



Let the wonder begin

A WELCOME STORY



FROM MAD HATTER HOUSE

Hi! I'm Alice. I'm hiding
on every page in this
book. Can you find me?



For all the MHH Children,
and their Big People

LET THE WONDER BEGIN...

This book was made with care and respect on Birpai Land. At Mad Hatter House we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we work and live, the Birpai people, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We celebrate the stories, culture and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders of all communities who also work and live on this land.



“Every adventure requires a first step.”

- The Cheshire Cat, Lewis Carol's
'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'



THE MAD HATTER HOUSE

PHILOSOPHY



We Are Family

We see a sense of belonging as our foundation.



We Are Nurturers

We nurture our environment and one another.



We Are Learners

We are capable and creative and view ourselves as lifelong learners.



We Are Connected

We are active citizens and contribute to our world, locally and globally.



To see all the details of our Mad Hatter House Philosophy, and more, check out our website.

Once upon a time there was a magical place called Mad Hatter House, where a child called _____ was going to play and learn.

Your child can draw a picture/or put a photo of themselves here



With your child **fill out their name** in the spaces provided. You can find key words from our philosophy IN UPPERCASE throughout this book. Our Philosophy underpins everything we do at Mad Hatter House. **Please record any questions you or your child has along the way and let us know so we can help answer them!**

Mad Hatter House was a special place on Birpai land. The Birpai people have lived on this land for a long, long, long time.

CHILDREN'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We the children of
Mad Hatter House
say thank you to the
Birpai people for letting us share this land.
We promise to look after it and the people and
the animals too.

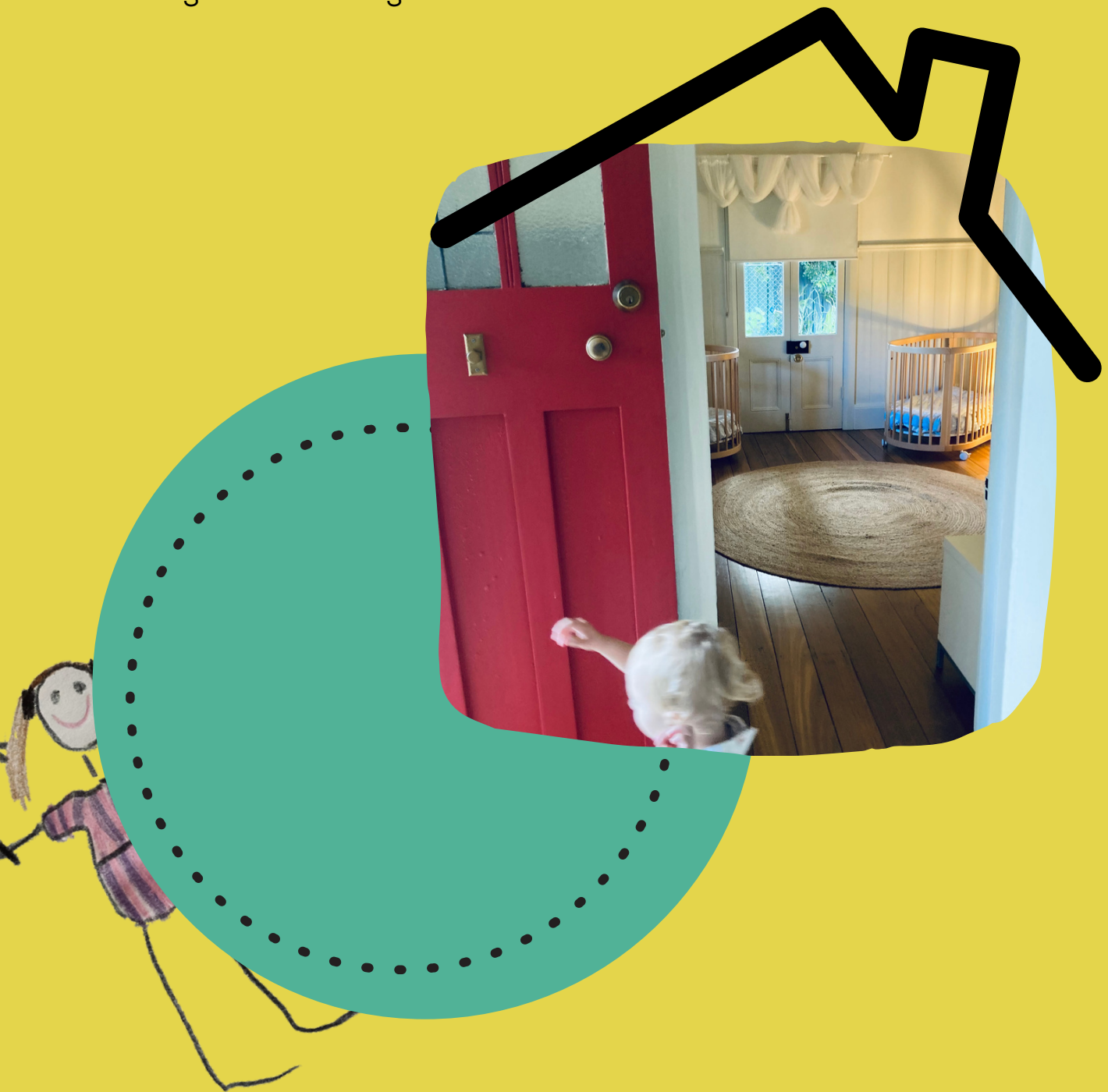
Hello land
Hello sky
Hello trees
Hello me
Hello friends

