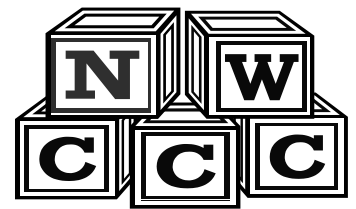


Norwest Child Care Centre

March 2010

Autumn Edition



Welcome to our March edition of our newsletter. Last week Norwest celebrated our first Art and Craft Exhibition. Those of you who attended, we are sure would agree what a hugely successful night it was. Many parents were amazed by their children's masterpieces on canvas as well many of you have had a bid on the rather artistic group paintings.



March has also been busy with lots of our children's Grandparents coming in for a lovely shared afternoon tea with their grandchildren.

This was closely followed by an array of green throughout the centre as Norwest celebrated an Irish Tradition of St Patrick's Day.

This Newsletter is action packed and we hope you enjoy reading all about Norwest CCC.

Norwest Wins Award!

Norwest Child Care Centre Pty Ltd was an Award Winner at the 2009-10 National Work-Life Balance Awards, in recognition of their outstanding achievements in providing innovative work-life balance solutions in the education, innovation and research sector.

Fixed hours, high staff turnover, mandated worker-to-child ratios and a high number of employees with young families are just some of the challenges faced by employers in the child care industry; however Norwest Child Care Centre is reaping the benefits of making work-life balance a priority. Norwest, a multi-award winning centre in Sydney's North-West, has successfully taken on a flexible approach to benefit each and every employee. For example, the company gives its employees the ability to take 'mental health' days, an initiative which is used by around 90 per cent of employees. Fifty per cent of employees have also taken advantage of the ability to work part-time.

Norwest has a wide range of work-life balance initiatives and these include:

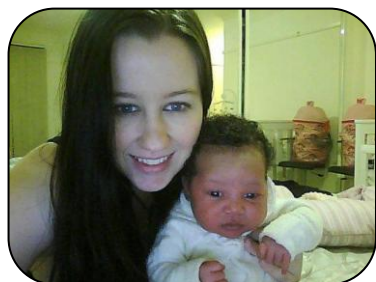
- a negotiable period of unpaid maternity leave with a communication program
- flexible working arrangements, including the ability to work part-time, varying start and finish times and opportunities to take study leave
- rostering staff levels above minimum legislated requirements, to reduce stress on employees
- financial assistance for employees who wish to study
- a variety of health initiatives, including paid time to attend medical appointments.



Norwest employs a diverse workforce, including students and people with a disability, and each has a say in the rostering and the ability to negotiate their individual arrangements. Management also leads by example, by using flexible working arrangements such as varying their hours and using study leave. By showcasing these initiatives and the benefits that have resulted, Norwest hopes to help change the culture within the child care industry and strongly encourages other employers to do the same.

Staff News and Updates

* Congratulations to **Dana** and her family who have welcomed baby Christopher into their lives back on 28th January 2010.



* Congratulations to **Alison** and her partner Musa who have welcomed baby Amelia Nakayanja Lule into their lives on 23rd February 2010.

* Welcome to **Jessica Rogers (Jess)** who has joined the Norwest team as a Trainee. She has also stepped into the position of Assistant to the Rainbow Fish and is quite a natural with the young babies.



* Welcome on board **Musa** who is doing an internship with Nesha whilst he completes his Psychology degree – he'll be here on Fridays doing a range of psych work with the children and staff!

* Sadly we are saying a temporary good bye again to **Ashley** who is going to take a bit more maternity leave to spend time with her baby Adam and has also started her Bachelor of Education. We also say good bye to **Sam** who has also chosen to step up and do her Bachelor Degree and decided to work part time as a nanny around uni study. We will keep both these girls on our books as they head through their degrees and they are welcome back at any time! They will be missed around the centre here.



* Congratulations to **Monique** who will be stepping up to be the Joey's Group Leader. She has loads of experience under her belt from working with Amanda and the Kangaroos over the last 2 and half years and is looking forward to this new and exciting challenge. Monique is also working her way through her Diploma.

