



promoting play with purpose

Early Learning Program

Pre-kindy

Family Handbook

- Beechboro
- Kingsley
- Woodvale

Welcome

I would like to welcome you to Meerilinga Early Learning Program. We recognise you are the first teacher of your child and value and appreciate your input; the teaching staff and I look forward to an exciting and rewarding partnership between you, your child and the community.

This handbook has been designed to provide you with general information about the program, to help with the smooth transition between home and our program.

Please read the handbook carefully, as it outlines important information on health, safety and legal responsibilities.

You know your child best and we welcome your input and suggestions and encourage conversations to help us better understand your child. By working together we can achieve a consistent approach between your home and the program, ensuring that all children and families enjoy their time with us.

I look forward to our association together, and trust that the Meerilinga Early Learning Program will be an enriching experience for you and your child.

Lesley Moreschi **Chief Executive Officer and the Early Education Team**

Would you prefer information about our centre, organisation and services in another language? Please indicate your preference.



ITALIAN

Lei preferirebbe le informazioni del nostro centro, la nostra organizzazione ed i nostri servizi in un'altra lingua? Per favore di indicare la sua preferenza.



ARABIC

رغبتك في الحصول على معلومات حولنا مركزنا، تنظيمنا وخدماتنا بلغة أخرى؟ يرجى إشراف تفضيلتك؟



POLISH

Byłby ty woleć informacja około nasz środek organisation i usługi w inny język? Podobać się wskazywać twój pierwszeństwo.



AFRIKAANS

Verkies u om meer inligting met betrekking tot ons sentrum, organisasie of dienste te ontvang in 'n ander taal? Gee asseblief 'n aanduiding van u voorkeur.



CHINESE

你在另一种语言中较喜欢关于我们的中心，机构和服务的消息吗？请表明你的偏爱。



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United Nations Convention on a child's right to play

Article 31 You have the right to play and rest.

When I play, I use my imagination,
I characterise, I explore, I discover,
I organise, I lead, I delegate, I contribute
and relate my ideas, I question,
I compromise, I follow.

I work both cooperatively and independently,
I create, I socialise, I practice caring and
sharing, I regulate my emotions, I indulge
my senses, I re-enact my experiences
and tell stories through games. I negotiate
and problem solve.

I am making sense of my world
and my place in it.

I AM LEARNING THROUGH PLAY
FOR I WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE
ONE DAY.



Meerilinga™
promoting positive childhoods



Meerilinga's Story

Meerilinga is a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity, which means that all fees paid by parents go directly to providing the best possible care and employing highly qualified, professional staff. Meerilinga prides itself in promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; working with children, their families, early childhood professionals, planners and the community to raise the status of children in Western Australia.

Meerilinga's association with children dates back to 1911, to the pioneers of the kindergarten movement and the early learning advocates for children's interests in this state.

Today, recognised for excellence in promoting and supporting the education, care and wellbeing of children, and providing a diverse range of professional resources and support to children, the health sector, the education sector, child protection, parents, the community and volunteers, Meerilinga aims to improve the quality of life for the children of Western Australia through our:

- Parenting Support Programs
- Facilitated Playgroups
- Early Learning Program
- Registered Training Organisation

“We have seen our daughter thrive since attending the pre-kindy program. Her enthusiasm for learning and her new found independence is wonderful to see. Thank you for helping her grow and creating an environment that she loves.” , Woodvale parent.

“ELP is wonderful and thoroughly enjoyed by my child. Interactive and engaging activities, teaching social skills too. “ , Kingsley parent.

About our Early Learning Program

Welcome to the Meerilinga's Early Learning Program. We are pleased that you have entrusted us with your child's learning and development.

Our Early Learning Programs are guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Quality Standards (NQS). The EYLF is a national framework for children from birth to 5 years. The framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life. Educators work in partnerships with families to develop programs that are responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities and recognise that children learn through play. By using this framework our Educators will promote your child's learning through play by planning stimulating environments and interesting learning experiences to enhance their learning opportunities.

Our Early Learning Programs have been assessed by the Department of Local Government and Communities and have being rated as Exceeding National Quality Standards. We continue to meet these high standards by providing innovative programs and engaging respectfully with the community.