Reference: Adapted from the "Acknowledgment of Country of the Wurundjeri people"




The children and educators at Mad Hatter House believe it is very important to **NURTURE** this land, and the Birpai culture. Educators are always looking to improve their knowledge about First Nations histories and cultures, connect with **Community** and share learning with our children.

One day, _____ and their family came for their first adventure to Mad Hatter House. When they arrived there was a big red or orange door.



Transitions, like starting at a new Early Childhood Service, can be a big deal for both children and families (that's why we wrote this book!). At Mad Hatter House we do our best to make all transitions as positive as we can. There are many different types of transitions children will go through in their lifetime. Our job, as Educators, is to make sure that each child feels comfortable, secure and confident with the process of change. This will help build skills for future transitions in your child's life, like starting school.

Their family would sign _____ in, and help them put on their sunscreen. Their special room, is called _____.



Nonna's Nook

0 - 2 years



Grandma's Gables

2 - 3 years



Poppy's Place

3 - 6 years



The friendly administration team will help you to "sign-in" using our Kiosk. Mad Hatter House is accredited as a **SunSmart** Service with the Cancer Council of NSW. Sunscreen should be applied prior to your child coming into MHH. We will do another application throughout the day. Children must also wear clothing that covers their shoulders (no singlets) and bucket hats (not caps). Check your emails for a copy of our SunSmart Policy.

The Magical Door

I once knew a girl
And down she did fall
Though she wasn't expecting it
She fell through the floor

It wasn't the usual one
It was something way more
A magical, wonderful
Fall through a door

The door was bright orange
It pulled her right in
To a place where everyone
Fit perfectly in

It felt like a home
But was also unique
Where love was the language
They all learned to speak

Nonna's Nook was a space
For the especially small
Where they'd be cared for and nurtured
They'd feel a hundred feet tall