* We'd already started the difficult search for talented staff to step into the roles that Julia and Louise will be vacating when they have their babies – so we've ramped up that search to find more staff soon. We have already booked a couple of staff in for a trial to see how they go here at Norwest. Meanwhile both **Sarah** and **Rachel** will be stepping in and assisting in all rooms as we experience these transitions. We thank you in advance for your patience regarding our administration during this time. You are all important to us and if we do not get back to you straight away please send an email and we will respond as soon as we can.

This year Norwest will again be offering the ever so popular **Entertainment Books** for families to purchase. These books are terrific value for families offering 25-50% off or 2-for-1 offers from many top restaurants, cafes, take away chains, attractions, and activities in the Parramatta, The Hills, Blue Mountains and Macarthur areas as well as amazing offers in Fashion, Health & Beauty sections and some great offers on resorts, leisure and travel. For a limited time you may purchase an Entertainment book and you will receive over \$15000 in valuable offers that you and your family can use until June 2011. Some of the great places in the entertainment books include Taronga Zoo, Sydney Aquarium, AMF Bowling, Hoyts Cinemas, Putt Putt Golf, and many more! And there are 5% discount cards for Coles shopping. If you wish to purchase an Entertainment book, please fill in the forms found in your parent pocket and return these ASAP to Sarah. Also great to pass on to family and friends so they too can benefit from the many fantastic offers available!

Did you know all our **Policies** go through a review process each year and you can have a say on the Policies that govern Norwest? You will find our Policy Reviews on the Notice board in the Foyer. Feel free to make comments at any time.

Our Annual Transition to School evening will be held on Tuesday 27th April from 6:30 – 8.00pm. This is a great information session providing your family with the latest in information about transitioning into a NSW School. The session is run by a School teacher. Please feel free to prepare questions and bring them along to the night.

Car Park, Gate and Door Safety

Each and every day here at Norwest is busy, and involves many different people coming and going throughout the day. We would like to reiterate the importance of safety around our most common traffic areas.

The **Car Park** is limited to a slow speed of 5 Kilometres per hour. We keep our Car Park at a slow speed just in case children manage to break away from their parents and run out in front/or behind any cars coming through the driveway or leaving the car spaces. Children as pedestrians are the second most common injury for children (www.kidsafe.nsw.gov.au). Studies have tested the rear vision of a number of popular cars and results show that there is a large "blind zone" behind most cars. So please take caution, we are sure you would all agree you would never want to injure a child with your car.

Next up we have the **front Gate**. Please do not let your child swing on the gate. (It will break and cost you lots to replace) Please take care and ensure your children's hands are being held as you enter and exit through the gate. Until 10 years of age each child must hold an adults hand as pedestrians. Children below the age of 10 years do not have the capability or judgement to handle many pedestrian situations. Children need to be accompanied and closely supervised by a parent or adult carer to keep them safer.

And finally, **Door** safety. Please help us maintain the highest possible level of security through the Norwest doors. At Norwest we run our security fob system to ensure the safety and well being of all our children throughout the centre. Occasionally you may find someone you do not know waiting to come inside at the doors. Please do not let them in. Kindly ask them to wait outside and inform them you will get a staff member to get them. Our staff need to conduct security checks on anyone who is not known to them, and we find it difficult to do this if strangers are able to wander on into the centre at any time.

Guinea Pigs For sale

We have two Guinea Pigs on the lookout for a new home either a boy (de-sexed), mother and baby daughter or one female. They're incredibly cute and easy to care for (cleaning up your kitchen scraps!) Please speak with Rebecca or Nesha if you are interested in a new addition to your family.



Spotlight on: Jessica Rogers

Started at Norwest in: January 2010

Working in: Ocean Room as Rainbow Fish Assistant

Family: Jess is the youngest of four children and lives locally at home with mum and dad

Favourite thing to do on the weekend: Go to the beach

Something you don't know about Jess: She is trying to learn to surf and loves a good old fashioned cartoon!

News from the Kitchen

Michele has just started studying a Certificate in Nutrition and Diet, and we're looking forward to sharing her new knowledge and skills.

