



Merinda Park Learning & Community Centre Inc

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Melways Ref. 129 F8

Registered ACE Provider 3952

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PLAYGROUP HANDBOOK 2012

Phone (03) 5996 9056 Office

Office hours 8.30am – 4.15pm

Email: admin@merindapark.com.au

Website: www.merindapark.com.au

Playgroup enables families to learn, develop and socialise within our community in a fun, relaxed and safe environment.

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre Playgroup. For many parents, families and caregivers our playgroup will be your first contact with a playgroup environment. Playgroups are becoming increasingly important as a source of recreation, social contact and community support, as well as providing your young child with an important source of recreation. Contact with other children of similar ages provides the opportunity to discuss parenting problems, form friendships and generally interact in a friendly and supportive environment.

OBJECTIVES:

The prime objective of MPLCC is to provide a playgroup environment that will meet the needs of families, caregivers and children within our community and to be responsive to these changing needs. MPLCC is committed to equality of educational, recreational, and social opportunity. All people have the right to participate in an environment free from discrimination

PHILOSOPHY OF PLAYGROUP

“Learning and growing with the community”

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

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

AIM

Our main aim for you and your child/ren while in playgroup is to provide you with a safe, friendly and stimulating environment. Together we will provide a balance between structured and unstructured child initiated and adult supported experiences for you and your child/ren to do together using a range of equipment and materials, including improvised equipment and natural materials both indoors and outdoors.

Playgroup is parent run. A group leader is appointed in each group, who is spokesperson for the group not someone who runs the group. The groups operate as a team - organising activities and cleaning together as a group.

- ❖ *Please remember that while attending playgroup you are responsible for your child's safety and security.*



While in playgroup children have the opportunity to participate in:

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.

SESSION TIMES: Wednesdays

9.15 am – 11.00 am (Bring a healthy snack) and 11.00 am - 12.45 pm (Bring a healthy lunch)

1.15pm – 2.45pm is the supported “Baby Bears” for families that need a little bit of help and support perhaps with a child with a mild disability or parents finding it difficult.

This group is designed to be smaller so that support is more on a one on one basis.

Families will be assessed as to whether they require the support of this group or able to participate in our Community Playgroups.

COSTS:

\$3.00 per week for one child and \$4.00 per week for a family.

All fees are paid at reception.

BOOKING

We encourage families to visit the Centre prior to get a feel for our Centre. An enrolment form must be completed before you and your child can start playgroup. 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.

For new families attending the first week, whilst you are getting a feel for the Centre, we offer this session free of charge.

WHAT TO BRING TO EACH SESSION

- ❖ A drink with his/her name clearly marked (preferably water).
- ❖ A healthy snack or lunch e.g. apple, banana, cheese, sandwich. **HEALTHY FOOD ONLY.**
- ❖ Sun hat or coat with the child's name clearly marked.
- ❖ Spare change of clothes.
- ❖ Spare nappies for nappy changes, wet ones etc.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- ❖ Ensure your name is on the cleaning up roster (at least twice a term)
- ❖ 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.**
- ❖ Children are not allowed in the storeroom
- ❖ Children must be supervised by the parent at all times It is your responsibility to watch your children. This includes mixing with other children, as well as when they are using equipment, toilets and supplies.
- ❖ Ensure doors are closed leading into the hall way.

SIGNING IN/OUT BOOK

Each child must be signed in at the commencement of playgroup and out at the end of each session.

YOUR FIRST DAY AT PLAYGROUP:

Do not stand aside. Get down on the floor to play with and talk to the children. Some children may cling to their parents for the first few sessions. This may last for months in some cases.

Let the children choose what they want to do from the activities set out so that the child can go to the table and get busy immediately upon arrival.

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 we will 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 eg: police.

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 and parents /caregivers will be required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears whenever they are outside.
- ❖ Children who do not have their hats with them will be asked to play indoors or in an area protected from the sun.
- ❖ SPF30+ should be applied before you come to playgroup for added protection.
- ❖ 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 we advise you to take them home or to the doctor.

MANAGING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

It is the responsibility of the parent to direct and encourage positive behaviour in their child/ren. If you have a problem with someone else's child please see the Playgroup Co-Ordinator or Early Childhood Co-Ordinator.

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 appropriate food handling regulations.

ACCIDENTS / ILLNESS / INCIDENTS:

- PLEASE DO NOT BRING A CHILD WHO IS ILL.
- There is a first aid kit in the childcare room.
- There are first aid officers present at the Centre at all times
- An ambulance will be called in case of extreme illness or accident

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 an anaphylaxis action plan and written consent to use the EpiPen in line with this action plan.
- 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.

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

CEO:

Jan Gilchrist

EARLY CHILDHOOD CO-ORDINATOR:

Kathryn Bellis

PLAYGROUP CO-ORDINATOR:

Reigan Reed

Reigan is assisted by volunteer parent helpers.

COMPLAINTS:

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

- ❖ Early Childhood Co-ordinator
- ❖ Mrs. Jan Gilchrist – CEO 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.
- ❖ Your feedback about our service is highly valued. Please feel free to discuss your views with us at any time.

CLEANING AT THE END OF SESSIONS:

It is expected that ALL PARENTS help clean up at the end of the session. A roster for cleaning is set up at the start of each term. Parents are asked to place their name on the roster to help.

- Carpet must be vacuumed, floors swept and mopped if required.
- Tables and sinks to be wiped down.
- Toilets and hand basins must be cleaned
- Rubbish bin beside the sink emptied if required.
- Only sandpit toys to be used in the sandpit. If other toys do get used in the sandpit they must be washed before putting them back in storage.
- The storeroom and cupboards must be left tidy after use and everything put back in its proper place.
- Equipment placed in sheds must be stored as per plan displayed inside shed.

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.legislation.vic.gov.au>

We hope you and your child/ren enjoy your time with us.

