
Waite Campus Childrens Centre

Parent Newsletter

October 2008

Please read this newsletter to find out more about:

- ◆ Proposed changes to early childhood services
- ◆ Family Picnic
- ◆ Limited Care?

From the Director

Thank you to all the families who attended our Parent Evening. This was a great support to staff, acknowledging the work and professionalism that they give to children's development programs and individual portfolios.

It is an exciting time to be involved in early childhood services and there is a lot happening in this area across Australia. In the monthly newsletters for the remainder of 2008 I plan to highlight for families some of these changes. I hope this will provide information to families on early development and learning programs and encourage families to reflect on our Centre and the programs we offer.

While much of what is being planned with respect to early childhood will provide a greater focus on the value of early childhood services to our social capital, it is very long overdue. Most early childhood professionals, educators and researchers have known for many, many years that the early years, 0-6 form the foundations to our long term well being; and that early education and care are indivisible. Our society, however, has not valued either parenting or early childhood services; children have always been (and for many this continues) the less visible keys to our future. While society at large has changed and young children are growing up in a very different world to their parents the broader values of society are taking much longer to shift. Society still has an ambivalent attitude to the relation between parenting and employment, and the workplace can be very hostile to parents. Children are growing up with fewer siblings and in smaller extended families. Parenting young children has become a more complex and stressful experience. Despite the clear social and economic value of quality early childhood programs, services have been under-funded and undervalued. Many families are unable to access quality early childhood services at the times they need.

The Federal Government is currently taking some action to redress this, through funding for new and innovative services which will incorporate early childhood services with health and other support agencies; increasing the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) to 50% and planning broad changes to enhance the quality of all early childhood services across Australia. This will include national early years learning and quality frameworks, and developing a seamless system of education and care while ensuring all 4 year olds have access to 15 hours of preschool with a qualified early childhood educator. In the longer term this will see an end to the current session type preschool that dominates in South Australia (though not in other States). Early childhood professionals know that children learn best through developing strong and stable relationships in a consistent environment. Moving children between services within the same day can hinder children's learning and development and may not foster children's wellbeing. What we hope to see in the future is children being able to begin attending an early childhood service and to continue in the same service until they commence school, with additional funding provided to the service when the child turns four. These changes are exciting and positive. If you would like to learn more, make a visit to www.dest.gov.au/sectors/early_childhood. This provides information on all new initiatives from CCTR to the draft National Frameworks.

Family Picnic

This year our annual family picnic in the Rose Garden near Urrbrae House will be on Sunday 19 October from 3 to 6.30 pm. To continue supporting children and families to 'be active' we will have people from Life Be In It running games from 3.30-4.30. This will include a parachute, earth ball, sack races, hoppers, hoops and more. Please register on the Parent Notice Board. This is a great way to meet other families from the Centre while enjoying the beautiful gardens of Urrbrae House.

Welcome to:

the following children and their families who have commenced at our Centre in recent months: Will, Joshua, Queenie, Bella, Yolande, and Alice to Room 1; Sanna, Scarlett, Zara and Alex to Room 2; and Tomas, Liam, Matthew and Alice to Room 3.

Centre closure

Thank you to those families who informed us of their childcare needs in the week January 5-9. In order to operate a service during this week we required an average of 12 children per day. As we only had approximately 2/3 of this number we will not be offering any service during this week.

The dates for the centre closure can now be confirmed as
1pm Wednesday 24 December
to
8am Monday 12 January 2009

Diary Dates 2008

End of Year Celebration -Wednesday
December 17 featuring the
Amazing Drumming Monkeys

National Recycling Week 10-16 November.

Board and PAG Matters 2008

Adelaide University Childcare Services Inc (AUCS) Board has changed its meeting times to the last Monday of the month. The next meeting Monday 29 September.

The **Parent Advisory Group (PAG)** meets on the **third** Friday of the month. The next PAG meeting will be Friday 17 October.

New babes

Congratulations to:

Maboob, Kazia, Fardeen, on the birth of Faiza 30/9/08, Kirsten, Tim and Hugo on the birth of Zoe 1/10/08 ; Pina, Ben and Tahlia on the birth of Liam 2/10/08 and Joan Heath and Luke on the birth of Kieran 24/10/08

Staff news

Mandarin Immersion Program

At the parent evening we became aware that many families do not know about our Mandarin immersion program in Room 3. In February 2008 WCCC introduced a trial of an additive bilingual (L2) program through language immersion in Mandarin in our 3-5 year age group (Room 3). This is an additive bilingual program because Mandarin is a completely new language to most children. It is an immersion program

because during designated periods (currently 9am-12.30pm) of each day the majority of Eunice and Lucy's

communication with children is in Mandarin. There is always a staff member who speaks English available to children. This program is unique to WCCC. We are quite confident in saying we are the only early

childhood service in Australia to have an additive second language immersion program.

Why language immersion?

- ◆ Every child has the ability to learn additional languages
- ◆ Learning a second language enhances children's reading readiness as it develops their metalinguistic awareness or capacity to use knowledge about language.
- ◆ Young children are intuitive language learners and will learn a second language contextually in the same way that they learn their primary language. That is by hearing it spoken on a regular basis.
- ◆ Bi-lingual children develop a more positive attitude to non-native languages and foreign cultures.

It is important for parents to be aware of this and discuss with their children as second language immersion programs do well when there is support from parents. If you would like more information please speak to myself or one of the Room 3 staff.

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