Philosophy

Meerilinga's philosophy is based on the belief that children deserve the right to grow and develop. Each child in our program is viewed in a holistic manner and individual needs and interests are shared and built upon to ensure positive learning experiences for every child. Children learn through play, therefore we encourage and support their learning and development by being involved, supportive and available.

We value each child's unique culture and celebrate diversity. We believe children learn through developing strong, nurturing and

respectful relationships so that they feel confident to take on challenges, make friends and learn about the world in which they live. We want to nurture in children a sense of wonder and appreciation for the environment through providing a variety of experiences for them to choose and explore at their own pace.

Our Educators are motivated and dedicated professionals who participate in professional development opportunities to enable quality practice to be maintained as part of our continuous improvement. Educators work in partnership with family members and the community. We encourage and welcome families' participation in the program, open communication and the sharing of information. All information shared with Educators will be treated respectfully and in the best interests of children.

The Curriculum

Our educators plan the curriculum to focus on the value of a child's right to play. We acknowledge that children have a right to play under the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989).

Research tells us that children who learn through play are more courageous, creative and rigorous thinkers in adulthood.

So how do we provide a play with purpose curriculum?

- Firstly we provide opportunities for children to learn about themselves and construct their own identity through positive experiences with educators who they trust and make them feel safe and confident.
- As well as plenty of opportunity for individual exploration and inquiry children are encouraged through songs and stories to develop friendships and empathy and work collaboratively with others.
- Educators are always on hand to provide different options based on our knowledge of the child's interests. Children are

encouraged to problem solve and redirect their and each other's behaviour in fair and respectful ways.

- We love to ensure optimum brain development by providing an environment that is not just fun but challenging and allows for intentional learning through play.
- We love spontaneous events, they are opportunities to engage children in new thinking and knowledge... to take risks and develop communication and social skills.
- Creating teachable moments that enhance their play experience rather than creating an end product or outcome, it's the process of learning that counts.
- Intentional teaching is essential to support children's ongoing learning and extension of knowledge during play.

Our Staff

At Meerilinga we value continuous professional learning for our staff. All our educators are qualified and experienced Early Childhood Educators and are dedicated to their roles. Educators are actively encouraged to participate in further education and other professional development activities, to ensure they stay current with early childhood research and developments.

For the information about our educators please view the display in the foyer.

"My son attends Meerilinga ELP and the staff there are fantastic. Parents are made to feel very welcome and my son loves all the different facets of play available."
Woodvale parent.

"Your teachers are invaluable.", ***Cockburn parent.***

Locations

	Location	Session Times
	<p>Beechboro 106 Amazon Drive Beechboro</p>	<p>Monday - Friday 9am - 12pm</p> <p>Wednesdays 12.45 - 3.45pm</p>
	<p>Kingsley 48 Peregrine Drive Kingsley</p>	<p>Tuesday - Friday 9am - 12pm</p>
	<p>Woodvale 30 Chichester Drive Woodvale</p>	<p>Monday - Friday 9am - 12pm</p>
	<p>Cockburn 219 Winterfold Road Coolbellup</p>	<p>Monday - Friday 8am - 4.30pm</p>
	<p>High Wycombe 104 Edney Road High Wycombe</p>	<p>Monday - Friday 8am - 4.30pm</p>

Our Daily Routine

Our daily routine is flexible and follows the rhythm of the children rather than a clock. This allows the children to engage in meaningful experiences and puts them in charge of thoughtful decision making.

Our days differ depending on the children's needs and interests.

Our routine is generally:

- 8.45: Children begin to arrive at the centre. Selections of both indoor and outdoor play experiences are available.
- Around 9am we have a Morning Session – we gather together to say good morning, plan our day and participate in a group time experience (language / music/ storytime).



- Morning tea is offered from 9.30-10.30, a relaxing social time for children to engage in conversations and social experiences either inside or outside.
- Playtime continues indoors and outdoors throughout the day– our children and educators work together to create interest based activities and experiences.
- 11.40 Sharing time / Group Time – we usually read a story or play a game together.
- 12.00pm - Home time (**afternoon session follows same routine**)

Settling Your Child

Each child's experience of starting our early learning program is different and while some children eagerly join right in, other children need a little bit longer to adjust.

