

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 Community Service 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 the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader and all educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardian, children and others attending the service.

Exclusions

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

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.

Policy Reviewed	17 November 2023	By	Advisor Policy & Compliance
Approved By	CEO		
Previous Review	10 October 2021		

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 Service Co-ordinator.

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	17 November 2023
Date of Last Revision	10 October 2021

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 Co-ordinator 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 Manager Finance and Operations, or delegate. • 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 Advisor to contact the current Inclusion Support Provider - Communicare to begin funding or support process.
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>

Process Details

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3.	<p>Waiting List</p> <p>Families can be placed on the waitlist through the Smart Fees software. 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 Co-ordinator 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> <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>

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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>Co-ordinators 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> <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>