Our autumn menu has been incredibly popular – with new dishes such as Mediterranean rice salad, Chicken and White Bean pasta salad and Bolognese pide. Yum!

As always we love your input and suggestions – do you have a favourite meal at home? Have you tried something new, or seen a great recipe? Would you like to come in one day and do some cooking with the kids? Some afternoon tea perhaps?

We are also about to embark upon the collation of a recipe book, so if you've got a favourite recipe you'd like to include, please let Michele know.

Nutrition Information

We're often asked questions about children's nutrition, so we thought we'd give you some links to recognised authorities on health and nutrition.

- The Australian Breastfeeding Association
<http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au>
- National Health and Medical Research Council Dietary Guidelines for all Australians
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/dietsyn.htm>
- The Healthy Kids Website is a great place for information
<http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/topics/2015.html>
- As always, the Childrens, Youth and Women's Health Website is a source of practical help
<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicCategories.aspx>
- The NSW food authority has some Food Safety tips
<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>
- Nutrition Australia has some handy advice
<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org>

Strengthening families, resourcing parents

As a parent you quickly learn the need to tune into your child from the time you bring them home. As they grow this becomes increasingly important as their needs and development change. "Tuning into Kids" is a parenting program designed to provide you as parents with the information resources you need to meet the diverse needs and emotions of your children. The following link will take you to their website and program on "Tuning into Kids: Emotionally Intelligent Parenting". The website also has other parenting programs available throughout the state.

<http://www.resourcingparents.com/calendar/view.php?id=1012>

Another outstanding parenting program available through their website is the famous "Triple P Positive Parenting Program" which will be on offer here at Norwest for three weeks in July. Keep watch for more information.

New Car Seat Laws

As you should all be aware from March 1st, 2010 New Laws were introduced to improve Child Restraints Awareness and Safety of all children travelling as passengers in vehicles. As summary of the laws are outlined below and for more information please go to: www.rta.nsw.gov.au

**0-6 months: Must be in an approved rearward facing restraint

**6 months to 4 years: Approved rearward or forward-facing restraint

**4-7 years: Approved forward-facing restraint or booster seat

** Approximate guide only.



In conjunction with our Art and Craft Exhibition there was also a fabulous **Wine Fundraiser** where you could purchase some great Australian wines at reasonable prices. These wines were sourced from some of the fabulous Wineries around Australia. The wines available for purchase cover a large selection of tastes and flavours. If you wish to view and purchase wines please collect an order form from the foyer at Norwest, or speak with Rachel, Sarah or Nesha.

Influenza and Vaccines

With winter approaching some of you may wish to explore the option of flu Vaccines to prevent your children from getting some of the nasty influenza infections that will present during the season. Influenza is not a cold. It is a highly contagious disease. If your children are presenting with any of the following symptoms, usually occurring one to three days after infection, please seek medical advice. As per our Exclusion policy children with such symptoms would be best left home to recuperate.

- Fever
- Headaches
- Muscle and joint pain
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Severe tiredness and lethargy

For more information on the flu, please visit <http://www.fightflu.gov.au/> or speak with your family doctor.

Learning Ladder Toy Catalogues

This year we will again be exploring the easy way of shopping through Learning Ladder Toy Catalogues. For those of you who attended our Art and Craft Exhibition you will have seen some of the fabulous educational products on offer. Some of their products have been around for years and are used consistently in early childhood settings and schools. The catalogues will be available in the next couple of months and will be a great way for you to grab some great priced products to put away for birthdays and even Christmas. Keep watch for further details outlining how and when to order.

OCEAN ROOM REPORT

The Ocean room has been very busy once again, celebrating many events including St Patricks Day, the ducks visit, Harmony Day and this week Norwest's 7th Birthday. The room is starting to settle into a good routine and all the children seem to be now enjoying their days with a great variety of activities happening during the day including stories, play dough, puppets, drawing, painting and general exploring of the indoor and outdoor environments. All the groups have started with practising 'baby sign'. 'Please/thank you' is the first sign we have started with, and with a little help from all of their teachers, many of the children have picked it up very well. Thank you to all the Ocean Room parents who came to the Art and Craft night and purchased their children's art work, I'm sure you all liked them. Please feel free to have a chat with the staff in the room with any questions that you may have.