You are encouraged to visit our program prior to commencing and you are welcome to participate and be involved in any aspect of the program during this orientation process.

Here are a few suggestions we hope will help make it easier to settle in your child:

- Start talking about our ELP before you start. We have a welcome storybook available to help you with this process, please ask the educators and they will arrange for you to take it home.
- Be positive about starting. If you are apprehensive about leaving your child, they will be apprehensive too. (Children tend to pick up on parent's feelings and often magnify them).
- Expect that your child may be sad or reluctant initially – this is normal. How you deal with it will make a difference.
- Let your child bring in something comforting from home such as a favourite stuffed animal, a photo or a security blanket, etc..
- Always say goodbye so your child knows you are going.
- Establish a routine for dropping off your child so that they know what to expect. Routine is important to children.
- Leave quickly and smoothly once you have said goodbye. If you have forgotten something please ring us rather than returning to go through the separation process again. The actual 'goodbye' is going to be the hardest part of your child's day, so make it as quick as possible. If your child is anxious,

Arrivals and Departures

On arrival at the centre, please ensure that you do the following:

- Sign next to your child's name in the attendance book, along with the time,
- Assist your child to place their bag on their hook,
- Place lunch box and drink bottle on trolley,
- Apply, or assist with applying, sunscreen to your child's face and other exposed skin (you may do this at home if you prefer) – see our Sun Safety Policy at the end of this Handbook,
- Wash your and your child's hands, to minimise the spread of germs between home and the Centre,
- Speak with an educator about anything that may impact on your child's day.

When collecting your child from the centre, please:

- Sign next to your child's name in the attendance book, along with the time,
- Collect your child's belongings, including any wet clothes or artwork
- Ensure that your child's educator is aware of your child's departure.

PLEASE NOTE: It is essential that you sign the attendance book when on arrival and departure. This attendance record is used to ensure all children are evacuated during a fire drill or in an emergency. Failure to sign "IN" could place your child in danger during an emergency and failure to sign "OUT" could result in staff or fire officers re-entering a burning building to locate a missing child and needlessly placing their lives at risk. Because this is a legal document it is important that parents sign in the correct manner. In the case of an emergency we will contact the parent/guardians first, if this is unsuccessful we will contact the

Authorised Nominees. Please note that Photo ID is required to be held at the Centre for us to release your child to any Authorised Nominees.

What to Bring

Food and drink

Children should all have had a good nutritious breakfast before arriving. Children who attend the Centre must bring a healthy lunchbox filled with enough food for morning/afternoon teas and lunch and a water bottle. We encourage parents to send a variety of healthy food choices such as pre-cut fresh fruits and vegetables, cheeses, milk, yogurt, and whole grain breads or crackers. Please do not provide cordials or juices in water bottles. Junk food and treats are not accepted at the centre. Please ensure all containers are clearly labeled. Children have access to their lunchboxes throughout the day, if your child's lunch box needs refrigerating please advise the educators who can arrange this.

We ask families to not pack foods that may result in food allergies or anaphylaxis e.g. nuts and eggs.



Toys from home

We have a large range of toys and equipment for your child to play with. We encourage the children to leave their own toys at home as educators cannot take responsibility for the loss or breakage of personal toys. Some children may wish to bring a security toy or blanket during their early days if so, please label the toy or blanket clearly with your child's name.

Clothes

Our program includes activities that are creative and sometimes quite messy, so please dress your child in clothes that are appropriate. Each day you will need to bring a bag for your child that contains:

- One full change of clothing, including underwear & socks (if worn);
- A jacket during the cooler months;
- Broad brimmed sun hat
- Nappies or training pants (if required).

All items must be clearly named. While we try to ensure that things are not lost or damaged, we cannot take responsibility for unnamed articles.

Most children bring their things to the centre in a small back pack or bag. Please ensure that your child's name is easily seen on their bag with a bag tag or similar.

Toileting

At Meerilinga it is our goal to foster your child's independence, we encourage children to develop their toileting skills and will support parents with this process. If your child is toilet training please let our educators know so we can continue to support them through this process.

