

## Children’s Experiences, Learning and Evaluation

### Policy Statement

Meerilinga aspires to enhance children’s learning and development through the pedagogical practice of Educators in a variety of positive learning environments, in partnership with families, resources and agencies. We believe the curriculum framework together with research accentuates that quality educational programs significantly influence children’s development in all areas.

Thoughtfully planned experiences and environments encourage the children to feel a sense of control over their actions, be curious and investigate, explore their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. We have the opportunity to provide a supporting learning environment and program, gaining inspiration from children and families.

### Policy Purpose

Meerilinga Children’s Programs provide a program that is developmentally appropriate to the strengths of the children attending the service and stimulates and provides for the development of each child’s social, physical, emotional and intellectual ability, including language skills and creativity, in partnership with the care and education children receive from their parents/families.

Children’s educational programs will be guided by the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards. The 5 learning outcomes will be embedded in all children’s educational programs and experiences:

1. Children will have a strong sense of identity
2. Children will be connected with and contribute to his or her world
3. Children will have a sense of well being
4. Children will be confident and involved learners
5. Children will be effective communicators

Educators will gather and interpret information about children as individuals to inform the preparation of the environment, and implement experiences that are engaging and meaningful, supporting children’s holistic development.

### Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, students and visitors of the service.

### Exclusions

### Policy Review

Biennial or from time to time when the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operations and customer service.

<b>Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>10 August 2022</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Advisor Policy &amp; Compliance</b>
<b>Approved By</b>	<b>CEO</b>		
<b>Previous Review</b>	<b>8 February 2020</b>		

## Implementation

The Curriculum Leader under the direction of the Community Service Co-ordinator Quality Advisor will be responsible to the Manager Children and Community Services and Approved Provider for the development and documentation of the programs, and for ensuring resources are allocated for staff to meet their programming responsibilities. Programming is cyclic to incorporate a focus on all children attending and will be shared with families in accordance with regulation 76 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations and the National Quality Standards.

Programs will be displayed in a location highly visible to families and workers and invite discussion and input into any aspect of the program development and review. Programming records are kept in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

The approved learning framework includes the principles, practices and learning outcomes that guide Educational Leaders and Educators in their curriculum decision making, and assist them in planning, delivering and evaluating quality programs in early childhood settings.

### Early Years Learning Framework

- Each child's learning will be based on their interests and strengths and guided by educators.
- Educators must work in collaboration with families to provide relevant learning experiences for each child, based on their interests and family experiences.
- Every child will be equally valued. Their achievements & learning will be celebrated.
- Educators will observe and record the strengths and learning of each child.
- Educators will work closely with children and families to produce ideas for the curriculum.
- Learning Outcomes will be linked to the curriculum during and after each child's learning has occurred.
- The curriculum will be constructed on the children's interests, educators extending children's interests, spontaneous experiences and family contribution.
- Where appropriate, the service will liaise with external agencies and support persons to best educate and care for children with additional needs.
- Where appropriate, the curriculum (play and learning experiences) will build and develop each child's Learning Stories, Portfolio and Observations of each child's strengths and development.
- The curriculum will be evaluated and reflected upon continuously by educators.

The program will be balanced to provide indoor and outdoor experiences, explore diversity, new learning and celebrations.

Routines and transitions (will be communicated to children, families and workers with timeliness, respect, developmental appropriateness and abilities.

- Availability and appropriateness of indoor/outdoor space
- Workers experience
- Child/staff ratios
- Number and ages of children
- Children from the same family

- Children from diverse backgrounds
- Continuity of care
- Children's individual needs and developmental abilities

Children will have ready access to personal clothing and possessions in their allocated storage space.

Our learning programs will provide opportunities for child initiated and alternative choices individually or in groups, to develop respectful and positive relationships with Educators and their peers or other adults, and to develop their social competence, with the appropriate staff supervision, engagement, support and communication.

Educators will be provided with opportunities such as networks, training, and publications to further their professional development in quality care and education practices. This includes enhancing their skills and knowledge about the importance of physical activity for children.

### **Value of Children's Play**

Meerilinga has long advocated for the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child where Article 31 highlights a child's right to relax, play and to join in a wide range of leisure activities.

The Early Years Learning Framework defines play-based learning as 'A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations'.

We believe play encompasses children's behaviour that is intrinsically motivated, freely chosen and personally directed. Play helps children develop a sense of belonging, allowing freedom for children to feel confident and competent as learners.

One of the four Pillars of Meerilinga's Early Learning Philosophy is 'Promoting Play with Purpose' and we value play as an integral part of a child's development.

Meerilinga proudly endorses the '[WA Play Charter](#)' by the Play Matters Collective WA where we support the shared belief in the fundamental value of play to children's health, happiness and development, and to support a more playful world for the children in our care and in our community.

*'Play is essential for health, happiness and resilience. It supports physical, social, emotional, creative, intellectual, spiritual and cultural development and learning. Children's own identity and their relationships with others are strengthened through play'.*

### **Children's Participation in Physical Activity**

Physical activity is particularly vital for children's health, growth, development and wellbeing. Meerilinga is committed to supporting young children to be physically active by ensuring Educators provide learning experiences that include physical active play opportunities as a part of their daily routine and program.

Physically active children are healthier and stronger, with research showing they have a healthier weight, better bone health and cardiovascular fitness, and better cognitive, social and emotional development. Promoting healthy active behaviours in childhood can lead to lifelong good health.

We will promote the growth and development of children by providing adequate physical activity and limiting sedentary behaviours.

