

The Elder Street Herald

Accreditation Result!!!!

Well we have definitely had our share of performance feedback over the last couple of months, with Accreditation surveys, Accreditation validators and moderators rating our performance and now our Partnership with Parents Questionnaires! We are always looking for ways of improving and viewing the centre and its procedures from others perspectives. It is always a great way to be inspired and stimulate new ideas. More about our Parents with Partnership questionnaires later in our newsletter.

Last week our eagerly awaited Accreditation Certificate and Quality Profile arrived with a breakdown of our ratings against the 7 Quality Areas. We are very proud of our results and

scored almost all High Quality in each area. Our Composite Quality Profile (which is now on display on the noticeboard in the foyer) shows a slight dip in areas 5 and 6. This is due to two indicators not being met. These indicators were:

5.3.8—The centre maintains current information from recognised health and safety authorities on dangerous products and objects. What the validator wanted to see was that we had some printed information somewhere on display in the centre on the topic of poisons. We have had this type of information in our newsletters and on our Community notice board in the past, but did not have it up currently. We have included some

more on this topic on our Community and staff notice board presently.

6.5.3 Current information on sleep equipment and safe sleeping practices from recognised authorities is available to staff and families.

As we had a current and sourced Safe Sleeping Policy we thought we had this covered, but we learnt that it also needs to be displayed in a prominent place—which it now is in our Possum Nursery area.

So we scored 50 out of 52! We scored well above Good quality especially given that to be accredited a centre only needs to reach a Satisfactory standard. Our team would never settle for satisfactory and will continue to work hard to maintain our High rating in all areas.

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NEW FRIENDS AT ELDER STREET



Tamsin is such a happy little girl..



Beautiful Annika had a great first day on the 18th of May...



Mitchell is a joy to have!



Ruby has settled in wonderfully....



Huxley always has a story to share....

Your feedback from the Partnership with Parents Questionnaire

Thanks once again for taking the time to complete your Partnership with Parents Questionnaire. We have received some wonderful comments and also some great constructive feedback on areas for improvement. The surveys also highlight to us the level of understanding that parents have on certain issues or procedures around the centre. Our newsletter is probably the most far reaching large body of information resource that we have available to share with families. So we will take the opportunity to respond, advise and inform families more and more of how we are doing certain things that you are maybe unaware of or a little confused about.

I would like to especially thank the parents who took the time and effort to think of suggestions for different areas of the centre, these range from security to enrolment information—this is all extremely helpful feedback that we can act on. So here are the areas of feedback most commonly mentioned this year and our plans to be added to our centre's Continuing Improvement Plan:

Program and Evaluation Feedback:

*More facilitation of research into topics, rather than lots of separate topics. Drawing the learning from days to weeks to months.

*Generally more education for parents about the Emergent Curriculum.

Planning/Response:

As a staff we have discussed the need to grow further in our learning about the Emergent curriculum and after a year of using this method and establishing all the facets required, eg. daily journaling, port folio entries etc, we feel it is time to step up our roles as learning facilitators for the children. This will probably be most evident in the Preschool room, but can also happen in the younger groups, just in a more subtle way. We will be

undertaking some further workshoping on projects and documentation to ensure that children's interests are followed up further. Thanks Wendy for your input, we will miss you next year!!!

* We will endeavour to very shortly reprint some of the earlier information that we gave out when the Emergent curriculum was first introduced to parents. In the meantime, I remind parents that each child's port folios has a few pages of preamble information at the front of the folder about the programming to help you understand its aims and goals.

Just generally, a few parents have mentioned that they would like to attend a Port folio evening. When parents were surveyed on this last year, we again had only a few parents request this. The majority of responses supported the option to look through folders at their leisure and make individual appointments if required. Just to let families know that if there was ever any areas of concern regarding a child's development or wellbeing that we observe at the centre, we will always make contact to discuss this with you and go through records and observations.

Children's Experiences & Learning Feedback:

* Information Boards seemed to be mistaken for Daily Journals from reading comments—more information about these is required

* Request for ways parents can contribute to their children's learning.

