

Enrolment and Orientation

Policy Statement

Meerilinga operates a child safe and inclusive niche Pre Kindy-Early Education and Care Program to families for children aged between 2.5 and 4 years as a core business fee for service at each Children and Family Centre location.

We set our service apart by offering place based flexible, affordable and exceeding quality services. We accept enquiries from all families, acceptance of an enquiry is not a guarantee of enrolment and our Early Learning Programs operate waitlists.

Policy Purpose

At Meerilinga we support and encourage the interest and involvement of families and educators to share in, contribute and feel a part of the child's experience at the centre. The quality of early relationships and experiences and the environment strongly influence children as they grow into adulthood and positive early experiences lay a solid foundation for later life.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Staff and Families.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to non-licensed services such as playgroups or crèche.

Policy Review

At least annually or from time to time the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operation and customer service.

Implementation

Families who are seeking to enrol with Meerilinga will be provided with an orientation and information on how the centre and program operates, family handbook and how their child will be cared for. A trial session may be catered for as well as visits for short periods prior to longer sessions by discussing this option with the Director.

Applications for enrolment must include any known additional needs of a child. Meerilinga values diversity and will honestly and openly assess our capacity to accept enrolment. We are committed to equity and believe in all children's capacities to succeed, regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities.

We need families support by being open and allowing time for us to evaluate the environment, plan for training and supporting staff, contact supporting agencies and access funding for additional staff to ensure that each child has opportunities to participate and interact with the program and peers.

In all circumstances where we are unable to enrol immediately, children remain on our waitlist and we will endeavour to offer a place through active involvement and partnership with the family and other agencies.

Priority of Access guidelines will be consistent with those currently approved with the Federal Government Childcare Care Supplement.

| Enrolment and Orientation Process | |
|--|---------------------|
| Process Owner | CEO |
| Effective Date | 14 June 2018 |
| Date of Last Revision | 1 July 2017 |

| Process Details | |
|------------------------|--|
| | Description |
| 1. | <p>Enrolment</p> <p>A parent or guardian will complete the online or paper Enrolment Form and are provided with associated documents and forms to complete formal enrolment.</p> <p>All enrolments are actioned within 24 hours of initial completion.</p> <p>Parent or guardian is required to make a claim for CCS through Centre link before they arrange enrolment</p> <p>The parent or guardian agree to sign a Complying Written Agreement (CWA) including: enrolled days/times, Fees payable, start date</p> <p>The Director will confirm enrolment details through smart fees.</p> <p>My Gov sends families this confirmation which details the main enrolment information. The families have to confirm the enrolment through their My Gov account which is then confirmed through smart fees.</p> <p>When it has been identified that financial hardship support is required the below options are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrelink, Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) • Payment plans, as agreed by Executive Manager Finance • Meerilinga Financial Hardship application process. <p>If Inclusion support is required the below process is followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment and Inclusion officer to contact the current Inclusion Support Provider - Communicare to begin funding or support process. |

Process Details

| | Description |
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| 2. | <p>Priority of Access Guidelines</p> <p>The Priority of Access Guidelines must be used by approved services to allocate available child care places where there are more families requiring care than places available.</p> <p>When filling vacant places, a service must fill them according to the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priority 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect• Priority 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test• Priority 3 – any other child. <p>For more information on priority of access visit here</p> |
| 3. | <p>Waiting List</p> <p>Families can be placed on the waitlist through the Smart Fees software.</p> <p>When a place becomes available these families are contacted to confirm interest in enrolment.</p> <p>Children not yet 2.5, inclusion support requirements, financial support, child protection, can be added to the wait list. Priority of access applies to waitlisted children.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Allowable absences</p> <p>If a child has not attended the session by 10am the family is to be contacted to advice of reason for absent day.</p> <p>If a child is absent due to illness, holidays or family circumstances, they are still required to pay for the enrolled position. They can access CCS for up to 42 days of allowable absences.</p> <p>Public Holidays are deemed as an allowable absent.</p> <p>Centre Coordinator is to mark child as absent on the sign in register and initial.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Orientation</p> <p>Prior to start date the family will be invited to bring the child/children for a one (1) hour visit of the centre and to meet key educators. During this visit the families have the opportunity to look at and discuss; Curriculum: Policies: Quality Rating, Relationships and Environment.</p> <p>Our educators will assist our families with settling into our program by answering queries about the curriculum, routine etc.</p> <p>While visiting is different for each child it is a time of adaptation and change for all parties. Our Educators will establish, adapt their activities and demonstrate a secure and welcoming environment in which both the parents and child feel comfortable at all times. If it has been identified that a child will have difficulty settling and transitioning into our program. The parent is encouraged to leave their child for short periods of time throughout the transition period to help settle the child into the program.</p> |

Process Details

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| | <p>On return, the parent is encouraged to spend time in the centre with their child before taking them home. After the initial visit, discussion with parent/s & Education Coordinator on how the visit went and if more such visits are required and what will happen on the first day they arrive (separation – stay for a while, leaving-handing over to staff, reading a story).</p> <p>Families can use a free session of care to support this transition period.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Transitional Learning and Development checklist M:\Admin\Document Mgmt\Doc Templates\ELP\ELP Development Checklist T476.dotx</p> <p>This transition document is designed to ensure children in our ELP are developmentally ready to participate in a 3 year old program.</p> <p>If a child is under 3 you may be requested to complete this document to ensure they are included in our pre kindy program, which involves being identified as a 3 year old in our educator/staff ratios.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Ceasing Care</p> <p>All families are required to give 2 weeks' notice in writing when cancelling care. Child care subsidy will not be paid for absences where a child has not attended and then ceases care.</p> <p>Directors will be required to phone families at 10am each morning if the child misses their session. If a child is absent for two consecutive weeks and the family are unable to be contacted then care will be cancelled.</p> |
| 8. | <p>Inclusion Support</p> <p>If a child had been identified as requiring additional support at enrolment the below process is followed. A child must be enrolled to begin the funding support process from the Australian Government.</p> <p>Access the Parent Information and Consent Form and a Request for Inclusion Support Form.</p> <p>Complete request for inclusion support from the Communicare website.</p> <p>Provide families with parent consent form. The parent or legal guardian completes and signs the Parent Inclusion and Consent Form.</p> <p>Collect child's diagnosis letter if available.</p> <p>The services submit both forms to our email address: info@wainclusionagency.org.au.</p> <p>Communicare Inclusion team member will visit the service to observe the child and provide recommendations to the centre.</p> <p>Barriers and strategies are developed with the inclusion professional and the education co-ordinator to submit on the portal.</p> |

Process Details

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| | <p>Approvals for funding can take up to 6 weeks.</p> <p>Additional educators will be employed once funding has been approved. Education Directors are to work with family and inclusion support officer to ensure the child's needs are met while waiting for the approval process.</p> <p>Reviews of the Inclusion development plan are 6 & 12 monthly to ensure funding is continued</p> |
| 9. | <p>Patricia O'Sullivan OM Sponsorship</p> <p>The CEO may approve funding a full or part fee for a child to enrol in an early learning program. Generally priority will be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Children;• Children with an underlying long-term health condition or disability which presents the need for additional assistance compared to children of a similar age;• Children of family's experiences hardship, isolation or in need of protection. <p>All recommendations must be made by the Supervisor directly to the CEO. Supporting evidence may be requested.</p> |

Associated Documents

- Family Handbook
- CFC Integrated Handbook
- Flexi buzz Flyer

Associated Forms

- Application for Enrolment www.meerilinga.org.au/early-learning-program/enrol-online-for-our-early-learning-program/
- Developmental checklist for children not yet 3 years located at (M:)
- Financial hardship application
- Special needs assistance
- Payment Plan Agreement (to be developed)
- Easy Pay Direct Debit
- Request for Inclusion Support
- [https://www.wainclusionagency.org.au/CommunicareWAIA/media/documents/WAIA-ISP-Request-for-IS-Form Interactive V2-0.pdf](https://www.wainclusionagency.org.au/CommunicareWAIA/media/documents/WAIA-ISP-Request-for-IS-Form%20Interactive%20V2-0.pdf)
- Inclusion Parent consent [https://www.wainclusionagency.org.au/CommunicareWAIA/media/documents/WAIA-ISP-Parent-Consent-Form Interactive V2-0.pdf](https://www.wainclusionagency.org.au/CommunicareWAIA/media/documents/WAIA-ISP-Parent-Consent-Form%20Interactive%20V2-0.pdf)
- Transitional Learning and Development checklist <M:\Admin\Document Mgmt\Doc Templates\ELP\ELP Development Checklist T476.dotx>

Guidelines for Enrolment Advisor

Families will be advised of an acceptance of enrolment by the Director and will be advised of a nominated period (7 days) to accept the offer and sign the CWA. Failure to formally accept the position or additional days within this time frame means the position or additional days are forfeited and will be offered to other families on the waiting list.

Except in the event of exceptional circumstances approved by the CEO, the start date must be within 1 week of formal acceptance of the position or extra days. Families that do not accept offers of positions or additional days are able to remain on the waiting list.

The service will maintain an enrolment record for each child. Enrolment records include a minimum of:

- The full name, date of birth and address of the child;
- The full name of each parent; the residential address and telephone number of each parent; the address and telephone number of each parent's place of employment;
- The full name and telephone number of a person authorised by a parent to collect the child from the centre;
- The full name, address and telephone number of a person, other than a parent, who may be contacted in an emergency;
- The name, address and telephone number of the child's medical practitioner or hospital;
- A parent's written authorisation for medical attention to be sought for the child if required in an emergency;
- Details of any court orders;
- Details of any specific healthcare needs of the child, including any medical condition; and allergies;
- The immunisation status of the child;
- Cultural background, languages spoken.

A service must ensure that the enrolment form is updated annually.

Meerilinga will orientate all families to our program. During the orientation visit each family will receive a family handbook. Our educator will discuss the handbook, and cover the following information during orientation:

- Names of Educators
- Contact details of the ELP during operating hours
- Our philosophy and curriculum
- What to bring
- Sleep and rest
- Parent Involvement/Consultation/Feedback Opportunities
- Policies
- Routines
- Community Events
- Flexi Buzz

Families will receive:

- A tour of the service and introduction to their Educators
- Family Handbook.
- All necessary forms:
 - Enrolment form
 - Flexi Buzz flyer
 - Easy Pay Direct Debt

Children will receive:

- A tour of the service and introduction to their child's Educator and play environment
- Welcome to the ELP story book

Records Management

| Title | Location | Responsible Officer | Minimum Retention Period |
|---|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| Enrolment Form | CFC | Director | 3 years from exit |
| Complying Written Agreement | CFC | Director/Advisor Enrolment & Inclusion | 7 years |
| Transitional Learning and Development checklist | CFC | Director/ Advisor Enrolment & Inclusion | 3 years from exit |
| Financial Hardship Application | CFC / WLEED | Director/ Advisor Enrolment & Inclusion | 7 years |
| Inclusion Support Request | CFC | Director/ Advisor Enrolment & Inclusion | 3 years from exit |
| Payment Plan Agreement | CFC / WLEED | Director/ Advisor Enrolment & Inclusion / Finance | 7 years |
| Easy Pay Direct Debit | CFC / WLEED | Director/ Advisor Enrolment & Inclusion / Finance | 7 years |

Reference

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (WA) 2012 - *October 2018*
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012 - *October 2018*
- ACECQA - National Quality Standards - *February 2018*
- ACECQA - Belonging, Being & Becoming - Early Years Learning Framework
- Code of Ethics - *Meerilinga*
- Code of Conduct - *Meerilinga*
- Family Assistance Law
- Privacy Act 1988
- Children and Community Services Act 2004

Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|-----------|---|
| Inclusion | Taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum-decision making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued, and that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference (EYLF p24 & FSAC p22) |

Mapping Policy and Processes

| Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 | |
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| Section | 166, 167, 169(1)(3). |

| Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012 | |
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| Regulations | 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 84, 85, 87, 88, 90, 92, 93, 95, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 121, 122, 123, 155, 157, 158, 160, 161, 162, 168(2)(k), 170, 171, 173, 177, 181, 183. |

| Policy Area | Standards for RTOs 2015 | National Quality Standards Early Childhood | National Standards for Volunteering Involvement 2015 | Standards to Community Services | Standards to Family Support |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Children's Programs | Not Applicable | QA 1 - 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.3.3 QA 2 - 2.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3. QA 3 - QA 4 - 4.1.1, 4.1.2 QA 5 - 5.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.2. QA 6 - 6.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2, 6.2.3. QA 7 - 7.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.3, 7.2.1. | Not Applicable | 4.1.1 Principle 1, 4.1.3 Principle 3, | S1, S3, S7, S10, S11, S13, S14 |