

Student Handbook



Our vision, our mission, our values



Our vision

We are working towards a future where:

- the promise and potential of every child is realised
- families and communities are strong and caring
- children's services are valued and well resourced.

Our mission

SDN Children's Services is a not-for-profit organisation committed to:


- providing high-quality inclusive, early childhood education and care. This means our services are safe, affordable, inclusive and as inspiring as possible.
- Strengthening families and communities. This means we build strong connections within communities.
- addressing inequalities faced by children. This means we challenge discrimination and help remove barriers to full inclusion.

Our values

In carrying out our mission, we commit ourselves to being:

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



A photograph of two young children, likely of Asian descent, engaged in an outdoor activity. The child on the left is wearing a white sleeveless top with pink trim and a blue apron, and a wide-brimmed hat with a colorful floral pattern. She is holding a blue globe and applying white paint to it. The child on the right is wearing a white sleeveless top with pink trim and a dark blue bucket hat with a red interior. She is smiling and also applying white paint to the globe. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green grass and a red metal structure.

As a not-for-profit organisation established in 1905, SDN is one of Australia's most experienced and trusted leaders in early childhood education and care

Welcome to our student program

Congratulations on securing a placement with SDN Children's Services

At SDN we are committed to the education and training of early childhood educators. We understand how important practical experiences are in developing your skills as an educator and we are committed to ensuring your placement or internship with us provides you with opportunities to learn, perform and grow. Through our student program we endeavour to provide the best possible supported learning experience in the sector and an ideal start for students who wish to build a career in early childhood education and care and related allied health services.

A placement with SDN offers the opportunity for you to connect with us, care alongside us and challenge yourself. We recognise that student placements provide a valuable opportunity to build knowledge and experience for both you and our staff. The staff at your SDN service are all early childhood or allied health professionals and are committed to supporting you to achieve your practical experience goals and objectives.

This booklet will give you an overview of our student program and outline the requirements and expectations for your student placement or internship experience. If you



have any questions about the information in this booklet please contact Lucy McKenna our Stakeholder Relationships Coordinator — Tertiary Institutions on (02) 9213 2402 via email on L.McKenna@sdn.org.au

We look forward to welcoming you to SDN and sharing our passion for early childhood education and care.

Glynis Chang

Director, Inclusive Education and Care Practice Unit.

What you need to know about your placement



Introducing Lucy McKenna

Stakeholder Relationships Coordinator — Tertiary Institutions

Lucy McKenna oversees our student program at SDN. Her role is to look after you while you are completing your placement or internship with us. Lucy will arrange to meet you during the first week of your practicum to officially welcome and induct you into our organisation. If you have any questions or concerns while on placement Lucy is available to assist you.

Before you can commence your placement or internship it is essential that the SDN Student Program Team has received all your appropriate documentation. Please ensure you have completed the paperwork requirements below, as unfortunately you will be unable to start your practicum until all documentation is received.

Paperwork requirements

With this booklet you will have received

- two copies of your confirmation letter and
- an emergency contact details form.

Please sign both copies of your confirmation letter. One copy is to be kept for your records and the other must be returned to the SDN Student Program Team (studentprogram@sdn.org.au) as soon as possible, along with your completed emergency contact details form and letter of insurance from your tertiary institution.

On the emergency contact details form we ask you to provide your Working with Children Check (WWCC) number. All students completing a placement in any of our NSW services must have a number. If you do not have a number you must apply for one to the NSW Commission for Children and Young People. SDN is required to check this number before you can commence your placement or internship. To ensure

this is possible you will need to return your emergency contact details form to our SDN Student Program Team by no later than one week prior to commencing your practicum.

Unfortunately if you are unable to provide a valid Working with Children Check number you will be unable to undertake a placement or internship with us.

Focus children and research

We recommend that you bring your practicum outline with you on the first day of your placement so your workplace supervisor can understand what you will be looking to achieve during your time with SDN.

As part of your assessment criteria you may be required to select children to observe as focus children. When selecting focus children you must liaise with your workplace supervisor and Centre Director or Service Delivery Manager. They will then assist you with acquiring written consent from the children's parents before proceeding with any observations or studies. Once obtained, it is essential that you forward a copy of this consent to our SDN Student Program Team (studentprogram@sdn.org.au) and retain the original for your records.

If you are considering any research in conjunction with your placement or internship you will also need to contact our Stakeholder Relationships Coordinator — Tertiary Institutions, who will assist you in submitting an application to SDN's Research Ethics Committee. All proposed research must be approved by SDN's Research Ethics Committee prior to undertaking.



If you proceed to observe focus children or conduct research without written approval you will not be allowed to continue your placement or internship with SDN.

Starting your placement

On your first day you will receive an SDN name badge. Please wear your name badge at all times while in your SDN service or when conducting activities externally on behalf of our organisation. Name badges must be clearly visible to children, families, staff and members of the public.

During your time with us, we ask that you dress in keeping with a professional work environment and in accordance with the type of work being done. Please ensure all clothing is clean, neat and in good repair. Suitable clothing includes:

- t-shirts or polo shirts without logos
- long pants including jeans, shorts, skirts and dresses
- enclosed shoes.

Please avoid wearing:

- tops, singlets or dresses that have shoestring straps or are strapless
- clothing that reveals midriffs or are low cut, including low rise hipster pants
- very short skirts, dresses or shorts
- track suit pants
- thongs or open toed shoes.

When working outdoors you will need to wear a hat and sunscreen in adherence with our Sun Safety Policy (available at the centre) so please bring a wide brim hat with you for the duration of your placement.