Planning/Response:

Below are photos of each of the 3 room's Information Boards. These are

the boards referred to in the survey. The photos and information on these boards aim to provide parents an understanding of the areas of development and what activities and teaching strategies we use to facilitate this development. Next time you have 5 minutes, have a read.

* It is always exciting to provide parents with information on how to aid their child's learning. You may be surprised to know that a great deal of it in the early childhood years is based around the importance of play, but I will gladly find some up to date information to help empower parents to engage in their children's learning.

Protective Care and Safety Feedback

*That although the front of centre has the security door, that the access to the back of the centre lets down any real security attempts.

*Need for clock at sign in desk—at least 4 requests!!

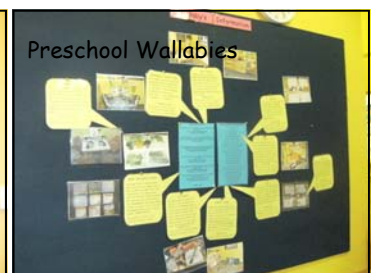
*Paper towel dispenser often empty.

Planning/Response:

*We will be putting on our thinking caps of how to secure the back of the centre as best we can. At this stage we are thinking of putting a simple latch on the playground side of the back gate to act as a deterrent.

*We will try again with the clock at the front, maybe this time up on the wall above the store room. We used to have a clock and pen stand that sat just above the sign in sheets, but sadly it mysteriously disappeared!

*We try our best in keeping up with the paper towel, at times our deliveries are quite erratic and we go through it very quickly. As a back up there is



Each room has an Information board explaining the areas of development that are enhanced each day via our programming and examples of activities

Feedback continued...

always a role of kitchen paper towel available on the nappy change bench that anyone is welcome to use.

Managing to Support Quality Feedback

- * More regular newsletters.
- * More information on Allowable Absences.

Planning/Response:

- * The Elder Street Herald has for the past 4 years been a bi-monthly publication. Unfortunately due to other office commitments, it will have to remain bi-monthly. I will try to pack as much into each edition as possible!!
- * I will happily provide more informa-

tion on Allowable Absences in this newsletter. If anyone has other related questions about child care benefit etc, please give me a call or drop me an email at:

elderstreet@optusnet.com.au

IDEAS

Many great ideas and suggestions that we will surely follow up....

- *Composting and worm farm
- *Visit from Emergency Services
- *Information night on healthy eating
- *That a parent undertake an OHS audit on the service—please call if you are interested, this would be fantastic!

Some ideas suggested that we already do:

Visit to local library and park—the Joey and Wallaby children go each year for a read and play. We missed out in 2008 due to the Lambton Park playground being refurbished, but we have some planned for this year—we of course need lots of parent helpers to be able to go on these adventures!!

Musicians visit and play for the children—we have had many of these and a few more booked in for later this year.

Thanks for all the information and kind words—it really keeps us going and striving to do our best.

StEPS—Eye Testing

Parents of children who are 4yrs or older would have received a Hunter New England NSW Health notice regarding The Statewide Eyesight Preschool Screening (StEPS). This is a highly recommended free vision screening assessment. This round of screenings could only accommodate a small group, so for this first round I gave out forms to children at the older end of 4yrs who would be going to school next year. I have been advised that they will probably come back later in the year to do more testing. We have received a few forms back and it is of course optional. Once we have received a few more forms back I will ring the coordinator of the program to make a date for the testing. I will try to have a day that crosses over as many attendances as possible to save parents coming in to the centre just for the testing. At this stage there is still time to return forms for those who may have forgotten. Thanks.



AQUIM GEL WASH AT SIGN IN DESK

In the light of the recent outbreak in gastroenteritis and general illness (viruses, flus etc) and feedback from frustrated parents, we thought it necessary to once again reassess that we were providing cover of all bases for lessening the spread of infection.

