



Elder Street Herald

May/ June 2011

Going Green— Sustainable Practices at Elder Street

One of our Continuing Improvement goals since 2008 has been to step by step keep moving towards being a greener children's service. To date we have done some, but to be honest the improvements have really only scratched the surface. I have been researching and reading up on some inspiring children's services all around Australia and the world that are engaged in some amazing sustainable practices and all the staff at Elder St agree that we think we can do much more.

Our current practices include:

- Vegie garden
- Basic recycling
- Worm farming

We have begun to write a Sustainable Practices Policy for our centre community and hope to include the following further practices and improvements.

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink strategies.
- Composting to work with our worm farming and gardening
- Introduce rain gauges for the children/families/staff to demonstrate the amount of water we catch during rainfall

- Carrying out water, energy and waste audits
- Install a water tank for use on gardens and water play
- Most exciting of all—the building of a secure chook yard in our Hush Garden area and keeping 3-4 chickens—this will be our Spring Project (see story on page 3)

To begin the reduction of paper usage, we would love to be able to email our newsletters to all families that have this capabilities. Could you please provide your email address for us on the back page of this newsletter or email us at

elderstreet@optusnet.com.au so we have your email address.

COMMUNITY INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT

We would like to involve our centre community in the evolution of going green as much as possible and therefore would like to invite families to send us their ideas/practices of how they practice sustainability at home. We are sure we have lots of greenie families within our community and would love for you to share any tips with us or volunteer to help set up some of the ideas we have, eg, come in and help us prepare our compost bin, we will need some plumb-

ing help when we purchase our water tank and later on down the track when our chickens are set up, we would love some volunteers to come and help care for our chooks especially over long weekends, holidays etc.

If anyone has connections or networks with bodies that carry out water or electricity audits, please also let us know. We are planning to attempt to carry out our own waste audit. We will let you know how that turns out.

The aim of our new Sustainable Practices Policy is to demonstrate best practice in environmental education and to encourage children, families and community to adopt attitudes and practices that care for the environment.

Thank you to all the Wallaby family and friends who were able to come along on our Pizza in the Park excursion on Friday 10 June 2011.

The children had a very busy schedule with lots to do and LOVED every minute of the experience which would not have been able to happen without our extra helpers!

Special points of interest:

- We had Julie from Pacific Smiles come and talk to the Preschool children this month—the children loved receiving a little goodie bag of brushes and paste and also enjoyed having a go brushing the big teeth and learning how to floss.

FAMILY SURVEY

Our Centre philosophy states that that we want to encourage children to develop respect for the environment and to nurture love and respect for our planet and do this by engaging in activities that foster ecologically sustainable practices.

Is this an important issue for your family personally? Please rate from 1 to 10 how important this issue is for your family.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Not important \rightleftarrows Very important

Please return via email or place in fee box in centre foyer. Thanks

CHILD CARE REBATE—CCR begins on 4 July 2011

Families registered with the FAO would have recently received information regarding changes to the Child Care Tax Rebate. As of 4 July, 2011 the rebate will be called the Child Care Rebate (CCR) and gives families the option for receiving this rebate weekly as a reduction of their child care fees.

My understanding as a service provider is that families have been asked to nominate their preferred method of payment out of 4 options and that families who do not respond to the information sent out will remain on their current payment method. To clarify further, the options are:

1. CCR paid to your service as a fee reduction.

2. CCR paid to family bank account after attendance records have been submitted by your service.

3. CCR paid quarterly to family bank account.

4. CCR paid annually to the family bank account.

Our child care software provider (Starcare) will shortly be sending us an upgrade package so we can process this new rebate by 4 July. Payments made after this time by families who opt for a weekly CCR will be receipted as normal but will have an additional column showing full fees, child care benefit and also child care rebate. Once a family reaches the annual cap (\$7500 per child) your fees and therefore receipts

will return to the normal amount of fees less only child care benefit, until the next financial year. Families should also be aware that the full 50% is not reduced each week as the FAO will retain a 15% buffer to avoid debts due to entitlement changes. My understanding is that at the end of the financial year, if all calculations are correct and no debts outstanding, the 15% amount will be returned to families' bank accounts.

Families that currently do not receive Child Care Benefit can opt to have their fees reduced via CCR.

For any further explanation please do not hesitate to call Mel in the office from Tues-Fri 8.30am—5.00pm.

