
Waite Campus Childrens Centre

Parent Newsletter

June 2009

Please read this newsletter to find out more about:

- ◆ Policy Review
- ◆ Practitioner Inquiry project
- ◆ WCCC 'Green Page' - action on climate change

Early Childhood Services:

The expansion of knowledge around early years learning and development has resulted in some core findings about early childhood services. The features of effective service delivery include both interpersonal and structural features.

Key interpersonal features:

- ◆ Responsive and caring adult-child relationships which are consistent and secure
- ◆ Recognition of parents and families as the primary carers of children
- ◆ Active engagement of the parents and families in the early childhood service
- ◆ An individualised and developmentally appropriate approach to each child where staff observe and monitor children's performance to ensure they provide challenging yet achievable experiences
- ◆ A play-based approach where staff seek to create exciting places and opportunities for young children to safely explore, experiment and practice new skills
- ◆ Environments structured by staff to promote children's optimum engagement and learning
- ◆ Children recognised as capable and competent where learning is achieved through a process of cognitive 'co-construction'
- ◆ A balance between 'cognitive' focus and 'social-emotional' focus
- ◆ Different learning environments for children differing in temperament, ability, language, culture and ethnicity.

Key Structural features:

- ◆ Group size
- ◆ Staff-child ratios
- ◆ Staff qualifications - this includes education and experience and ongoing staff development and support

We know that learning starts from birth and not just in the 'preschool or school' years.

Children develop and learn through their relationships with others as they actively participate in reciprocal to-and-for exchanges with parents and caregivers. We also know that children's learning can be slowed by overly academic preschool experiences that introduce formalised learning experiences too early. Evidence suggests that comprehensive and holistic services from birth to school age yield benefits as great as or greater than preschool services alone.

(From Policy Brief No 12 2008 Towards an Early Years Learning Framework)

Policy review

Each year we conduct a review of Centre policies in consultation with all families and staff. The aim of this process is to ensure that we are up to date with current legislation, consider any issues that have arisen with implementing policies in the past 12 months, consider any feedback from families and staff about policies and take some time to re-read and refresh our knowledge and understanding of the policy guidelines.

This year we would also like to focus on enhancing understanding of our programming policies so each family will receive a copy of a program policy and one other. While we understand that busy working families have limited spare time, we have found that this is a worthwhile process and we gain valuable information from the diversity of families attending the Centre.

Staff Matters

Bobbie is on annual leave until the middle of July.

Vince will be away from June 26th– July 2nd inclusive.

Kaarin will also have a few days leave from July 8-10th.

Board and PAG Matters 2009

Adelaide University Childcare Services Inc (AUCS)
Board meets on the last Monday of the month. The next meeting will be Monday 27th June at ACCC. We are still waiting for the ACCC to confirm our revised philosophy. The **Parent Advisory Group (PAG) meets on the third Friday** of the month. The next PAG meetings will be Fri-

Bookings and Enrolments

Thank you to all those families who responded to the recent newsletter and have provided information on changes to childcare bookings. Thank you very much to those families who have been flexible and changed days which has greatly assisted the transitions between rooms and the enrolment of siblings. Transitions for July have now been confirmed and will hopefully be completed for the week commencing July 20. The enrolments of siblings to Room 1 have also been confirmed.

However we have been unable to meet all request for changes at this stage .

Tuesdays and Wednesdays continue to be in most demand and these days are fully booked in all rooms except for Room 2 which has a vacancy on Wednesday. Room 2 also has a vacancy on Monday and Room 3 on Thursday and Friday. With only a few part time children reaching school age ready for term 3 we are not anticipating further transitions between rooms until January 2010 unless there are several as yet unknown reductions to current bookings in Room 3.

Please ensure that you notify us of any expected increases or decreases to your current bookings as early as possible.

Winter Ills

Unfortunately colder weather brings with it coughs colds and many other illnesses. While time away from childcare is sometimes difficult to manage keeping a sick child home prevents the ongoing spread of infection and re-infection. We appreciate families and parents monitoring their child's health and keeping children home when they have an infectious illness. It also assists staff and supports our childrens centre community if you let us know as early as possible if your child has been unwell and the nature of their illness.

