with any decision about a complaint you have made, you may appeal it by;

- Contacting Althea Projects CEO or a Board member, or
- Pursuing the complaint further with the relevant Program funding body (Department of Children, Youth and Multicultural Affairs)

Other avenues for complaint or appeal could include:

- Queensland Human Rights Commission
- Queensland Family & Child Commission
- Queensland Ombudsman

## Your Responsibilities

While working with us it is your responsibility;

- To treat others fairly and with respect
- To tell staff what your needs are
- To take responsibility for your own actions and recognise how they can affect others
- To abide by any conditions outlined in the relevant client handbook or information packages provided to you by the program you are working with
- To understand your own responsibility in the minimising of physical or emotional risk of harm to yourself and others
- To actively work towards achieving any goals you and your support worker have agreed upon
- To tell us when things are not working for you
- To let us know if you can't keep an appointment.

## Frequently asked questions about a child's stay at our Residential

### What happens when you bring your child to Wee Care?

When a child/young person comes into Wee Care it is a requirement that the parent/guardian completes a **Family Information Form** (this is a once yearly form) and an **Admission/Departure Form** (this is filled out every respite visit). These forms provide staff with relevant information to ensure a high quality of care for the child/young person is maintained during their stay. For example: any allergies, medication, what the child/young person likes to do, activities, general routine, special diet requirements, Medicare number, phone contact etc. If for any reason there may be any changes to a child's information given on admission it is important that these changes be communicated to Wee Care staff each admission.

A time for departure will be discussed at admission however if the time changes please contact Wee Care to let us know. Wee Care does offer ongoing respite support for children and families in need. Individual needs can be discussed with the Manager and if eligible a Family Support Plan can be arranged.

At times emergencies do arise due to accidents, or family breakdowns, ill health etc. and ongoing respite families may be asked to cancel their scheduled care for another time to allow for emergency referrals of children requiring our service.

### What do you need to pack for your child?

What ever you feel is necessary for their stay e.g. clothes, school uniform, bag and lunch box, medication and any special food (although we can obtain this if necessary) etc. Sometimes it is good to also pack in swimmers especially during the summer for safe water play.

Utmost care is taken by staff to prevent belongings from being lost. We encourage belongings to be marked, however, children tend to know what is theirs and it just takes a phone call and we will do all we can to locate any lost items. We would appreciate you bringing in your child's toothbrush and hair brush/comb. We understand that sometimes when we are in a hurry we can forget things, so don't worry, Wee Care has plenty of extra clothes, shoes, hats, toiletries and sun screen. We do require you to bring formula and nappies/pull ups should these be required.

Wee Care does not encourage children to bring electronic media, such as mobile phones or tablet computers into care with them. Wee Care has iPads and iPad

minis for the children to play with at certain times during their stay. If you feel that there is still a need for your child to bring any electronic media in with them, then please discuss this with the Manager. If these items are brought in then staff will ensure they are kept safe. Wee Care will not however accept responsibility for theft or damage of these items if they are not provided to Wee Care staff at the time of the child's admission.

### **What does Wee Care do if your child becomes unwell when with us?**

If your child/young person becomes unwell during their stay we will contact you first. If we can not contact you, we will attempt your emergency contact person. If you are unavailable we will arrange to take the child/young person to a doctor. Wee Care generally goes to a local doctors clinic who bulk bills, or the Townsville General Hospital after hours. Wee Care may also call the House-call Doctor to attend to children at the service. You will be advised of the outcome of the visit and Wee Care will purchase any medication on the child's behalf. This is why we need the child's Medicare number at admission.

### **Wee Care Staff Administering Medications to Children**

Wee Care require children who have regular respite with us to have their medication/s in a webster pack. Chemists will do this for free. For children who come into our service due to emergency circumstances, Wee Care will require their medication to be in its original packaging and clearly labelled with dosage and time to be given. We are unable to administer any prescription medications without instructions from a doctor or pharmacist. No medications should be left in the child's bag and needs to be handed to staff at admission. In completing the Admission form for your child you will need to note if your child is currently on any medication. If you select yes, then you will need to complete a **Medication Permission Form**. This provides all the necessary details for us to be able to provide your child with their medication. We have safe guarding mechanisms in place including recording medication administration logs when we do administer medication to your child and ensuring medication handover discussions occur at staff shift change overs.

**Paracetamol** is approved for reducing teething and ear pain and fever in children from colds and flu's and can be administered to your child providing you have given permission for us to do so in your **Family Information Form**. If staff are required to administer Panadol (or alternatives such as Dymadon) then they will telephone you to advise you of the next step in dealing with the situation. Wee Care considers a fever to be greater than 38 c.

### **Your Rights**

Your rights whilst receiving services from us include;

- Your information being handled in a way that complies with Information Privacy laws (refer to our public **Privacy Statement** at [www.altheaprojects.org.au](http://www.altheaprojects.org.au))
- To be provided with a service that respects your dignity and independence and is responsive to your physical, cultural and social needs
- The right to request access to information held by us that has been given to us by you
- To be safe in your dealings with us
- Having an active role in the support provided to you in terms of being led by your needs and what you would like to achieve
- To withdraw from our services at anytime
- To enter into a case/support plan with us for longer term support
- To be offered referral to other services if we are unable to meet all of your needs
- To be able to provide feedback or make a complaint without fear of retribution
- To have access to and/or use an interpreter or advocate should you need to.



## Accidents and Incidents

If your child is involved in an accident or incident while they are staying at Wee Care then you will be informed of this either immediately, if the accident or incident is serious or requires medical attention, or if the accident or incident is only minor in nature, for example a grazed knee from tripping over, then staff will inform you of it when you collect your child. You will be asked by staff to sign the **Incident Report Form** when you collect your child as acknowledgement you have been informed. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask the staff or Manager questions.

## Client Service Charter

### Our Commitment to You

At Wee Care you can expect:

- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To be treated justly and fairly
- To be supported and assisted through whatever situation or crisis you may be in towards the best possible outcome
- To be supported in a way that encourages hope for the future
- To be supported in a way that builds upon your individual strengths and assists you to find your own solutions
- To be protected from harm to your safety and wellbeing
- For us to be honest, accountable, transparent and non-judgmental in our work with you
- To be supported by a skilled and competent staff group
- For us to use your feedback or suggestions to inform the continuous improvement of our programs and services.

**Amber teething Necklaces:** Due to the risk of choking or suffocating Wee Care does not allow these to be worn while your child is in care at Wee Care. **Bonjela** is not supplied by Wee Care, however you can supply your own and permit Staff to apply to your child if they are teething.

### Transporting Children

Wee Care has a vehicle which we use to drive children to and from school, and occasionally on external outings. You will see a permission box on the **Family Information Form** allowing staff permission to transport your child should it be required. The safety of all children and staff will be provided in all activities as per our organisational Harm Prevention Policy and Motor Vehicle Policy.

Staff will carry an organisational mobile phone and their drivers licence at all times. Children will be transported in appropriate child restraints compliant with Qld laws. Wee Care has a range of car seats for children of different ages and weights and these are used at all times when children are transported in the vehicle. The safety of children is paramount to Wee Care and we follow all the current guidelines set out by the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads.

### Our Staff & their Training/Experience

Our Direct Care staff are childcare qualified/experienced and who provide the daily care and are responsible for the safety and well being of your children during their stay with us. Our staff are trained in First Aid, Infant & Child CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma. There is always two staff members present whether we are operating day or night unless we are transporting children to school. During the week the Program Manager is also present to answer any questions you may have.

### What we expect of your child when they come to Wee Care?

We only have a few rules and these are; respect for others, respect for property and most importantly, respect for oneself and to keep their hands and feet to themselves.

### What about Drugs/Alcohol and Smoking at our premises?

Wee Care has a smoke-free policy. No one is permitted to smoke inside the building or on Wee Care's property or whilst in contact with children/young people staying at Wee Care. Alcohol and drugs are banned from Wee Care. Please ensure you check your children's bags for any sharp objects and/or aerosol sprays before you bring them into our premises.

## **Is your child guaranteed a stay at Wee Care?**

Wee Care Residential service is funded for six (6) Children aged from 0– 11 years at any one time. Our program offers emergency/crisis care and respite child care. Families utilising the service for regular ongoing respite could have their planned care cancelled at short notice should an emergency/crisis arise if another family requires care. You will then be given another time slot when available.

## **How long can your child stay?**

The length of time that a child is able to stay at Wee Care is needs based. A stay may be anywhere from a short day stay to overnight, to a longer period. Should you require ongoing support the Manager is happy to discuss this with you and may be able to assist you and your child/ren through a Family Support Plan.

## **What about the safety of your child?**

Wee Care takes all precautions to ensure your child has a safe stay with us. Evacuation Plans are displayed. Smoke detectors, fire extinguishes and internal and external video surveillance cameras are in place throughout Wee Care and all exits are clearly marked. Wee Care has plans in place for many situations where safety may be a concern. There are procedures around water safety, bullying, contact with animals and medical emergencies just to name a few. Wee Care follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in everything we do. In addition, our service is visited on a monthly basis by the Community Visitor who speaks the children present about their stay, the food, staff etc.

## **What to do if you or your child has concerns about their stay?**

During their stay children and young people are encouraged to “Speak up” if anything is happening that they do not feel comfortable about. Staff talk to children and young people when they first come into Wee Care and let them know that they are available to listen and to talk through any concerns they may have. Feedback is encouraged and this is why we include the opportunity for you to provide feedback at Departure on the Admission & Departure Form we have you complete when you come to collect your child. Wee Care acknowledges the invaluable feedback from parents/carers and children, so please feel free to talk to the Manager about any issues or concerns. All Feedback provides the opportunity for continuous improvement of the services we deliver.

## **Other Important Information**

### **Confidentiality**

When working with children and families we embrace trusting confidential relationships. Confidentiality and trust is essential in any relationship however there are times where there are exceptions to this rule and this is when the safety and wellbeing of the child is at risk. Althea Projects is a Child Safe Organisation and Wee Care staff are mandatory reporters under the section 13E of the *Child Protection Act 1999*. This means if a child discloses to our staff they are being significantly harmed or they are at risk of significant harm occurring our workers are required by law to report this to the relevant authorities. This will be pointed out and discussed with you during the completion of the **Family Information Form** process. You will note on the form your acknowledgment that you were advised this.

### **Adverse Weather Conditions**

During a Cyclone threat the Wee Care Manager will make a decision as to whether it is safe for children to remain at the residential. If for any reason the child cannot return home (you may be in hospital) other arrangements will be made after speaking to the parent/carer and Manager, and the CEO of Althea Projects.

### **Diversity & Inclusion**

Althea Projects and Wee Care believe that all children and families have a right to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging regardless of gender, age, socio economic status, race, language, beliefs, additional needs and family structure or lifestyle.

All children and families who utilise the service will be treated with dignity and respect. Wee Care is able to support the physical needs of children with disabilities. Staff ensure they follow any specific requests by families, wherever possible, to provide consistency. Staff treat every child equally and will encourage children to treat each other with fairness and respect.