We request that all children have their hands washed on arrival and departure and also that siblings wash their hands if they are going to interact with the children or touch the toys and equipment. The one area that has been overlooked is that of adults. As the adults are the ones touching the gates, taps etc, it is important that you too contribute to mitigating the spread of germs. This week we introduced AQUIM gel, it is located in the front foyer next to the sign in registers. We encourage adults strongly to use the product on arrival to break the cycle of any germs they may bring in from the wider community. The product is only for adult use. Also mentioned on the information notice this week (18/5/09) was some reminders about exclusion periods and requests not to bring ill family members into the centre. Please help us with this issue, it will always need to be a whole team effort!

NOTICES

Thanks to the parents who volunteered to join our Parent Policy Review Committee. Our next policy for review is our Behaviour Intervention & Support Policy—copy will be posted on notice board and all committee members will have one emailed shortly.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Toddler Joeys

*Library & Park Excursion
on Wed 17 June 2009—
notes out soon*

STAFF HOLIDAYS

Kim away 1-3 June
(Mel & Georgia replacing)

REMINDERS

Time to re-pack the kindy bag—make sure there are extra socks, singlets, jumpers and long pants to keep us warm and dry...

Allowable Absences—www.fahcsia.gov.au/childcarehandbook

Child Care Benefit will be paid to all families for up to 42 absence days for each child per financial year. Absence days can be used for any reason.

If you do not want to use your Allowable Absence days there is certain documentation you can provide to cancel the days absence. For example, if your child is off sick, you can provide a medical certificate stating the period off time required away from the service and we will enter this documentation onto our child care software. When we send our weekly attendance data to the Family Assistance Office, they will see that absence days have been verified with a medical certifi-

cate and the absence will not be counted.

If in the instance you have used up all of your 42 absence days and your child is absent again after this, you will not receive child care benefit for this day and will be charged full fees. There are however, other circumstances that will allow payment of CCB after this time, some of these are:

*rostered days off (we need to hold a written statement from your employer confirming that you work rotating shifts or have rostered days off)

* Period of local emergency

* Court order, parenting plan or parenting order—we must retain a copy of the court order outlining that the child's absence from care is due to access by other parent.

If you would like more detailed information on this topic, you can visit www.fahcsia.gov.au/childcarehandbook.

Lastly, to know how many Allowable Absences you have used, have a look at your last payment receipt, it is displayed on these as required by Legislation.

Any other questions, give Mel a call between Tuesday and Friday.

Dunamis—Newcastle based charity sponsoring children in India

You may have seen the photos and information on the poster at the front of the centre over the last couple of weeks. Elder Street is sponsoring two children from a family of ten who live in India. They are twins called Sujatha (little girl) and Surendra (little boy) and they will turn 10 on the 8th of June. Their story is another sad one of bad health and poverty, with their father passing away from liver disease and their mother's work commitments to keep her large family fed and housed leaving her no option but to place her young twins in the care of Dunamis, where they receive care and education.

As mentioned in the information on the poster, we plan to involve the children of the centre by sending photos, letters and art work, occasional care packages of special treats and of course the centre will be sending a monthly donation to help make their lives a little better.

It really is the least anyone can do when we consider how truly blessed our own children are, with the opportunities for continued health, education and fresh food and water, plus wonderful holidays and so many toys and fun things to do.

Georgia (our Preschool teacher) is planning a trip to India in January 2010 to specifically visit the Dunamis school and orphanage. This will provide a wonderful opportunity for us to send over some special treats, clothes, toys and books for Georgia to deliver personally. If any family would like to sponsor their own child, please visit www.saveeachild.com.au for further information.

Professional Development Courses Update

Lockdown and Evacuation Procedures —Karen and Mel attended this course on Tuesday 5th of May at Atkinson Training. We both found it interesting and it helped us to work out what areas of the centre we could lock down in the unlikely event of an intruder entering the building. We are currently developing a policy and plan to give clear instructions to staff on what procedures we would follow in this instance. This will of course then be available to parents also.

