
Waite Campus Childrens Centre Parent Newsletter

February 2009

Please read this newsletter to find out more about:

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Quality Improvement and Accreditation in Early Childhood

The Federal Government has a broad agenda for Early Childhood Development which brings together the essential requirements of quality in child care and preschool settings and includes broad consultation to develop a National Early Years Learning Framework. This will also be linked with guidelines to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

In collaboration with the states and territories, the Australian Government is working through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to implement stronger quality standards for all early childhood settings. The Government has also committed to introduce a quality rating system to drive continuous improvement in quality child care and preschool and enhance parents' access to information about their early childhood education and care options. Until these reviews are completed we continue to work with the Child Care Quality Assurance Framework, or Accreditation process that has been operating in long day care since 1994. Waite CCC is due for its next accreditation in the months after March 2009.

Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA)

The broad objective of the CCQA is to ensure that children in care have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that will foster all aspects of their development and promote quality care for all children in approved Australian child care services. The aim of the CCQA is to provide a framework for reviewing, measuring and improving the quality of the work being done by approved child care providers. CCQA focuses on quality outcomes for children. It encompasses processes of self-study and continuing improvement against principles of quality care.

The CCQA systems operate on a five step process which measures the quality of care provided by the service and identifies areas for ongoing quality improvement.

This 5 step process is as follows:

Step 1: Registration. All long days care centres in Australia must be registered in order to be approved so that families using the service can register for CCB and CCTR. They must also pay a registration fee annually.

Step 2: Self study and continuing improvement. The key to this step is that there is continuous reflection on practices, consultation with families, and regularly review and evaluation conducted with reference to the Quality Practices Guide. Waite CCC's self study report must be completed by the end of March 2009 and forwarded to the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC).

Step 3: Validation. Just prior to this step all families, staff and the Director are asked to complete a Validation Survey. Step 3 then involves the completion of a Validation report by a peer Validator trained to validate quality practices. They will visit the Centre for two days and this visit should occur with 12 weeks of the self study report being received by NCAC.

Step 4: Moderation. Moderators have access to all information form the Centre, the Self Study report, the Validation report and the Validation surveys and use this to develop a composite quality profile of centre practice.

Step 5: NCAC makes a decision based on the proceeding 4 steps and provides the service with a composite quality profile that must be displayed for all families staff and visitors.

The profile from Waite CCC's last CCQA process in November 2006 is displayed on the Parent Notice Board. Please have a look.

Welcome

We have several new children who have commenced at the Centre in 2009.

We welcome the following children and their families Will and Sean to Room 3, and Natasha, Charlotte, Erin, Piper, Grace and Lachlan to Room 1.

While we will continue to have some enrolments across the Centre the majority of new enrolments will be in Room1 and most of these children are siblings of children already attending the Centre.

After the baby boom of 2008 which saw 24 siblings born we have no new babes for 2009...yet!

Staff matters

We welcomed 2009 with a planning day on Saturday February 7 which gave all staff the opportunity to revise emergency procedures and participate in whole staff and room planning for 2009. We will have another planning day on Saturday March 14 with Tina Quitadamo from ARMSU presenting a 3 hour session 'Beyond the Boomerang'. Several staff will also be updating First Aid certificates in March. Dani and Kaarin will be 'Sharing our Sustainability' with other early childhood educators at Somerton Park Preschool on March 17.

Board and PAG Matters 2008

Adelaide University Childcare Services Inc

(AUCS) Board meets on the last Monday of the month. The next meeting will be Monday 23 February. The AUCS Board has recently negotiated a new collective agreement for staff which will result in staff at WCCC and ACCC receiving additional annual leave, increased super and entitlement to paid maternity leave. When finalised this will make AUCS Inc a leading employer in childcare in SA.

The **Parent Advisory Group (PAG) meets on the third** Friday of the month. The next PAG meeting will be Friday 20 February.