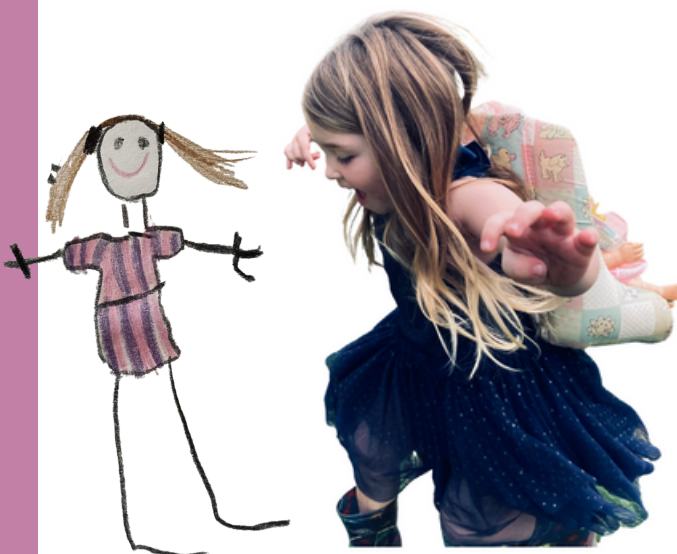


Grandmas Gables is next
Not too big or too small
Where children belonged
And were free to explore

In Poppy's Place children thrived
As they were trusted and viewed
As competent, capable,
They learned so much too

So when Alice fell down
Through the hole in the floor
And found her way down
Through the Magical Door

It would change her forever
She'd get the best start
As Mad Hatter House was
A place full of heart



Inside the door there were some educators called _____
_____ and _____ and _____, who gave
them big smiles. They were kind and friendly and very good at
helping _____ feel right at home.

MEET THE MHH TEAM

Rhonwen
Managing Director

Lisa
Director

Michelle
Assistant Director

Koryn
E.C. Teacher

Nicole
Administration and Enrolments Officer

Corinne
Administration Officer

Tyra
Trainee Educator

Rose
Team Leader

Jayde
Educator

Sam
Educator

Tracey
Educator

Jo
Team Leader

Anna-Maree
Educator

Linda
Educator

Alex
Educator

Ella
Team Leader

Danielle
Educator

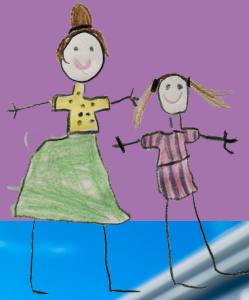
Julie
Educator

Emily
Support Educator

Support Educator

Our Educators make sure children feel at home. Families are encouraged to share about their child's **routines** or any special things that might be happening at home. Educators use children's needs and **interests** to help children engage, feel comfortable and **learn**.

They helped _____ say goodbye to their family. They said "I'll keep _____ safe, and take care of them, until you get back this afternoon."



By doing these things, families and educators helped the child to feel safe and secure. **Secure attachments** are really important for young children to help brain development, self-esteem, resilience and even school readiness. That's why our educators make sure they build **strong relationships** with children, by being a secure base for them to adventure from, and a safe haven to return to, if and when they need it.

Soon it was time to play! There were so many special places to explore at Mad Hatter House. Play is really important because it helps build children's brains.



90% of a child's **brain develops** by the time they're 5 years old. Starting from birth, children develop brain connections through their everyday experiences. They're built through positive interactions with their parents and caregivers, and by using their senses to interact with the world. A young child's daily experiences determine which brain connections develop and which will last for a lifetime. The amount and **quality of care, stimulation and interaction** they receive in their early years makes all the difference.

When _____ went inside they saw lots of interesting things to explore. It was like a home... only magical!



Mad Hatter House has been influenced by the **Reggio Emilia approach** which recognises and values the environment as a 'third teacher'. This approach says that physical spaces influence **what and how children learn**. Our spaces are aesthetically pleasing, flexible, full of natural and real life materials, honour the cultures of our children and families. We want our environment to foster a **sense of belonging** and give children **autonomy**.

Inside there were quiet places where _____ could sit with an educator to read a book about _____ (let us know your favourite book here) and ask lots of questions, or just relax.

I wonder if this is the right place?

You're amazing



Talk
+ talk
+ talk



Reading and storytelling with babies and children promotes brain development and imagination, develops language and emotions, and strengthens **relationships**. The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) highlights educators' relationships with children as central to supporting their learning.

Educators would help children make signs to go on buildings, write shopping lists or read menus. They would sing songs, respond to babies babble, and talk to them about all the things they were seeing and doing.



