



MEADOW SPRINGS

Early Learning Centre

Parent Handbook

Where we help to nurture each child to their full potential

Welcome to Meadow Springs Early Learning Centre!

We would like to welcome you to our centre. We look forward to helping to facilitate learning and development for your child.

Please read this information carefully to assist you in settling your child into the centre and to answer any questions you may have. If you require more detailed information, please do not hesitate to consult the director or a staff member. The centre's policy manual is available in the office for you to view at any time.

Meadow Springs Early Learning Centre offers a child-centred programme in a small, family-based setting.

We look forward to sharing your child's early years with you and your family.

Kind regards, MSELC educators

Welcome to Parents

The educators at Meadow Springs Early Learning Centre extend to you and your child/children a warm welcome. This may be your first experience using a childcare centre for your child and there may be some things you find confusing or difficult to understand. We want you to know that we are here to help you find your way to a happy partnership with those who care for your child. We hope your child/children will find their stay with us both caring and fulfilling.

We are licenced to care for 55 children, ages 12 months - 12 years.

Meadow Springs Early Learning Centre is accredited through the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. The National Childcare Accreditation Council ACECQA administers the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for long day care centres.

Long day care quality areas are:

- QA 1 – Educational program and practice
- QA 2 – Children's health and safety
- QA 3 – Physical environment
- QA 4 – Staffing arrangements
- QA 5 – Relationships with children
- QA 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- QA 7 – Governance and leadership

The system operates on a five-step process that measures the quality of care provided by the service and identifies areas for ongoing improvement. The ultimate aim of these QA systems for childcare is to promote and ensure quality outcomes for children.

For more information, please visit the NCAC website:

www.acecqa.gov.au

Early Years Learning Framework

EYLF outcomes:

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity.

Outcome 2: Children are connected to and contribute to their world.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of well-being.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators.

Our Philosophy

The Child

We believe children are naturally energetic and need space to exercise and use this energy to allow them to express themselves and explore their environment. We ensure that the environment we provide for the children will permit them to be free-moving and physically active. (Principle 4 – Respect for Diversity. Practice – Learning Environments).

We believe that children are full of life and love. Therefore, we provide an environment that channels their natural boldness, satisfying their need to be who they want to be in the world. We will encourage children to ask questions and seek answers in a variety of ways (Outcome 5: Children are Effective Communicators). We will offer them unconditional love and provide them with a choice in the opportunities available to them within our environment (Principle 3 – High Expectations and Equity). We will seek to always appreciate their natural beauty and protect them from things that threaten the children's simple love of life. We will provide opportunities for the children to extend their identities.

Our practice is that all children have the right to be nurtured in an environment that considers them 'holistically'. We will ensure that they are stimulated across all domains of development. We will ensure that we meet every child's unique, individual needs so that they can become individual beings.

The Environment

Our practice is to provide an environment that is not only safe but stimulating to children to let them achieve their outcomes. Therefore, we will ensure that it provides stimulation and challenges within the children's capabilities which do not put them at risk of harm (Principle 4: Respect for Diversity) and (Principle 5: Ongoing Learning and Reflective Practice).

We believe that the environment should be peaceful, friendly, loving and a place where children feel comfortable and are respected for who they are (Practice 4 - Respect for Diversity). We will ensure that all the staff who are employed at the centre are committed and appropriately qualified to provide such a place for children. We will also promote inclusion and acceptance of diversity that provides a comfortable and homelike environment, ensuring all staff can reflect on the children's learning outcomes, principles, and practices.

Childhood

We believe that childhood should be a time to be happy, carefree, and excited. We want children to learn, but also to be loved so that they can become self-reliant.

We believe that childhood is about exploration, exploring taste, sight, sound, touch, and smell. Therefore, we will ensure that the program provides opportunities for freedom, fun and excitement as well as time for appropriate displays of affection and love. We will include time for cooking and will ensure children are provided with a variety of foods, including different meats, fruits and vegetables and serve them in a variety of textures to enable all children to reach their full potential in their learning outcomes.

Our Role

The role of all those involved in the centre is to provide limits and guidelines for the children to follow, to foresee and prevent any hazards from occurring. Therefore, we will develop policies and procedures for guiding children's behaviour and for ensuring the environment is safe. We will provide continuity of care between home and the centre, encouraging healthy family and community relationships of cooperation, trust, and attachment.

We also believe it is our role to provide an interesting environment that promotes children's curiosity and learning. Therefore, we will provide a program of events, activities and experiences that foster children's development and learning.