Expectations

While on placement you will be expected to fulfil your practical requirements in a professional manner. Therefore we ask that you are adequately prepared and work in a manner that does not put yourself or others at risk. You will be required to work within SDN policies and procedures at all times and observe the privacy and confidentiality of clients and information.

We also ask that you contribute to the development of an effective working relationship with the field based staff member allocated as your workplace supervisor, and all other members of staff in the service.

Sickness and illness

If you are unable to attend your service on one of the days you have nominated to complete your placement or internship you must phone your workplace supervisor and speak with them directly to explain your absence and organise another day to complete your hours. If your workplace supervisor is not available you must leave a message with an appropriate staff member onsite and also send an email to the SDN Student Program Team (studentprogram@sdn.org.au).

Connect with us, care alongside us and challenge yourself



Discontinuation of placement or internship

We value you joining us for your placement or internship and we are committed to ensuring wherever possible we support you through the experience. However, for health and safety reasons any student who is found to have breached our Code of Conduct will unfortunately not be able to continue their placement within our organisation.

Behaviour that would be considered a breach would include:

- continual absences without notice or explanation
- continued failure to comply with reasonable direction from an authorised staff member
- inappropriate language in front of children, parents or staff
- failure to maintain confidentiality
- failure to comply with any applicable Australian Laws, Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics and the Education and Care Service National Regulations.

We also understand that personal circumstances occasionally prevent students from completing their placement or internship with us. If you are unable to complete your practicum with SDN we ask that you inform your allocated supervisor and advise the Student Program Team (studentprogram@sdn.org.au).

Feedback

At SDN your feedback is important to us, so we ask all our students to complete a pre and post survey about your placement or internship. These surveys allow us to collect information and ascertain to what extent you fulfilled the goals and objectives of your internship. We are also interested to see how well we facilitated your placement and any recommendations you may have for areas in which we can improve our student program. Our Student Program Team will organise for you to complete these surveys in the first and last week of your placement.

Issues

At SDN we expect your time with us to be educational and enjoyable. If you have any issues during your practicum please contact Lucy McKenna (02) 9213 2402 (l.mckenna@sdn.org.au) as soon as possible. As our Stakeholder Relationships Coordinator — Tertiary Institutions, Lucy is responsible for ensuring your placement or internship is an ideal learning experience and is committed to resolving any barriers to you achieving this.



Working for SDN

After completing your student placement with SDN you may be interested in working for us. As a leading not-for profit organisation in the children's services sector, SDN offers competitive salaries and rewarding and diverse careers. For all vacancies visit www.sdn.org.au/careers/job-vacancies/

Join our casual list

SDN has opportunities to work on a casual basis within our early education and care centres in NSW and ACT.

To join our casual team you must have completed a Certificate III or Diploma in Children's Services or a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

To find out more about SDN's casual network please call SDN's Recruitment Advisor on (02) 9213 2414 or email your resume through to careers@sdn.org.au.

Investigate the opportunities to work for SDN after your placement!

Benefits of working for SDN

Discounted child care fees and priority access

SDN offers discounted child care fees to permanent employees who enrol their children in SDN centres. Fees can also be paid on a salary sacrifice basis.

Paid parental leave

All SDN employees, after completing 12 months of service, are entitled to receive up to 10 weeks paid parental leave. This is in addition to the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme.

Training and development

We offer a range of training and education opportunities, internal and external professional development courses and financial assistance for staff who want to learn, perform and grow.

Work/life balance

SDN is a family friendly employer and we understand the responsibilities our people have outside the workplace. We respect that family life is imperative to most people's health and happiness. We support and promote a healthy work/life balance with many positions at SDN offering flexible hours, part time work, job sharing, and other flexible working arrangements including rostered days off for our centre based staff.



About SDN



respected children's services organisations. SDN is managed by the Board of Directors who work in a voluntary capacity.

What we believe: our philosophy

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.

What we do

SDN provides the following services:

- high quality, inclusive early childhood education and care
- early childhood intervention for children with disabilities
- family support services
- resource and mentoring for practitioners and other agencies
- Aboriginal training and employment support.

About us

SDN Children's Services is a not-for profit organisation that has been providing quality early childhood education and care since 1905. We are proud of our long history in teacher education and the provision of children's services.

SDN is one of only a few community-based organisations that has been operating in Australia for more than 100 years. SDN has survived many challenges, including two world wars and the Great Depression, and grown into one of Australia's most

Additional SDN resources

The Inclusive Education and Care Practice Unit

SDN values excellence and recognises the importance of professional practitioner learning for our staff and students. We aim to achieve consistent, up to date, quality practices with our growing and diverse workforce. SDN Inclusive Education and Care Practice Unit supports the continued development of our staff, regarding curriculum, and professional and inclusive practices.

Ngara Nanga Mai

Ngara Nanga Mai is SDN's internal Aboriginal resource. This centre offers leadership for the whole organisation regarding aboriginal culture and history, and best practice in working with Aboriginal children and families, in order to support the inclusion of Aboriginal children, families and staff within our services.

The Service Delivery Accountability Unit

The Service Delivery Accountability Unit provides and supports the leadership of our staff regarding compliance with regulations and legislation, responding to feedback from families, and reporting on our performance.



The SDN Archive at the History Room

The SDN Archive provides a unique resource specialising in early childhood education and care. The collection includes annual reports, meeting minutes, programming books, photographs, oral histories, badges, teaching resources, toys and children's artwork and furniture.



SDN has a long history of supporting the education and training of early childhood educators. We were the first to train and employ university qualified teachers to work in our early childhood education and care centres, and today we continue to support the learning and development of tertiary students through our student program.

Contact SDN Head Office

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Children's Services

educating and caring for our children