Behaviour Guidance

Educators at our Early Learning Programs practice positive guidance techniques. Limits to behaviour will be clearly expressed in positive terms and reinforced consistently in a developmentally appropriate way. Children will be encouraged to settle their differences in a peaceful manner. The children will be supported and encouraged to solve conflicts encountered in play. With the help of a supportive adult the children will develop empathy towards others, an understanding and awareness of emotions and problem solving skills.

Staff will role model the behaviour we want to encourage in the children and involve families in discussion about strategies that are used at home.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important milestone. Should you wish to, you can volunteer to be the parent help and share this special time with your child.

Due to regulations on food hygiene and allergies we are unable to accept any homemade food including birthday cakes or any other edible treats. Our Educators help your child to celebrate their special day in a variety of ways.

Communication

We believe that a child's connection to their family is fundamentally the most important connection a child has. We create a welcoming environment where all children and families are respected and actively encouraged to collaborate with educators about curriculum decisions in order to ensure that the learning experiences are meaningful. This partnership is based on the foundations of understanding each other's

expectations and attitudes and is built on the strength of each other's knowledge. We actively encourage parents to share their ideas, time, talents and skills in the service environment. Our families are encouraged to participate in cooperative decision making regarding all aspects of service delivery including policy making, maintenance of the environment and program design and we work to create open, honest lines of communication with all families.

Flexibuzz is the messaging platform Meerilinga uses to keep in touch regarding your individual child and what is happening in program.

It is a very simple process, it is free to download and use and replaces costly SMS. The Meerilinga staff will run through how to install the app on your smartphone/android or tablet in the first couple of weeks of your child's commencement. The app has the ability to translate our messages from English into 90 other languages.



Child Protection

Meerilinga believes that the interests of the children have to be held above all others. Educators report any concerns to the Chief Executive Officer if they have cause to suspect incidents of child neglect or abuse. If the Chief Executive Officer feels that there are “reasonable grounds” to suspect that a child is at risk of, or has been abused, he or she will report these suspicions to the relevant authorities as per policy and procedure.

Health and Safety

Our Early Learning Programs are committed to protecting the health of children and staff by minimising the risk of the spread of infections at our centre.

By limiting the attendance of sick and unwell children we can reduce the risk of infecting other children and the impact that this has on other families.

Children should not be brought to the centre unless they are able to cope adequately with the normal daily routines and activities within the program.

If children are showing any of the following signs, parents are well advised to keep them at home:

- Fever over 37.5c
- Vomiting within the last 24hrs
- Diarrhoea within the last 24 hours
- General lethargy and unwellness
- Heavy continuous nasal discharge - thick, green or bloody
- Severe or prolonged coughing
- Discharge from eyes
- Undiagnosed rashes

In the event that the staff feel that your child is unfairly exposing other children to illness or is too unwell to cope with the program, the parents or emergency contacts will be telephoned to collect the ill child.

When in doubt, we ask that you give us a call to determine whether your child should attend. Our centre follows the guidelines for 'Staying Healthy in Child Care' published by the National Health and Medical Research Council. You can find this document at www.nhmrc.gov.au.

Immunisation

As part of our enrolment process you will be asked to provide details of your child's immunisation status. If you have chosen to not immunise your child you may be required to withdraw them from our program if there is a confirmed outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease for their own health and wellbeing as advised by the public health office.

Accidents/Emergencies

We maintain a formal recording of all incidents, injury, trauma and illness which occur. Parents will be notified of any accident either by phone or when they collect their child.

Medication

If your child requires any medication, to be administered while in the program you are required to sign an endorsement to confirm your child has not had a previous allergic reaction to the medication. The child's name must be clearly printed on the bottle to ensure the correct medicine is given to the child.

Medication will only be administered by the staff if it is prescribed by a doctor and is written up on a medical plan detailing the

following:

- Child's name
- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Frequency
- How medication is to be administered
- Date of expensing
- Expiry date

Please see our staff to obtain a medical plan to take to your doctor if required.

Where medication for treatment of long term conditions or complaints such as asthma, epilepsy, or ADD/ADHD is required, staff will require a letter or action plan from the child's doctor or specialist detailing the medical condition of the child, correct dosage as prescribed and how the condition is to be managed.

