



Merinda Park Learning & Community Centre Inc.,
A0028764B ABN 69 093 616 835
Melways Ref. 129 F8 Registered ACE Provider 3952
Endeavour Drive, P.O. Box 7144, Cranbourne North 3977
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OCCASIONAL CARE PARENT HANDBOOK 2009

- Occasional Care Sessions.

Phone (03) 5996 9056 Office

Office hours 8.30am – 4.15pm

Email: mmerinda@bigpond.net.au

Website: www.merindapark.com.au

Occasional Care provides quality childcare for your pre-school age children in a fun, relaxed and safe environment.

Dear Parents,

Thank you for making the choice of using our facilities for the care of your child/ren. We trust that you and your child will have a happy association with us.

PHILOSOPHY OF CARE

“Learning and growing with the community”

Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre aims to provide quality childcare, with consideration given to the needs of all children, families and the community actively supporting growth and development.

It is our belief that all children regardless of race, religion, culture, colour, creed, sex, or abilities have the right to good quality child care within a homely, safe caring, comfortable environment.

AIM

Our main aim for your child/ren while in our care is to provide them with a nurturing, stimulating, and responsive environment. We will provide them with a balance between structured and unstructured child initiated and adult supported experiences in which children may use a range of equipment and materials, including improvised equipment and natural materials both indoors and outdoors.

With the age group that we are catering for, we will be flexible with the program we offer. Each day while your child is in our care we will provide him/her with some activities listed below.

CREATIVE PLAY

Art experiences such as painting, cutting, drawing, playdough, etc. All these provide a means of self-expression.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Dress ups, role-playing in the home corner, or with dolls, prams, etc. This kind of play gives the child the opportunity to work out problems and to show feelings and emotions.

PHYSICAL PLAY

Outdoor play, climbing, ball play, sandplay, digging, tunnel, large building blocks, etc. Success in motor skills leads to self confidence, and this leads to better performance.

MESSY PLAY

Water, slime, goop, finger painting, etc. They gain sensory experience with the different textures and totally enjoy themselves.

So if your child doesn't have an art activity to bring home, be assured he/she has spent their time with us developing their skills through another type of play.

We plan to spend about 15 minutes each session with your child whilst they are having a drink and a snack. This is a great time to develop language and social skills. At each session your child will have the chance to enjoy, story time, music and movement, recorded music and discussion times.

Programs and Activities offered to children are displayed in the childcare room above the attendance sheet (sign in area).

SESSION TIMES

9.30am – 12.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday.
Bookings essential to ensure positions available on the day.

Permanent Bookings are available by leaving a two week deposit at the start of the term.
Children need to be rebooked at reception for each term.

BOOKING

We encourage families to visit the Centre to meet with staff and see the program. An enrolment form must be completed before your child can start the program. A new enrolment form must be completed each year and it is your responsibility to ensure we have current contact details and health information about children during the year.

There is no hourly rate for occasional care services.

Bookings are essential, as we have regulated staff/child ratios. Casual bookings for occasional care will be accepted if there are vacancies, however preference is given to permanent bookings.

WHAT TO BRING TO EACH SESSION

- ❖ A drink of water, in a refillable drinking container, with his/her name clearly marked.
- ❖ A healthy snack e.g. apple, banana, cheese. **HEALTHY FOOD ONLY.**
- ❖ Sun hat or coat with the child's name clearly marked. **NO HAT NO PLAY.**
- ❖ Spare change of clothes.
- ❖ Spare nappies for nappy changes, please supply wet ones.
- ❖ Please name your child's bag clearly.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- ❖ Dress your child in comfortable **play** clothes and sturdy shoes – **NO THONGS OR SLIP ON SHOES**
- ❖ Sunsmart clothing for play outside – no backless clothing or singlet tops
- ❖ **Please ensure all articles are clearly named.**

WHEN DROPPING CHILDREN OFF

We cannot accept children into the room before session time. The staff need that time to set up the room and prepare activities. We ask that you wait in the foyer until the staff welcomes you into the room. For children's safety, we ask that when entering the Childcare room you shut the door immediately behind you.