Story Telling — Georgia and Sheree attended this on Monday 18 May at Glendale TAFE. They enjoyed this re-fresher type course that reminded them of the value that storytelling with children plays in the development of sound literacy skills and they also report that they learnt some great new storytelling techniques and prop type stories that they have already used with the children this week.

The next round of staff training is as follows:

Creating Great Group Times—Tuesday 26 April with Atkinson training—April attending

Music with a Difference—Tuesday 18 August with Atkinson training—Georgia and Kate attending.

Two dedicated professionals, April and Georgia acting out Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* for the Wallaby children....



Good For Kids, Good For Life—Physical Activity campaign

As most families would know, our centre has been actively involved in following the guidelines and research of the Good For Kids Good For Life program introduced in November 2007. We have had our menus analysed by the program's dieticians, we then changed our menu to reflect the advice given to us and work very hard at encouraging and educating the children about healthy eating and drinking. We have also shared quite a bit of information with parents via our newsletters on this subject.

The next phase of the GFKGFL program has begun. It will focus on the other important factors of healthy

living, which is Physical Activity. A few weeks ago we were involved with the team at GFKGFL again and took place in an interview about what our centre provides to children in encouraging and provision of physical activity. The questions centred around the time the children spent doing physically active play, child initiated free active play, fundamental movement skills, sedentary behaviour/activities and small screen recreation whilst at the centre. We will over the next couple of weeks receive feedback on how we went in the survey and advise on any improvements in this area. After this information is received we will begin developing

Our own Physical Activity Policy, which will then solidify our practices with the GFKGFL research.

We feel quite confident that whilst at the centre the children are provided with many opportunities to be active and we have resources and space available to allow this. We had two different children's based movement businesses come to the centre and offer a free trial of their services. The children had a great time and although beneficial, we felt that it would be unnecessary to pay for a service that we already provide within our own programs. But as the photos show, we all had fun....



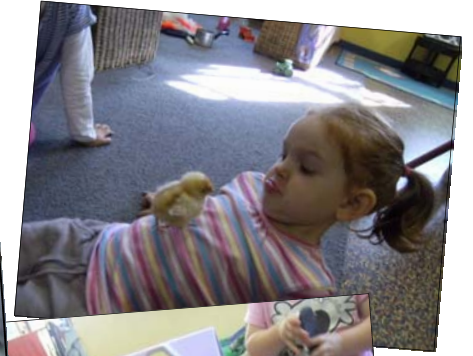
What is the Equipment Levy fairy bringing to Elder Street this year ???.....

- *3 new bikes (one with a seat on the back!)
- * Emergency Service Centre
- *Crawl and see mirror for babies
- * Lots of new push along trucks for all ages
- * Lacing cards
- * Puzzles
- * Car sets
- * New shovels for the sandpit
- * Magnet toys and accessories
- * New large activity blanket for the nursery
- * Soft books
- * Balls
- * Tri sided easel for preschoolers
- * Coloured unit blocks
- * Pounding Bench.....we all say thank you for your contribution!

If you would like to have your newsletter emailed please complete the following slip and return to the centre:

My email address is: ...

CHICKIES!!



Henny Penny Hatching

From our own littliest chicks to our biggest Roosters, no one was able to resist having a look at and a cuddle of the lovely little baby chickens. The children were interested, intrigued, amazed, sometimes a little bit scared and all very caring towards the animals. Some of the children were lucky enough to witness a few of the eggs hatching which was very, very special, other experiences were seeing the chicks grow from tiny newborns to active chicks with fluff growing into feathers. The older children were able to be involved with checking the temperature of the incubator, topping up drinking water and food and of course everyone had a few cuddles too....



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!!

May

- Ayla turns 1
- Elodie turns 1
- James turned 3
- Phoebe turned 3
- Jack turns 4
- Millie turns 5
- Laine turns 5



June

- Millie turns 1
- Tamsin turns 1
- Gabrielle turns 2
- Damon turns 3
- Joseph turns 3
- Shona turns 4