Asthma/Anaphylaxis

We have children enrolled who live with anaphylaxis. This is a sudden severe and potentially fatal allergic reaction to certain foods such as peanuts, nut products and eggs.

It is important to understand that even trace amounts of nuts and egg can cause anaphylaxis. The sensitivity is such that these children can have a reaction from just touching another child's hand or sharing toys and equipment with others who have been eating foods that trigger a reaction. Our staff undertakes training in the management of anaphylaxis, asthma management as well as first aid training.

We ask for your cooperation to minimise the risk of these children coming into contact with the allergens by following these simple steps:

- Foods containing nuts or peanuts are banned;

- Many sweets and biscuits contain traces of nut – e.g. Peanut butter, Nutella, certain muesli bars, chocolate bars and biscuits containing nuts;
- Children have access to their bags throughout the day, so sweets and biscuits etc. should not be left in their bags;
- Please encourage thorough washing of hands and face after eating and before coming to the Early Learning Program;
- Please be aware of the dangers of cross contamination such as containers that previously may have had nuts or eggs in them. Even washed containers can still have traces left behind.

This is a great opportunity to teach the children about the need for health and hygiene and to raise awareness of caring for



others in their community.

Sun Protection

As all Meerilinga services are SunSmart centres we need to ensure we meet the recommendations of the cancer council.

To ensure that all children are protected from skin damage

caused by sun we provide sun cream for all children. Suncream needs to be applied 20 minutes prior to going outside, we recommend this is done before your child attends the program. Suncream is available at the sign in table.

Parents may choose to provide their own sunscreen if their child has allergic reactions to some creams.

Parents are asked to dress children in clothing which offers protection from the sun, particularly on the shoulders. A top with sleeves is required. Wide brimmed hats or legionnaire hats are asked to be worn and kept in their children's bags. Parents are asked to ensure they too bring an appropriate hat when on roster. For SunSmart information please speak to staff or go to **www.cancerwa.asn.au**

Compliments and Complaints

We invite your feedback on any aspect of our services. We welcome any complaints, comments or compliments about the service we provide to you, with the view that this will assist us to improve our service. Complaints and concerns made either in writing, verbally or by phone.

Settlement of an informal complaint will be address by our centre manager. If the complaint is resolved to the clients satisfaction no further action will be followed. If the clients dissatisfied, the formal complaints process will be followed. Formal complaints will be documented and acted on as required by policies.

Complaints process for families:

1. Talk to the staff member you usually see to assess whether your grievance can be resolved at this level. If no resolution then go to step two.
2. Contact the centre coordinator of the service, they will make a record of your complaint and try to resolve it with you.

3. If you feel your grievance has not been resolved appropriately, you need to formalise the complaint in writing.
4. Once received from you, the complaint will be discussed with the senior co-ordinator and you will be contacted for further discussion of the issue with yourself, the line manager, and/or the general manager.
5. If you are not satisfied with the response the CEO will be given materials related to your grievance and respond within 10 days.

Compliments process for families:

We are always happy to receive compliments about our services and staff. You can follow the same processes as outlined above to give us a compliment. Any compliments related to individual staff and staff teams are forwarded to them appropriately and recognised.

Parent Volunteers

Parents are welcome to join in our program at any time. We value parental involvement and the skills you can share with us. Your child will benefit from your participation in the program, even if it is for a short time at the beginning or the end of the day.

Fees and Payments

Session Fees

9.00am - 12.00pm

\$260 one session per term

\$490 two sessions per term

\$735 three sessions per term

\$980 four sessions per term

Application Deposit: The service requires a non-refundable deposit of \$50 to be paid for each child prior to initial enrolment.

This deposit is credited to your account on formal enrolment.

Payment of Fees: Full term Fees are to be paid prior to commencement of each term within 14 days of receiving your invoices or alternatively can be paid fortnightly by way of direct debit from your chosen account. If paying via direct debit, fees are payable fortnightly and are required two weeks in advance. Each term's fees are to be paid in full prior to terms end. You will receive a Direct Debit Request Form and a Direct Debit Service Agreement that outlines this arrangement. Details of individual family accounts and all completed forms are confidential and may only be accessed by the individuals concerned.