Early literacy is learning about sounds, words and language. MHH Educators set up literacy-rich environments, which show how literacy is useful in everyday life. MHH educators also scaffold and plan intentionally to develop children's literacy knowledge. This might look like Educators helping children to write signs in construction areas, shopping lists as part of games, or write their names on their artworks. Educators also help children learn about sounds, rhymes, and book knowledge.

There were places where _____ could make-believe they were a doctor, or astronaut or hairdresser or anything else they could imagine!



Play theorists like Vygotsky and Piaget, as well as contemporary research have all identified **imaginative play** as important to children's development. This play develops our brains flexibility and creativity. Using our imagination is a skill that we all require throughout life. At Mad Hatter House we make sure there are ample opportunities for children to experience, initiate and engage in imaginative play.

There were places where _____ could build and make things like _____ or _____ (what things might you like to build?). There were also lots of chances to practice sorting, making patterns, counting and measuring things.



Did you know that playing and talking with babies builds ideas about space and numbers? Building with blocks and boxes also helps to develop a child's concept of shape and size. Buttons, beads, paper plates and shells can be used to make patterns, compare and classify things and begin to place them in an order and sequence. These activities are part of supporting children to become numerate (being able to apply maths in everyday situations). Being numerate is key to success in school and vital for making important decisions as we go through life. MHH educators use everyday routines, children's interest and play to help develop children's **numeracy**.

Lately at Mad Hatter House, lots of children had been very interested in learning about _____. The educators helped the children to investigate and to remember to think like a scientist!



Have you heard about **STEM** education? STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. At Mad Hatter House this doesn't mean teaching facts. We learn together with children, encouraging them to ask questions and explore their interests. MHH Educators might build on a child's interest in building with blocks for example, they guide children to observe, investigate, ask questions, measure, design, and build. At Mad Hatter House everyone is a **LEARNER**.

Outside, at MHH, there were gardens growing delicious herbs and vegetables, some chickens to collect eggs from...



You might see some of our gardens, compost bins, chickens, frog bog, water tanks and recycling systems. MHH Educators support children to appreciate and take care of nature. Children learn about the **environment** and **sustainability**, developing hands-on skills, thinking skills, and a sense of place and **CONNECTION**. If you have any particular interest in this area and would like to share your skills, knowledge or resources with our children, please let us know!

and lots of places to run, slide, jump, climb, skip and swing.



These are all **gross motor skills** and they help children learn how to coordinate and control their body movements. Gross motor skills also help lay the foundation to be able to complete fine motor skill movement such as pinching or grasping. At Mad Hatter House we also support children in their **risky play**. Risky play in early childhood can help develop a child's self-confidence, resilience, executive functioning abilities and even risk-management skills.

There was a secret, calm, sensory space. You could enter it through a special little door. Here _____ could search for treasure. The space also included a Yarning Circle.



Some of the many benefits to having a **sensory garden** include, sensory development, calming, explorative and discovery skills, promotion of communication and language skills and allowing children to engage with the environment. A **yarning circle** is an important process within First Nations culture. This space and process encourages respectful sharing, trust-building and **connectedness**.

There were trees to climb and sandpits to dig in. There were also lots of materials where _____ could use their imagination to build cars, or cubby's or maybe even a _____.



There will be lots of opportunities to play with "loose parts" or **open ended materials** such as crates, pipes, buckets, blocks, and rocks. These resources enable children to discover, create, improve and imagine. They encourage, problem-solving, cooperation, decision-making, fine and gross motor skills, independence, vocabulary, and maths, art and science skills.

The educators worked with _____, and the other children, to write down and take photos and videos of all the things they were learning at Mad Hatter House.



Our educators work in **partnership** with you as families, using the Learning Outcomes from the **Early Years Learning Framework** to guide their **planning** for children's learning. So that our children are engaged in learning, educators identify children's strengths and interests, choose appropriate **teaching strategies** and design the **learning environment**. Educators also carefully assess learning to inform further planning. (EYLF). We share this learning with you via **Storypark**, and we always welcome your input.