The PAG is currently reviewing the responses from the program and service review to set goals for 2009-2010 and also revising the Centre philosophy. Once redrafted this will be available for all families to review.

Program and Service Review

Thank you to the 35 families who completed the program and service review. This was a great response and provides us with an excellent overview of what families think about our service. While there is general consensus on most areas there are one or two families who have individual issues with some aspect of our service. I urge all parents to take some time to discuss any issues they have as they arise by making a time to speak with me.

We encourage and appreciate any feedback, and questions or problems are always received with openness and an approach that aims for mutually agreed solutions.

Administration matters:

Thank you to all families for their patience while we work through the issues of changing to the new CCMS system and adapting to a totally new booking and billing program. Jill and I are becoming increasing competent with this but still make the occasional error.

Under this new system we are no longer responsible for applying CCB to accounts. We forward each families childcare usage through the internet to CCMS and CCB is applied by them and then returned to us. As this process usually takes at least 48 hrs we are unable to email or print correct accounts until at least the Wednesday of each week. Generally this will not be done until Thursday as Jill works on Monday and Thursday. If you receive an emailed account earlier in the week, as has happened on at least two occasions, please disregard this as it will be an error .

Childcare Tax Rebate

If you wish to claim the Childcare Tax Rebate (CCTR) either as a quarterly payment or at the end of the financial year you **MUST** register for Child Care Benefit (CCB). CCTR will refund 50% of your out of pocket expenses for childcare up to \$7500 per child.

*** We have several families who have recently commenced for whom we have not received reference numbers. Until you register for CCB and provide us with appropriate details Centrelink will not receive any information about your childcare usage and no CCTR claim can be paid. If you need to back date this at the end of the financial year it becomes very, very time consuming for everyone involved .

Please register now.

Go to: www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/OfficeOfEarlyChildhood/cctr/Pages/ChildCareTaxRebate.aspx for more information

Policy Review

Thank you to all the families who responded to our policy review. All policies have now been updated to include relevant changes and editing. This has included some changes to the purpose statement, re wording to either improve clarification or provide a statement about practices that are implemented each day but were not previously included in the relevant policy. Some changes were made to reflect more inclusive language.

A few questions arose during this process that we hope the following clarifies a few of these .

Why shouldn't the PAG exceed 10? There is a wealth of literature about the best size for advisory groups, committees and Boards which shows that when groups are too large they don't work as effectively. As the PAG also includes a staff representative and the Director we have found that a group of 12 people allows for every to participate actively and

If a child bites others frequently it should be reported to the aggressors parent, This is always done and is currently included in our Behaviour Management policy as Procedures for Dealing with Difficult and Challenging Behaviours "If unacceptable behaviour is persistent, staff will work with parents to determine possible causes of the behaviour and encourage positive alternatives."

Some regular staff practices and policies are noted in the Centre Policies and Procedures Handbook and we will continue to review this, especially as we review Staff Policies during October.

Sustainable Futures

Our sustainable future fund is growing. Some of the funds will be used to add to our community water grant. Sustainable Focus is managing this project for us and quotes for the work are due Friday 26 September, with work expected to commence in October. The development of the outdoor classroom and butterfly garden will also be supported by the sustainable futures fund with almost 120 metres of fencing required to enclose the area to the east and south of the centre. We plan to grow some of the plants for this ourselves with seeds sourced from Trees for Life and we are hopeful of receiving a positive response to our application for a small grant to the Grow A Great School program.

Ape it up at Monarto is a Family Fun Day to be held on Sunday October 5th at Monarto Zoo.

Dr Jane Goodall, international conservationist and Chimpanzee expert, and UN Peace envoy will open the new Chimpanzee enclosure on the day. She will talk to children and youth about the Roots and Shoots program she established, which promotes care for animals, the environment and the human community. For more information go to the Zoos SA website. www.zoossa.com.au For information about the Roots and Shoots program go to www.rootsandshoots.org