Information on exclusions re Swine flu have been posted around the Centre. It is now only required that those children or adults with a diagnosed case of swine flu need to be excluded from the Centre. There is no longer a requirement that children be isolated for a week after travelling to Melbourne or overseas .

Practitioner Inquiry Project 2009

Practitioner inquiry/research is about improving our practice as educators of young children through:

- ◆ Reflecting on and exploring our current practice
- ◆ Sharing our thinking
- ◆ Changing/modifying our practice on the basis of our reflections and discussions
- ◆ Recording what we think and do

Our current question for this project is:

How can exploring our understanding of early years learning with families and staff enhance the outcomes for children attending Waite Campus Childrens Centre?

In the coming weeks we will prepare a draft plan to develop/explore the question with both staff and families. The question may evolve and may change .

Some of the questions raised by the staff team at our recent staff meeting were:

What is learning?

How do we learn as adults?

What was our learning style as a child?

What is something we remember learning in our early years?

What influenced this learning? Was it the people, the environment, or?

WCCC Green Page

Waite Campus Childrens Centre teams-up with Climate Friendly™ to take meaningful action on climate change

Waite Campus Childrens Centre has committed to taking action on climate change by offsetting 28.2 tones of greenhouse gas emissions with GreenPower and VCS renewable energy carbon credits for a second year.

The push to 'go green' has come from the Sustainable Futures for Children Committee which was formed in April 2007 resulting in Waite Campus Childrens Centre choosing internationally respected, Australia-based, carbon reduction and management company Climate Friendly™, to help implement a long-term carbon footprint measurement and offset strategy.

As a first step, Waite Campus Childrens Centre have measured emissions associated with the operation of their childcare centre including electricity, natural gas, air travel, paper, and waste emissions and opted to offset the 28.2 tones of unavoidable emissions by purchasing GreenPower for electricity emissions, and renewable energy carbon credits sourced by Climate Friendly from the Gudhepanchani wind farm, India, for all other emissions sources.

By July 2010 families will only be able to receive invoices by email.

Why not start now by providing us with your email address

by a written note in the post box

or save paper and email: childcare.waite@adelaide.edu.au

Having you bills emailed will help the environment and saves time. energy and paper.

Proposed butterfly garden and outdoor classroom

The draft plans for this area are now on display on the parent notice board. Please have a look and give us any ideas you have for changes or improvements or any other comments!

The development of this area is being supported by a Community Development Grant of \$1500 from Mitcham Council and a \$1000 grant from Grow a Great School with the bulk of funding coming from the Centres sustainable futures for children budget.

Work on the garden is expected to commence in July with a 'planting day' in August. We plan to give the newly planted gardens time to settle and establish before using this space with children in the new year. The grant applications and planning work towards this new area has been largely the work of the Sustainable Futures for Children Committee (SFCC). This group currently meets on Wednesdays, as needed, from 1-2pm. If you are interested in joining this group please speak to Kaarin.

Water Efficiency at WCCC

SA Water is conducting free water efficiency assessments at schools, preschools and childcare centres. We had an assessment on June 12th and received a wonderful letter from SA Water.

"The assessment indicated that there have been several and highly efficient water conservation strategies implemented within the "wet areas" of the centre which will undoubtedly result in significant water and financial savings in the future. The Water Conservation Officer who conducted the assessment was very impressed with the various water saving measures implemented and gave an extremely high Water Efficiency Rating."

NAIDOC Week 5-12th July

Celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The theme for NAIDOC Week in 2009 is [Honouring Our Elders, Nurturing Our Youth.](#)

National Tree Day

gives all Australians an opportunity to get involved with their local environment at a community level.

<http://treeday.planetark.org/>

In 2009, **Schools Tree Day** will run on **Friday 31st July** and **National Tree Day** will take place on **Sunday 2nd August**.