When it was time to have food, _____ sat with some other children and the educators. They spoke about all of the things they had been doing, like _____ They also spoke about the delicious food they were eating, and what different food do to help our bodies.



Healthy eating habits started in childhood can have a lasting effect. **The National Quality Standards** require Early Childhood Services to adequately promote **healthy eating**. We have loads of **resources** to support you and your child, including lunchbox tips, information on first foods, breastfeeding and returning to work and much more. Let us know!

The Educators helped _____ find out what they had in common with the other children to help them make friends.



Positive relationships in the early years of a child's life helps them to connect with others, build positive friendships and support children to **self-regulate** their emotions. Educators help children to have **meaningful interactions**, become **socially competent** and build quality relationships.

----- also had lots of opportunities to connect with our community. Sometimes Mad Hatter House children went on excursions to places like the library. They had opportunities to be part of special community events like Lassiandra Festival and NAIDOC week. Other times children had special visitors from the community come to visit them at Mad Hatter House.

I wonder if this is the right place?



Connections with families and communities are part of helping children feel **connected**. It gives them opportunities to feel a sense of **belonging** and also to be **seen and heard** in the community on issues that are important to them.

When _____ was old enough, they would head off to Big School, with all the wonderful things they had learned at Mad Hatters, ready to give them the best start. Their educators would help them know what school is like and help the school get to know_____.



Educators at Mad Hatter House see the **transition to school** as a process where educators, schools and community work together to meet the individual needs of each child, and to help them move smoothly in to the school environment. School readiness is something that happens over a long period of time, not just in the final months before school. Educators use their **knowledge of individual children** and **child development** to support children to establish the skills they need in school, and for life! **The Transition to School Statement** is completed by a child's early childhood teacher or educator and is sent to their new school. The statement:

- summarises a child's strengths, interests and approaches to learning
- passes this information between families, early childhood teachers and educators
- gives children a voice in the process of meeting new people in the school environment
- helps link the Early Years Learning Framework to the Early Stage 1 Syllabus.

----- had so much fun. In no time at all their family was back to collect them. The educators spoke with their family about what they had learned about that day. ----- also told their family what special things they seemed to enjoy.

Add photos of your child's first day here



At Mad Hatter House being CONNECTED is really important to us. We are excited to be starting this journey with you and your child. We see you as your child's first teacher and hope that you feel welcome to share your ideas, beliefs and culture with us. We also hope that you feel comfortable to ask us for support or information, so that we can work together to give your child the best start in life.



The END.
Or is it really just the
beginning???????



WANT TO KNOW MORE

Check out our website
www.madhattherhouse.com.au
for more information on things like...