Most importantly, it is our role to provide the children with unconditional love and enjoyment. Our principle is to provide a secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationship with all children and their families. This will develop a sense of security for the children and their families in case of staff absences.

Parent Participation

Parents are our biggest support. Your encouragement and any assistance, in whatever way i.e., collecting bits and pieces, assisting with programs, providing input into policies and procedures, providing recipes, or just dropping in for a visit would be invaluable assistance.

You are encouraged to become involved with the program of the centre and your ideas and any suggestions will be greatly appreciated. We are always happy to have people come into the centre with interesting things to show, sing and make, especially activities of a multicultural nature.

You can be involved by explaining your child's temperament, stages of development, and likes and dislikes to the educators. Even though a parent's life is very busy, we would appreciate a few minutes every morning and evening as you bring and collect your child to talk about how he/she is progressing. Tell the educators the little things they need to know e.g., changes in sleeping patterns, development you observe, the cold your child seems to be contracting or how an activity was enjoyed.

Remember that our door is always open, and we value your participation. If you need to speak to one of the staff members regarding your child's progress, please feel free to make an appointment at a time convenient to you and the staff concerned.

Settling Your Child into the Centre

Before your child starts at MSELC, it is helpful if you:

- Take time to make sure your child knows that they will soon be going to daycare
- Talk positively about day care
- Visit the centre with your child to meet the staff and join in the program for a while.

The educators will let you know the most convenient time to do this.

From the first day your child attends, always say goodbye to your child when you leave and tell him/her that you will return. Alert the staff of your intention to leave, so they can distract your child. We encourage you to remain with your child for as long as you feel necessary to ensure your child's wellbeing.

Please telephone the centre during the day for reassurance that your child has settled. The educators will always tell you honestly how your child is.

Days and Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 7 am – 6 pm. 51 weeks of the year

MSELC is not open the week between Christmas and the New Year. MSELC is closed on all public holidays throughout the year. Signs will be displayed to remind parents of upcoming public holiday closures.

Fees

\$110.00 per day (\$495.00 per week fulltime)

Fees are to be paid two weeks in advance on the first day of attendance and are to be always kept two weeks in advance.

If at any time you are having trouble paying your fees, please speak to the director. You can be assured that all private matters always remain confidential.

Public Holidays

The centre will be closed for all public holidays with all normal rates applied.

Holiday Procedure

If we receive two weeks notice, families will be able to take four weeks holiday (or part thereof) per year at 50% of the normal fees. This enables us to hold your child's position. For example, if your child is booked in for three days a week and you are taking a two-week holiday, you will only pay for one week of fees and the other week will not be charged. This will only apply if you are in two weeks credit at all times.

Sick Days

You will be charged full fees for any absent days; however, Centrelink will pay for 40 days of 'allowable absences' per financial year. Parents will still have to pay their portion. Parents should notify the centre if their child will not be attending during their booked time.

Method of Payment

Statements will be sent by email. All fees need to be paid by that Friday lunchtime.

Payments can be made in cash, EFTPOS, Direct Debit, or Internet banking.

Our bank details for Internet banking are:

ACCOUNT NAME: Kool Kids WA Pty Ltd

BSB: 066 516

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 1062 2631

Enrolment

On enrolment, you will need to complete an enrolment form, your child's birth certificate and immunisation records. To receive the childcare benefit, parents must apply to the Family Assistance through your Mygov account. The Family Assistance Office will determine a parent's entitlement and will notify the parent and the centre of the level of fee support.

Signing In and Out

Children must be signed in and out every day on the ipad located either near the front entrance or on the bench where it may be charging. Without your child signed in and out, the centre is unable to claim the Child Care Benefit and the full fees will then be charged to the parent.

This is a legal requirement by the Licencing Board and the Family Assistance Office.

The sign in ipad is also an important safety and security measure, as it is what staff use to account for all children in emergencies (such as a fire). Please remember to sign your child in and out every day.

What to Bring (Please ensure everything is labelled with your child's name)

Each day:

- A change of clothes
- Water bottle
- Nappies if needed
- Child's bag with their name on it
- A piece of fruit for morning tea each day of attendance
- Sheet and blanket if your child sleeps

Guiding Children's Behaviour

Learning appropriate behaviour is part of your child's social development. Our staff aim to help children to be responsible for their own behaviour and to develop an understanding of what is appropriate in different situations.