Keeping up with Technology—iPad learning in the classroom

We have a new learning resource in our preschool room which the children, families and staff are finding exciting and useful, it is an iPad 2. The inspiration to bring this piece of technology to our early childhood setting came from recent attendance at the EYLF seminar in Sydney, reading a paper Learning with Technology for Pre-service Early Childhood Teachers (A. Campbell & F Scotellaro Faculty of Education University of Canberra) and listening and observing the children's play and communications.

We have over the years removed any signs of multi-media from our play rooms (ie, tv and computers) as we believe that best practice for promoting learning through play does not require these components for success. We are still of this belief and philosophy, however we feel we need to remain open minded to the different mediums available to help promote the whole child's world and let's face it, all of us have computers at home and I would be surprised if any of our children's families did not have at least 1 mobile phone in their home.

Learning Outcome 4 from the EYLF promotes that children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials. Evidence of this learning occurs, in this instance, when children use information and communication technologies (ICT) to investigate and problem solve. We as educators want to assure families that the introduction of our iPad has been carefully planned and is very much a complementary resource to the children's learning experiences that provides scaffolding to other planned experiences.

To date the children have loved the following applications:

Monkey Lunchbox, Clickety Stick, Numbers, ABC and Patterns, Matching Games, eBooks, Dinopedia, Little Things (like iSpy) Glow draw, Dino train, Scoop and Cupcake shop.

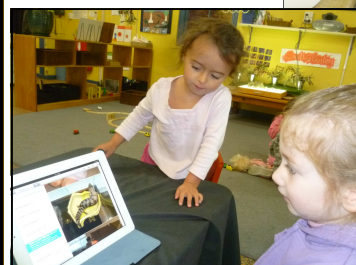
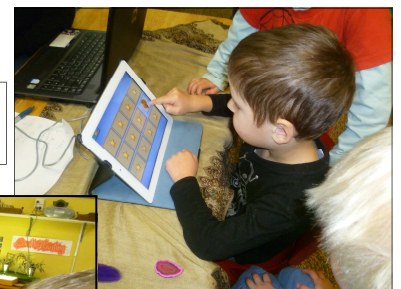
We have received and sent emails to our families, Kate has sent us an email from Europe on her big holiday, we have researched subjects on the inter-

net such as the earth's rotation of the sun, insect life cycles (we have a caterpillar cocoon in the Joey room), animal information, lizards, Tasmanian devils etc, taken photos using the camera and recorded ourselves singing songs.

The children in all age groups love the iPad and like all fun things, we need to make sure that the time children spend in front of it is limited. The time frame decided for the preschoolers, by the preschoolers, was 10 minutes. We actually carried out an observational experiment when we first got the iPad and learnt that some children had had enough after as little as 2 minutes and the longest spent on by one child was 12 minutes. We love that the children can transfer questions from their immediate learning environment and then scaffold their learning and be excited and inspired to investigate and look for answers using a different type of learning medium. That is what being a learner and researcher is all about.

Welcome to the world of the "digital natives" (Prensky, 2005), the "millennials" (Howe et al, 2001) or the D-generation (Jukes et al, 2006) who were born into a world where technology is a given and where mobile phones and computers are tools you have used since your fingers were big enough to press the keys or the touch screen. Digital technology is so much part of their lives that they barely notice it is there. They can use DVD and CD players to select their favourite movies and music, use the remote to channel surf, use a microwave to heat up a snack, the internet to call email their grandmother and the family computer to play and to learn. (Zevenbergen & Logan, 2008)

Sam playing a matching game



Ava & Mali looking at a picture of Mali's lizard that her mum emailed to school

Spring Project - Elder Street Chickens

From iPads to chickens in the garden!! What a wonderfully diverse little place we come to each day!! As discussed in our main story, we are planning to introduce some chickens to our back playground. We already have a little fenced off section of our yard (see picture) that would need some modifications (build some weatherproof nesting boxes and perches and some chicken wire to properly enclose) to properly house the chickens, but we feel it will be a worthwhile exercise especially moving towards being more environmentally sustainable.

Other than lots of reading and a few of our staff having chickens as children, we are pretty new to the game of chickens, so if we have anyone out

there from our families (extended family, friends etc) that has some advice to offer or tips for building the chook yard, please pass them on to us, we would love to have them come and check out our little area and see what they suggest.

Like last years big project (Dry creek bed) we would love families to be involved in the creation of our chook yard and will happily share out jobs of sourcing some chickens and bringing them in when the yard is completed (the centre will obviously fund the project) or helping in any other way, please let us know.