Tips for Starting at an Early Childhood Service

Lunchbox Ideas

Circle of Security

Reading with Your
Child

The Early Years Learning Framework

Child Development

Sun Protection

The National Quality Framework

Play and why it's so great

Separation Anxiety

...and lots more

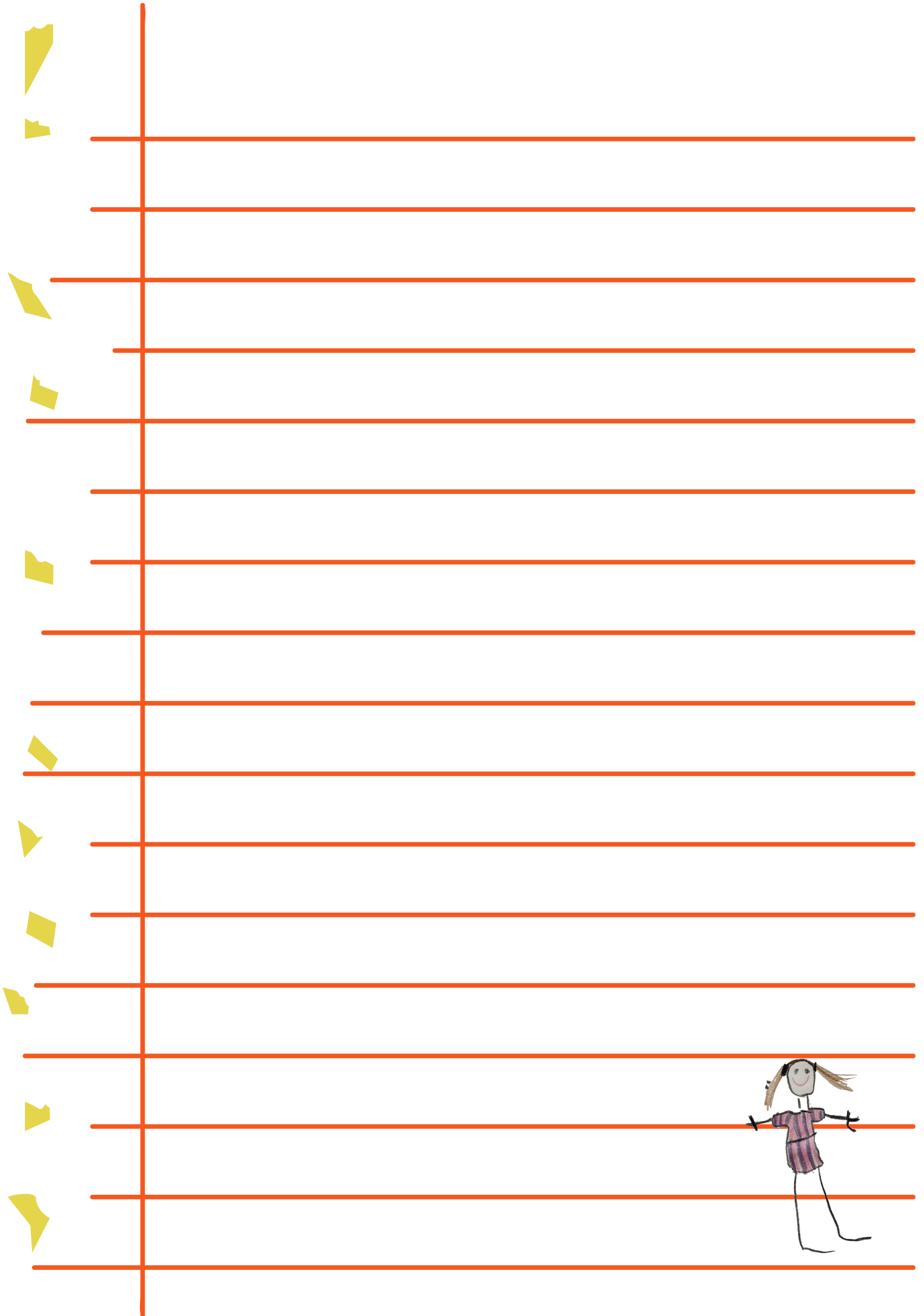


Or please feel free to have a chat with us anytime!

NOTES

A notebook page with a vertical red margin line on the left and horizontal red lines for writing. There are several yellow paper scraps on the left edge. A small cartoon girl is drawn at the bottom right.

NOTES



A set of horizontal orange lines for writing notes, with a vertical orange line on the left side. There are several yellow paper scraps on the left edge.