*Physical Activity is any bodily movement that needs energy. It includes light activity and games (e.g. slow walking or standing at a table doing art and crafts), as well as energetic play which makes children huff and puff (e.g. running, jumping, skipping, dancing, riding, climbing and active games). It can be spontaneous/unstructured or planned/structured. It can be done indoors and outdoors.*

*Sedentary Behaviour is any 'still' activity which needs little energy and is done in a sitting or lying down position. It includes sitting, screen-time (television, tablets, video games, computers) and vehicle travel.*

Meerilinga is committed to the 'Play Active' program initiated by the WA Telethon Kids Institute and are guided by the Australian National Quality Standards (Quality Area 2.1), the [Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years](#) and the World Health Organisation Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age.

These guidelines include recommended levels of physical activity and sedentary behaviour, while maintaining sufficient sleep within a 24-hour period for toddlers and kindergarten children.

To meet the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years and based on a 7 hour day for the children (1- 5yrs) enrolled in our Bindi-Kindi and Pre-Kindy Early Learning Programs, we will endeavour to follow the recommendations:

- Provide opportunities for children to participate in at least 180 minutes of physical activity daily, using a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day.
- Although more is better, we aim to include at least 30 minutes of 'energetic play' each day for our Pre-Kindy children.
- Use strategies to break up prolonged sitting and limiting the total amount of time young children spend sitting. This includes limiting the use of equipment that restricts movement.
- Children will not be confined for more than 60 minutes at a time e.g: chair at a table, high chair or mat during quiet times.
- Children will not sit for extended periods, except when engaged in learning activity with an Educator e.g. reading and storytelling.
- Sedentary screen time for purposes other than learning will not be allowed.

Equipment, furniture and resources must have the endorsement of the Australian Safety Standards and are used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Toys of violence are considered inappropriate to Meerilinga's aim of providing a safe and caring environment and will be returned to the adult guardian.

The service will maintain and update annually an inventory of all equipment, resources suppliers and manufacturer's instructions.

***Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will ensure:***

- The Education Leader selected is supported to lead the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle within the service.
- The Educational Leader has the skills, knowledge and attributes to mentor and support educator's understanding of educational programming and practice.
- The staff record includes the name of the person designated as the educational leader.

***Co-ordinator / Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will:***

- Ensure that a suitable program based on an approved learning framework is delivered to all children.
- Collaborate with Educators and provide curriculum direction and guidance.
- Ensure all Educators work as a team in preparing and/or implementing the curriculum which collaborates with the service philosophy.
- Ensure modifications are made in the environment for children with special needs.  
Management will make appropriate, professional referrals where necessary with family permission.
- Ensure a conscious balance between indoor and outdoor experiences is planned for with large blocks of unstructured time for child initiated play.
- Promote children's physical activity by supporting the development of their gross motor skills through a range of intentionally planned and spontaneous active play learning experiences.
- Ensure key physical activity recommendations from the Australian Government Department of Health together with the Play Active Program are embedded into our curriculum.
- Support families through positive, respectful and reciprocal relationships through regular communication.
- Ensure each child is acknowledged for their uniqueness in a positive way.
- Support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate.
- Be consistently aware of and responsive to children who may require additional support, assistance or attention, noticing and listening carefully to children's concerns and discussing diverse perspectives on issues of inclusion and exclusion and fair and unfair behaviour.
- Ensure the educational program is displayed in a place that is accessible to parents and families.
- Ensure a copy of the program is available at all times.

***Educators will:***

- Collaborate with the Educational Leader for curriculum direction and guidance.
- Implement an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning which will underpin the educational program and involves educators in critically thinking about what is obtainable and why.
- Document children's experiences and their responses to the environment making children's learning visible to children, educators and families and promotes shared learning and collaboration.

- Provide experiences that include both structured and unstructured learning times catering for children's individual needs, interests and are age appropriate.
- Provide positive instruction, role modelling and advice to children as they develop and improve their skills and understanding.
- Ensure materials and equipment reflect the cultural diversity and family values that exists in our society.
- Respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning.
- Provide experiences that actively promote and initiate the investigation of ideas, complex concepts and thinking, reasoning and hypothesising.
- Gather information from families upon enrolment regarding the child's needs, interest and family backgrounds. This information is treated as confidential and allows Educators to provide experiences that interest and extend children's current development. We feel that it is important to develop a partnership between parents and Educators to ensure that consistency between home and the Service occurs and that the best possible care is provided.
- Make sure the child's participation in the program is available for families.
- Plan and implement intentional teaching to provide active play experiences to support the physical development of children of all ages (1-5 years).
- Promote children's participation in a range of safe active play learning experiences that encourage children to explore, be creative and challenge their development.
- Assist children to develop daily habits, understanding and skills that support health and wellbeing.
- Encourage communication with families about physical activity and gross motor skills development. Work in collaboration with them and professionals to provide active experiences that are inclusive of all children.
- Ensure families receive documented information on their children's learning progress.
- Explore ideas and theories using imagination, creativity and play, during large blocks of uninterrupted time.
- Use the learning outcomes to guide their planning for children's learning.
- Intentionally scaffold children's understanding and learning.
- Provide children with ongoing encouragement and positive reinforcement.
- Provide opportunities for children to be active daily through a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences within the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Make use of spontaneous 'teachable moments' to extend children's learning.
- Respond to children's displays of learning dispositions by commenting on them and providing encouragement and additional ideas.
- View children as active participants and decision makers, working with each child's unique qualities and abilities.
- Further extend critical thinking skills through provocations.
- Plan realistic curriculum goals for children based on observation and assessment of individual needs and interests.
- Seek opportunities within the routine for spontaneous play.

- Ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued with equitable access to resources and opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
- Use a variety of methods to assist their reflection on children's experiences, thinking and learning.
- Ensure critical reflection clearly exams all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives, identifying children's learning, spontaneous play, teaching strategies and changes that may be needed in the environment.