You are encouraged to discuss your child's behaviour with the qualified staff in your child's room to ensure consistent behaviour expectations between home and the centre. Limits to children's behaviour will always 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 staff will focus on positive behaviour, providing praise and encouragement where appropriate. Whenever possible, problems will be prevented before they arise by using methods such as diversion and providing equipment for all. Whenever necessary, a few minutes sitting away from the group will be used to emphasise displeasure of inappropriate behaviour. "Sit and Watch" time will be no longer than 2 minutes and the child must sit in the "Sit and Watch" position to observe the children's

correct behaviour until the caregiver tells them it is time to resume play. No further punishment will be given and the child will be reminded in positive terms of any expected behaviour. At no time will a child receive any form of corporal punishment e.g. smacked, or be placed in a room alone, made immobile, frightened or humiliated in any way, nor will food or drink be withheld as a form of punishment.

Biting and hitting are normal behaviours in the development of most children, usually caused by a lack of verbal communication skills. These behaviours will be dealt with using the same positive behaviour guiding strategies that staff use to deal with other unacceptable behaviours. Members of staff are always available to discuss such issues with you and to work together with you to address any persistent behaviour problems.

Excursions

Children may be taken on excursions outside of the centre as part of the planned activities of the centre. Excursions are considered an integral part of the children's program and will therefore be arranged from time to time, to provide a broad range of learning experiences for the children. For all excursions, written permission will be sought from parents and details of the outing provided in writing. All excursions will comply with the Community Services (child care) Regulations WA.

Alternative arrangements will be made for children not participating in outings.

Hygiene

The application of universal hygiene procedures will always be followed at the centre to control the spread of infection. Staff role model a high level of personal hygiene at all times and place emphasis on the children learning and understanding why hygiene is so important. Hand washing is central to this system and children will be introduced to washing their hands before all clean tasks (i.e., meals) and after dirty tasks (i.e., after using the toilet).

Occupational Health and Safety

In the interest of occupational health and safety and the wellbeing of our children, the centre is a smoke-free zone. All equipment and play areas are checked regularly to ensure they are clean and safe for children's use.

Sun Protection

Children will wear a hat that protects the face, neck, and ears whenever outside. SPF 50+ sunscreen will be applied 15 minutes before going outside. Staff will act as role models.

Safety Drills

Emergency evacuation drills will be practised at the centre at least 4 times a year. Evacuation plans are displayed at every door. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with these procedures.

Accidents

Despite every precaution, accidents will occur at the centre from time to time. The following policy will be implemented to protect your child and keep you informed should an accident occur.

You are required to provide written authority (included in the enrolment form) for staff of the centre to seek medical attention for your child if required.

In the case of a minor accident, staff that are qualified in first aid will attend to the injured child. Depending on the injury, you will be contacted at the time of the accident or informed about the incident when you arrive to collect your child.

If a serious accident occurs which requires more than first aid treatment, you will be contacted immediately or if you cannot be contacted, your emergency contact person will be phoned. Your child's injuries will be assessed and either an ambulance (with the cost borne by the parents) will be called or your child will be taken to the nearest medical practitioner for medical treatment. A staff member will accompany your child until you are able to be there. You will be provided a copy of the accident report completed by the person in charge of the centre at the time of the accident.

First Aid Qualifications

All our staff members have their first aid qualifications, and we have a fully equipped first aid kit at our centre.

The Education and Care Regulatory Unit

Information about the regulations of the child care services can be obtained by contacting the Child Care Services Board at:

Department of communities
Boorloo Campus
Level 7
130 Stirling Street
Perth

Postal Address: Locked Bag 5000, Fremantle WA 6959

Phone: 08 6277 3889

Email: ecru@communities.wa.gov.au

Website: www.dlhc.wa.gov.au

The Education and Care Regulatory Unit is the licensing body in Western Australia that is legally responsible for administering regulations.

We are sure you will enjoy your time with us at Meadow Springs Early Learning Centre. If at any time you wish to see me regarding your child, please feel free to make an appointment at a time convenient to both you and me.

Kindest regards,

Vicki Kenward



PLAY TODAY

By Leila P Fagg

You say you love your children,
And are concerned they learn today?
So am I; that's why I'm providing
A variety of kinds of play.

You're asking me the value
Of blocks and other such play?
Your children are solving problems.
They will use that skill everyday.

You're asking what's the value
Of having your children play?
Your daughter's creating a tower.
She may be a builder someday.

You're saying you don't want your son
To play in that "sissy" way?
He's learning to cuddle a doll.
He may be a father someday.

You're questioning the learning centres;
They just look like useless play?
Your children are making choices;
They'll be on their own someday.

You're worried your children aren't learning,
and later they'll pay?
They're learning a pattern for learning,
For they will be learners always.