We are planning to begin the chook yard construction in September when

the weather is a bit kinder. We will post a date and further information closer to this time.



'Tis the season to be snotty.....

SNIFFLES AND GENERAL YUCKY SEASON

Time to order in extra tissues! We always have a few sickies at this time of the year with either runny noses, high temps and some vomiting/diarrhea too. For those new to the centre or just anyone who needs a refresher, here are some tips and policy reminders:

* Hand washing is the key to breaking the cycle of infection - remember to

wash hands on arrival and before going home.

* Runny noses are okay, although if paired with a very tired, unsettled and upset little person, we request a day or two off.

* Children with high temperatures (over 38°C) should stay home. Please do not give Paracetamol in the morning and send to the centre. Whatever is causing the temperature will only be masked by the medication and in

the meantime possibly infect other children and staff.

* If a child is on antibiotic medication they need to stay home until 24hrs after the first dose.

* Vomiting and diarrhea needs 24 hours since the last episode before returning to the centre.



A DIFFERENT KIND OF BATTLE WITH THE BOTTLE....

A public health campaign to convince parents that bottle feeding has a use-by date is culminating in a three year child nutrition project run by the University of Sydney's Centre for Family Health. "Giving up the Bottle" is getting out the message that children who drink from bottles after the age of 12 months are open to problems including iron deficiency, tooth decay and middle ear infections. Feeding bottles are implicated because children who drink milk from bottles rather than cups after the age of 12 months tend to drink more milk than they need, which can displace other foods in their diet.

Cow's milk has great nutritional benefits and is recommended as an important food for children but it contains little iron. Iron deficiency in young children is not obvious - affected children may appear perfectly healthy. Middle ear infections in young children have also been associated with drinking from bottles while lying down. The findings of this study have revealed that three out of four children between one and two years old are still using feeding bottles. A good guide for the use of bottles is suggested below:

6 mths: Baby has breastmilk or infant formula and begins to eat foods from a spoon, drink cooled boiled water and

starts to learn to drink from a cup;

6-12 mths: Baby still has breastmilk or infant formula, drinks from a cup and eats family foods;

12-18 mths: No more bottle at all, drinking only from a cup (straw or sipper, as long as not fitted with a teat), and by 18 months is eating independently. Breastfeeding may continue past 18 months if it suits mother and child.

Source: www.uts.edu.au/new/releases

OUR BIRD FEEDER— bringing nature to our back yard..



The children have been putting our home grown sunflower seeds and mandarin skins and pieces in the bird feeder in our back yard for a few weeks now, but they never get to see any birds in the little house. Recently Catherine, our cook captured this moment for the children while the yard was quiet and all the children were inside playing. The birds say "Thank you kids!"

Birthdays

May

Eamon turned 1

Ayla S turned 3

Elodie turned 3

Xavier W turned 4

June

Millie turns 3

Tamsin turns 3

Gabrielle turns 4

Sam M turns 4

Ava turns 5

Joe C turns 5

Happy Birthday to everyone!!

A message from your child's drink bottle....



PLEASE take me home at night and give me a good wash.....

PLEASE fill me up in the morning with nice fresh water.....

That's all I ask for....Thankyou....:)

OTHER REMINDERS

- Siblings visiting the centre need to wash their hands if they want to play with the toys—we really want everyone to be healthy!!
- Please remember to pack extra warm clothes in bags ie, singlets, socks etc
- Bed bags need to go home to be washed at the end of attendance for the week—especially on Fridays!

Welcome to the Morton Family, Shannon, Jamie and little Rose who started in the Joey's room a few weeks ago. They have made the big move from the UK to Newcastle.....)

A FEW LAST THINGS.....

- Please remember to bring in blue books/immunisation records for us to copy if your child has recently had their immunisations updated.
- We have had 3 cases of head lice over the last month. Please check your children's hair regularly for eggs and treat accordingly if any eggs/lice are detected. If we are all vigilant with this we should knock it on the head, literally. We have some great information/policy on this issue if parents are interested in reading. Remember, head to head contact is the only way lice are transferred from person to person.
- Henny Penny Chickens are coming to the centre on Monday 19th of September for 2 weeks. We are hoping this will tie nicely into our big spring Chook Yard project.
- School Photos have been booked in for Wednesday 9th November 2011 with Peter Fields Photography.

Great websites for families:

<http://veryediblegardens.com>

<http://progressiveearlychildhoodeducation.blogspot.com/>

Our email address for the newsletter and other info is: