

Your Handbook



Contents

WELCOME

OUR VISION AND VALUES

ABOUT US

OUR SERVICE

MAXIMISING THE BENEFITS

FUNDING & FEES

CANCELLATIONS

OUR LOCATIONS

**SAFETY, INCIDENTS AND
YOUR RIGHTS**



Welcome to Bridges for Learning



Welcome to Bridges for Learning!

We are aware that this may be a challenging time for you as your child enters into the foreign territory of Therapy and Intervention Services.

We appreciate that there is a lot of new information to digest and feelings and concerns to process as well as the constant juggle of doctors or other healthcare professional appointments.

With this in mind, we would like to make your experience at Bridges for Learning clear, useful and as supportive as possible.

While the Therapy Program focuses on your child, we understand that you and your family may also have needs within this process. In our experience, parents feel much more confident about this process when they are kept informed, so please feel free to talk to us at anytime or enquire about our Parent Group sessions.

We look forward to working with you and your child!

Kathleen Hornery

General Manager



Our Vision

Every child with additional needs and their family can meaningfully participate in their community.



Our Values

Passion

WE LOVE WHAT WE DO

Flexibility

EVERY NEED IS DIFFERENT

Inclusion

WE CELEBRATE YOUR UNIQUENESS

Empowerment

WE ARE HONOURED TO JOIN YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY

Support

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Commitment

WE REMAIN CURIOUS

About Us

Our Organisation

Established in 1986, with a mission to support children, families and carers in the Southern Highlands and Wollondilly, Bridges for Learning is a non-government organisation and registered charity that provides a wide range of therapy and support services for children 0-15 years and their families.

Our Commitment

Bridges for Learning is committed to providing high quality and best practice services. All of our therapy staff are registered with their professional bodies and APHRA (Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency), and we continue to meet rigorous regulations and evaluations set by government authorities including:

- Accreditation by NDIA Quality and Safeguard Commission
- Member of Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network
- Child and Family Supports Alliance (CaSFA)



Our Services

Bridges for Learning follows a family-centered approach when providing services. We have a multidisciplinary team that provides *speech therapy*, *occupational therapy*, *psychology*, *physiotherapy*, *educational therapy*, *Allied Health Assistants*, and *counselling*.

We listen to, and work with, you

There are lots of different ways we might work together to achieve your goals. This might include:

- assessments that will help us identify the exact area of need;
- 1:1 face to face support;
- teletherapy;
- group therapy;
- school/preschool visits;
- allied health assistant programs, and/or;
- a combination of the above.

As your child achieves a goal, s/he may require different services to meet their new goals. We will always work with you to tailor a program of therapy that is designed to achieve their potential.



Maximising the Benefits

Making this Work

Our clinician-family partnership is a two-way relationship. Together We plan, develop and provide therapy to meet your goals.

Therapy is most effective when it occurs on a regular basis with opportunities to practice and consolidate your child's new skills between therapy sessions.



Guiding Principles

We know that children achieve success in an environment where:

- There is support for reflection, learning, growth and development;
- They are supported in a caring, compassionate and respectful way;
- There is commitment to equal access, social justice and social change, and;
- The environment is accountable and transparent.



Attending Therapy

Please arrive on time for your child's session. We will not commence the therapy session if you are more than 15 minutes late. If you are late, you are liable for the full appointment fee.

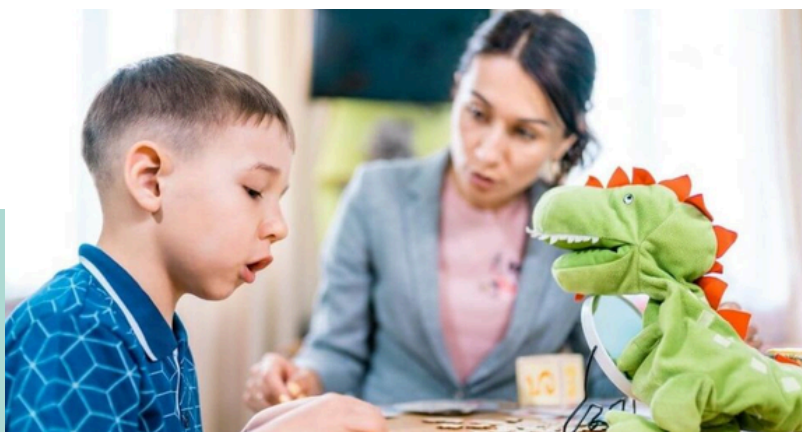
You are an integral part of the therapy relationship. When you attend sessions, you can ask questions, observe and learn how to implement strategies, and seek clarification when required. For older clients sometimes it is preferable that they attend independently, however we ask that you always remain at the Centre.

In the interests of the health and wellbeing of the children, families and staff, you agree, as determined by the NSW Department of Health, that your child is free from infection, or any other contagious condition.

It is vital that families make a commitment to attend sessions regularly and at the arranged time. Research shows that a consistent and regular approach to therapy provides the greatest benefits for the child.

We respectfully ask you to:

- Work with us to build practice into your everyday routines
- Provide us with a minimum of 10 working days' notice when requesting reports and letters of support.



Funding & Fees

NDIS

We support the following NDIS management types:

- o Plan managed: a provider supports you to manage the funding in your NDIS plan.
- o Self-managed: you choose to manage your NDS funding yourself.
- o NDIA managed (Agency managed): NDIA manages your plan for you.

Private Health Fund

You may have 'Extras' attached to your health insurance that may cover allied health therapy. Please speak directly with your private healthcare provider to determine if you are eligible for any rebates.



Medicare

Chronic Disease Management Plan: Previously known as an Enhanced Primary Care Plan (EPCP). You will need to discuss your eligibility with your GP. This program provides a rebate for five (5) allied health care session annually. There will be a gap payment between your Medicare rebate and the cost of each therapy session.

Mental Health Care Plan: This plan provides you with ten (10) sessions annually for psychology sessions. You will need to speak with your GP or Paediatrician to see if you are eligible. There will be a gap payment between your Medicare rebate and the cost of each therapy session.

Self-Funded

These are privately funded clients.

Travel

Any sessions that occur outside of our Centres will incur a travel fee, which is based on the time travelled. Travel will be charged in line with the NDIS Pricing Arrangements. Travel costs are charged in units of 10 minutes. We will always try group clients who are located near to each other to minimize costs wherever possible.

Additional Fee Information

- Fees must be paid at the time of appointment by cash, credit card or direct debit
- Accounts are payable within five (5) business days. An additional processing fee will apply once the payment is overdue.
- Our Therapy and Fee Listing can be found on the website (www.bridgesforlearning.org.au)
- We believe participation in our services is for everyone. Please discuss your situation with the General Manager.



Cancellations

When you book an appointment, this time has been set aside for your child exclusively. We plan activities around your child's goals for each session to maintain a high quality of service.

We understand that, at times, you cannot attend the appointment. We are happy to offer alternate types of therapies at your scheduled time to discuss any current concerns or offer some strategies to use at home, such as:

- telehealth, and/or;
- phone consult.

NDIS Cancellations given **after 10:00am the day prior** to your appointment will be considered a short notice cancellation, and **you will be charged the full amount of the session**. Your next scheduled appointment cannot be confirmed if more than two invoices are outstanding.

Self funded cancellations given **after 10:00am the day prior** will be charged 50% of the appointment cost. Assessment cancellations will be charged at 50% if less than 48 hours notice is given.

If you repeatedly cancel or fail to attend appointments, this may result in the loss of your regular appointment time or the termination of services.

We will contact you where we must cancel an appointment and will make every attempt to reschedule the appointment at a time convenient to you.



Our Location

Bowral

25 THOMPSON ST. BOWRAL, 2576



Safety, Incidents & Rights

Being Safe: Feeling Safe

We want everyone to be safe and feel safe. If you feel unsafe you can tell us and we promise we will listen. To comply with NDIA, we regularly review our risk management plans and ask questions about the ways in which we provide sessions. These questions look at the people involved, the environment, and the equipment used.

Handling Incidents

Our team knows what to do if there is an accident or problem. We will follow our policies and the NDIS rules. This means:

- We must speak with, and continually inform, the people involved;
- We must investigate the incident;
- We must tell the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission, and;
- We must show how we will make sure it doesn't happen again.

Everyone has the right to be treated fairly. If you have been involved in an incident you have the right to know what went wrong and what actions are being taken to fix it.



Emergency and Disaster Plan

In response to the increase in natural disasters, including bushfires, cyclones, extreme heat and severe storms and floods, the NDIS has introduced an Emergency and Disaster Management Practice Standard.

Bridges for Learning has plan that aims to mitigate risks to our Customer's health, safety and wellbeing, and ensuring continuity of supports.

We will also develop an Individual Emergency and Disaster Management Plan with you to determine how critical supports will continue to be delivered in a disaster or emergency situation.

your Rights

Bridge for Learning uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Person with a Disability, as outlined below

You have the right to:

- Choose Bridges for Learning to delivery your therapy and how they do this.
- Choose other services to deliver different types of therapy for my child.
- Not choose Bridges for Learning as your provider if you feel we are not acting in your child's or family's best interests.
- Ask Bridges for Learning if there is a conflict of interest;
- Not feel pressured to agree to supports that your child and family do not want or need;
- Only pay a fair and reasonable rate for your therapy
- Decide what personal information I give to Bridges for Learning so they can deliver supports.
- Provide feedback or make a complaint without worrying about how it will affect your child's therapy.

Your safety is important to us

We work hard to provide safe services to our families, but sometimes accidents happen. You can help prevent incidents from happening too. Act safely, treat others with respect and tell someone if you don't feel safe.

If we don't act safely

Contact us:

Bridges for Learning, 25 Thompson St Bowral, 2576

email: manager@bridgesforlearning.org.au

PH: (02) 4861 4054

Contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission

Email: contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au

PH: 1800 035 544

Contact the Office of Australian Information Commissioner

Email: foi@oaic.gov.au

PH: 1300 363 992



Bridges for Learning ...

... Are Mandatory Reporters

All of the team are mandatory reporters and must, by law, report any concerns we have about the welfare of our clients.

... Comply with the Reportable Conduct Scheme

Regulated by the Office of the Children's Guardian, this means that that we have systems in place for receiving, handling and disclosing information about reportable allegations made about our staff and volunteers engaging in harmful conduct towards a child.

... Have a Code of Conduct

This describes the standards of behaviour and conduct expected in dealings with clients, coworkers, volunteers, management, other stakeholders and the public. This is applicable to all employees, volunteers and contractors.

... Meet the Requirements for ...

- NDIS Code of Conduct;
- International Conventions;
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and;
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Bridges for Learning

bridgesforlearning.org.au

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