All invoices will be issued via email, unless otherwise agreed.

How to pay your fees:

Full term fees can be directly deposited into the bank account shown on your invoice or paid via credit card through the Meerilinga Website www.meerilinga.org.au under the "Make a Payment Tab". Please ensure that you reference your name and invoice number.

Or

Fortnightly direct debits via your chosen account.

If your account falls into arrears we will take steps to collect the outstanding amount and you may risk losing your child's position. All costs incurred during the recovery of outstanding fees will be charged to your account. Anyone experiencing financial difficulties in meeting their fee payment can apply for financial assistance through the Meerilinga processes.

Changes/Cancellations: Please note that any changes or cancellations to booking must be given in writing with 2 weeks' notice.

Absence: Fees are on a per term basis and remain payable even

when the child is absent through illness or for any other reason. Fees are payable on public holidays.

Privacy

Meerilinga is committed to ensuring that your personal information is kept private. We will handle your personal and sensitive information in accordance with the Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988), subsequent amendments and the Australian Privacy Principles.

To read our full Privacy Policy and how it relates to you please visit our website www.meerilinga.org.au.



Contact Numbers

Woodvale: 9309 3462

Emergency Contact: 0417 939 521

Service Approval Number SE-0001 2901

Beechboro: 9377 4749

Emergency Contact: 0407 086 755

Service Approval Number SE-001 2900

Kingsley: 9309 4174

Emergency Contact: 0439 599 250

Service Approval Number SE-0001 4187

Cockburn: 9331 2211

Emergency Contact: 0439 623 936

Service Approval Number SE-0001 4200

High Wycombe: 9454 7198

Emergency Contact: 0448 025 819

Service Approval Number SE-4000 6027

West Leederville Head Office: 08 9489 4022

or visit www.meerilinga.org.au

Meerilinga provider number PR-0000 7425

United Nations Convention on
a child's right to discover



Article 13 You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others

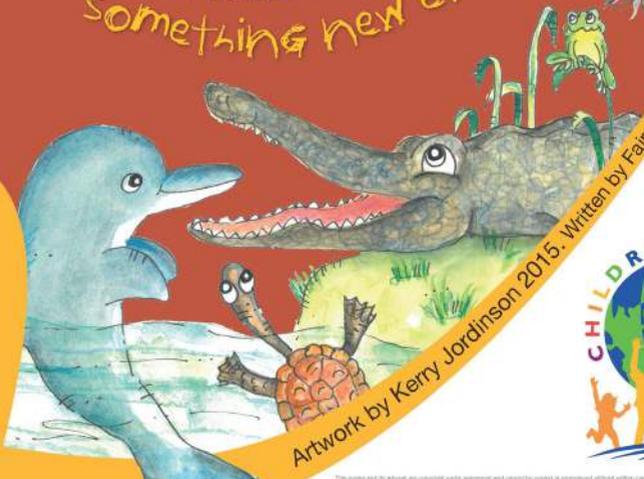
I am born curious,
I ask why? and how? and what?
I want to know how it works,
To take it apart, to see what's inside
To poke it with a stick!
I explore cause and effect,
I need to find out what happens next



My innate need to discover motivates me to learn
To discover my senses, my emotions, and my creativity
To discover my body and the extraordinary things I can do,
To connect with nature and discover wonder
in all that surrounds me.

I will explore my world and build bridges to cross into others,
I will discover cultures, languages, ideas and opinions.
Embrace differences and similarities that unite us
My own humanity

*AS I GROW I WILL DISCOVER
something new EVERYDAY*



Artwork by Kerry Jordinson 2015. Written by Fairy Queen Caroline.



Our vision

To be Western Australia's foremost organisation for children.

Our mission

To be outstanding in the development and wellbeing of children, supporting their families and community as a local, independent, charitable organisation.

Meerilinga believes

...it is imperative to raise the status of children in Western Australia.

Meerilinga works

...within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, focussing its expertise and resources on promotion, prevention and intervention.

Meerilinga develops

...its strategies on the basis of sound evidence, expert advice and consultation across its extensive networks and alliances.

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www.meerilinga.org.au