NOTES



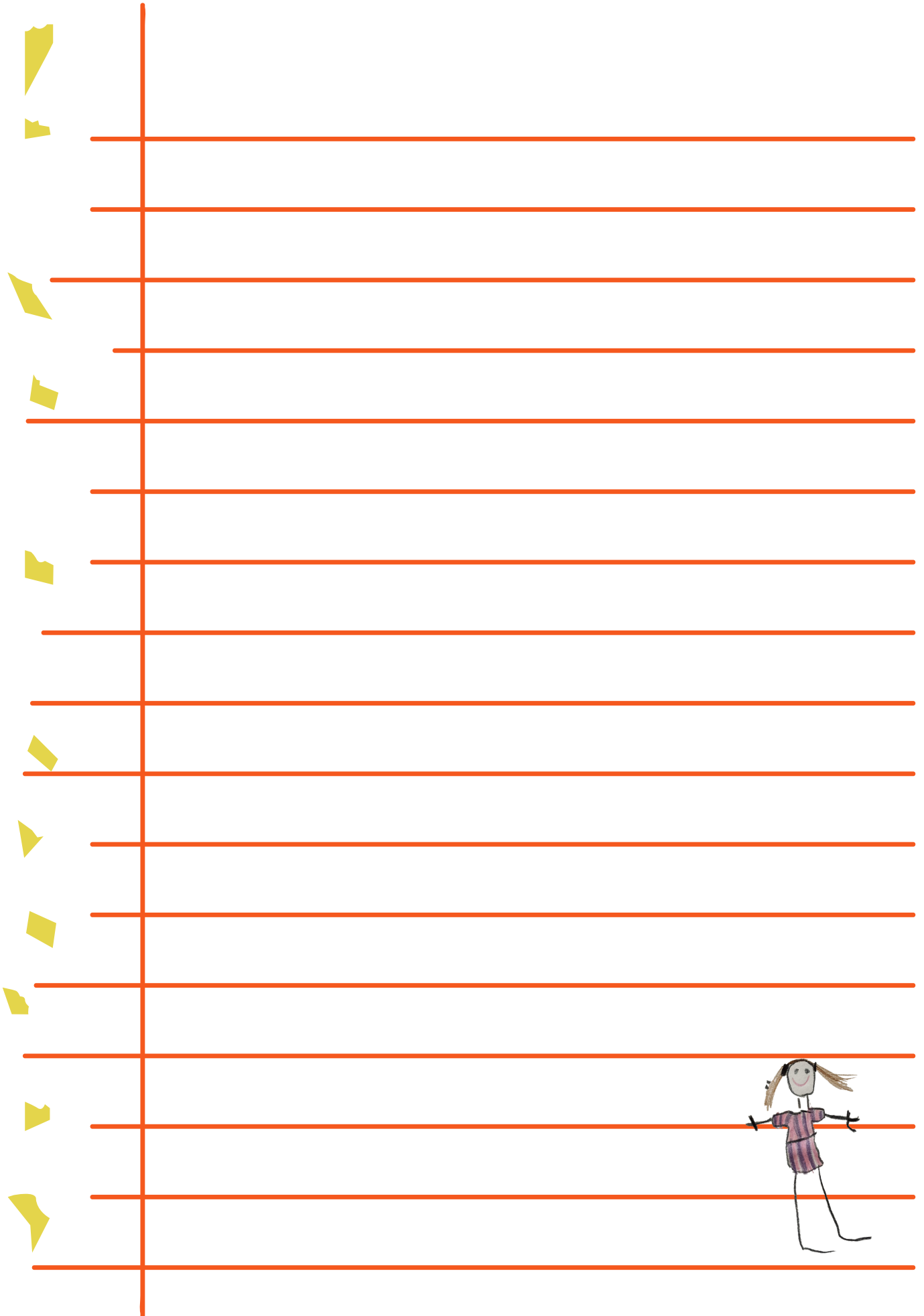
A series of horizontal orange lines for writing notes, with a vertical orange line on the left side. There are several yellow paper scraps on the left edge.



NOTES

The page is designed for taking notes. It features a vertical red line on the left side, creating a margin. Horizontal red lines are spaced evenly down the page to provide lines for writing. On the left side, there are several yellow sticky notes of various shapes and sizes, some overlapping the margin line. At the bottom right of the page, there is a small, simple cartoon drawing of a girl with pigtails, wearing a striped shirt and pants, standing with her arms outstretched.

NOTES



A set of horizontal orange lines for writing notes, with a vertical orange line on the left side. There are several yellow paper scraps on the left edge.



GET IN TOUCH...



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