SIGNING IN/OUT BOOK

Each child must be signed in at the commencement and out at the end of each session. You must inform us if someone else will be collecting your child. If any unexpected situations arise, please notify us by phone. Anyone who is collecting your child must be over 18 years of age and listed on the enrolment form.

If you have any concerns regarding your child please do not hesitate to speak to staff after the session when all other children have left or by making an appointment.

LATE PICK UP

If children are picked up late from care then parents will be required to pay \$1.00 per minute. Staff members are not legally responsible for children outside these hours. If a child is not collected one hour after the normal closing time then the relevant authorities will be notified if emergency contacts are also unavailable.

Casual bookings are available by phone during the week and making a payment before the session. Bookings will only be taken when there is a vacancy. **Casual bookings** need to be confirmed the day prior to care required to ensure that there is a vacancy available.

Cost	AM	Casual Rate	Concession Rate
1 Child	\$12.00	\$14.00	\$10.00
2 Children	\$17.00	\$19.00	\$15.00
3 or more	\$20.00	\$22.00	\$18.00

Occasional Care offers holders of Pensioner Concession cards, discount rates. To receive this discount you must present your current concession card to the Administration staff. Payment is required on the day of care.

If your child will not be attending on the day they are booked in we would appreciate a call to let us know. A holding fee of \$5.00 will be charged for the position being held for your child for that day. This applies to all permanent bookings.

The centre is closed on public holidays and during school holidays.

FEE HARDSHIP

Families can contact the Administrator to arrange a payment plan if financial hardship occurs. Families with outstanding fees at the end of the month with no payment plan arranged will be contacted and their spot in the program will be reviewed.

Fee inquiries can be put in writing to the Accounts department.

FIRE AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE

We have steps that are taken to ensure that everyone in the centre is evacuated in case of emergencies. There are also signs and fire extinguishers placed around the centre. Every term the staff and children practice evacuation procedures.

If you are in the Centre when you hear the air siren please follow procedures carefully and follow the instructions of the person in charge. Children will be evacuated through the double gates of the playground and assemble in the shelter at the park behind our centre. Parents must not leave the assembly area until notified by authorized persons.

MANAGING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

Our behaviour management policy is based on providing a democratic atmosphere where the key components are *Social Equity, Mutual Respect, Trust, Shared Responsibility, Co-Operation and Encouragement*.

All staff are directed to encourage the positive aspects of all children's behaviour. When children are displaying negative behaviour they will be directed to another activity until they are able to participate in an acceptable manner. If the negative behaviour continues children will need to stay by the side of a staff member for a couple of minutes. Parents will be informed of any persistent negative behaviour problems.

QUALIFIED STAFF

As a restricted licence Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre employs qualified staff or staff obtaining qualifications in Children's Services. Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre will ensure that the child/staff ratio as set out in Regulations 24 Children's Service Regulations 1998 will be met at all times.

SUNSMART

Our sunsmart policy has been developed to ensure that all the children attending this centre are protected from the skin damage caused by harmful U.V. rays. It is to be implemented throughout the year, but particularly between September and April inclusive.

- ❖ Children will be required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears whenever they are outside.
- ❖ Children must not wear singlets, tank tops, or backless tops while in care
- ❖ Children who do not have their hats with them will be asked to play indoors or in an area protected from the sun.
- ❖ SPF30+ must be applied to your child before they are brought to the centre. This guards them against any skin irritations caused by the use of different sunscreen. It is also very time consuming for staff to apply sunscreen to all the children.
- ❖ Outdoor activities will be minimized between 11.00am and 3.00pm (Daylight EST).

HEALTH

It is the responsibility of parents to notify us if a child is ill or has an infectious disease. The Health Department has stringent guidelines regarding the period of exclusion for infectious diseases. We will notify parents when there is an infectious disease at the centre, verbally or by placing a notice near the sign in sheet.

It is also in the best interest of your child and other children at the centre for sick children to stay away. Some minor illnesses, which also require exclusion are: Fevers, Diarrhoea, Vomiting, Conjunctivitis, Impetigo, Head Lice, Cold Sores, Hand, foot and mouth disease. If your child appears to become unwell during the session you or your emergency contact person will be contacted requesting the child be collected ASAP.

ASTHMA

Asthma is a chronic health condition affecting 1 in 6 children. It is a major cause for childhood admission to hospital and the most common cause of school absenteeism. While an average of four people die in Victoria each week from asthma, many of these deaths are preventable. Community education and correct management will assist to minimize the impact of asthma.

It is generally accepted that children under the age of 6 do not have the skills and ability to recognize and manage their own asthma effectively. With this in mind, Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre recognizes the need to educate its' staff and parents/carers about asthma and to promote responsible asthma management strategies

If your child is asthmatic, we must have an asthma plan from your doctor on file.

ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY

Parents/guardians of a child at risk of anaphylaxis shall:

- Inform staff, either on enrolment or on diagnosis, of their child's allergies.
- Provide staff with a current Medical Management Plan signed by a Registered Medical Practitioner and included with the enrolment form.
- Provide staff with a complete EpiPen kit.
- Regularly check the EpiPen expiry date.
- Assist staff by offering information and answering any questions regarding their child's allergies.
- Notify the staff of any changes to their child's allergy status and provide a new anaphylaxis action plan in accordance with these changes.
- Communicate all relevant information and concerns to staff, for example, any matter relating to the health of the child.
- Comply with the Centre's policy that no child who has been prescribed an EpiPen is permitted to attend the service or its programs without that EpiPen.
- Comply with the procedures outlined in Schedule 1.

ACCIDENTS / ILLNESS / INCIDENTS

- If your child is ill or injured, the appropriate staff member will administer first aid.
- A staff member will fill out an accident/incident report stating time, injury and first aid administered. Parents will be notified and the accident report will require the parent, guardian or approved person's to date, time & sign the accident/illness form.
- If your child becomes ill whilst in our care, the parent/guardian or approved person will be contacted to make arrangements to have the child taken home. The staff will make the child as comfortable as possible while they are waiting for the parent. If you are unable to be contacted, we will notify your emergency contact person.
- An ambulance will be called in case of extreme illness or accident.
- PLEASE DO NOT SEND A CHILD WHO IS ILL.

FOOD HANDLING

As a registered food handling organization, we now require parents to advise us before they bring in any food to be shared amongst the children. Any cooking done with the children will follow the appropriated food handling regulations.

Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre is a smoke free zone.

MANAGER: Jan Gilchrist
CO-ORDINATOR: Kim Kauhausen – Crump
CHILDCARE STAFF: Kristy, Sandra, Michelle, and Tracee

COMPLAINTS

If you have any concerns about any aspects of our services please address them to:

- ❖ Mrs. Kim Kauhausen - Crump – Children's Services Co-ordinator
- ❖ Mrs. Jan Gilchrist – Manager of Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre Inc.
- ❖ The President – Committee of Management should an issue arise that cannot be settled by either the Co-ordinator or Manager.
- ❖ The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 122 Thomas Street Dandenong Ph: 9213 2020
- ❖ Your feedback about our service is highly valued. Please feel free to discuss your views with us at any time.

PRIVACY INFORMATION

Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre is in receipt of Government funding for some of the programs and services it offers. We are required to provide statistical data to government for these funds but all data provided is managed in line with the Information Privacy Act 2000 and its principals.

You may be contacted in the future by a government agency or its representative, re your satisfaction with the services that you received from Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre. Only your contact details will be provided then they are destroyed. Further details re the Act and the Information Privacy Principles can be found at <http://www.dms/dpc/vic.gov.au/sb/2000 Act/A000814.html>

We hope your child or children enjoy their stay with us.