From Jules

Upcoming Events at Norwest CCC:

- *24th March - Norwest 7th Birthday Celebrations
- * 27th March – Earth Hours 8.00pm-9.00pm
- * 31st March – Bush Room Sports Day
- * 30th March – Easter Hat Parade
- * 2nd April – Good Friday (Centre Closed)
- * 3rd April – Daylight Savings Ends
- *4th April – Easter Sunday
- * 5th April – Easter Monday (Centre Closed)
- * 7th April – World Health Day
- *22nd April – Bush Room Sports Day
- * 25th April – ANZAC Day
- *26th April – ANZAC Day Holiday (Centre Closed)
- *27th April – Transition to School Information Night

RAINFOREST ROOM REPORT

The Rainforest has been busy enjoying the months of autumn, although it felt very much like springtime in the room with the addition of the Ducks hatching program and the birth of Baby Sally (Jacqui the Guinea Pig's Baby). We would like to thank the Broker Family for taking such wonderful care of Baby Sally and Jacqui over the weekend assisting with birth and more! We also celebrated Grandparents day with some wonderful play from some of the nans and pops who came to visit who lovingly adopted extra grandchildren in their time here at the Centre. Some children were even sad to see them go. Please tell all your children's grandparents they are most welcome to visit at any time. The Rainforest Room have also welcomed the addition of Frances to the room who is working on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Frances has been around Norwest for many years starting here in 2003 before taking time off for her own children. Last week we met Bell, who has come to support our Bi-Cultural Children. She speaks Mandarin and Cantonese and will be introducing all the children in the room about these languages and cultures.

BUSH ROOM REPORT

The Bush Room children also loved watching the duck 'hatch n grow' program. Many children seemed to love watching the ducks move around after they were born and huddle together under the warm light. In recent weeks the Joeys have begun actively exploring Yoga for relaxation. Many children are starting to move away from their sleep, yet still needing a decent rest time. Yoga allows their bodies to explore creative movement and learn breathing techniques that will help calm and relax them mind, body and spirit. The Wallabies have been investigating their fine motor skills of cutting, suggested from one of our parents as an interest. This will be continued to be explored to developing their skills and co-ordination. It's safe to say all groups have been loving the addition of our new wheelie toys and have all been madly engaging in active gross motor play as they run around the yard trying to balance and control their running and steering skills at the same time, something that is a little on the tricky side. The delightful addition to the Kangaroo team of teachers recently has been the lovely Peta, who together with Amanda, ensure a continuity of leadership of our group. Peta has brought with her a special interest of embracing diversity. This has helped to spark and fan an interest the children have in their abilities and senses. Through sunnies for sight day, harmony day and some special research and literary selections we have gone on a 'journey' exploring tastes (from our garden/kitchen) sight (and sight impaired). We spoke thought about and noticed the way we are the same and different with others. Our stand out activities were reading and discussing a special all black story about sight and colour in a sight impaired child's world and drawing aspects of a friend that was the same as, and different to each child and playing our Norwest exclusive circle game of "I like you just the same", which affirms strengths, similarities and differences between peers.

Highest Bids on Group Artworks

Congratulations to the following people and families who won the highest bids on the large group Canvases

Ocean Room

Rainbow Fish: Taryn Williams
Penguins: Negri Family
Dolphins: Menasse Family

Bush Room

Joeys: Trikha Family
Wallabies: Johnson Family
Wallabies: Coloured Raindrops: Bec Broker
Kangaroos Purple People: K
Kangaroos Bombs and Flicks: Meadows

Rainforest Room

Green and Bronze: Welsh Family
Red, Pink and Bronze: Quinn Family
Red and Black: Julia Stockwell
Purple and Blue: Hallinan Family
Frogs: Kumar Family



When Your Child Comes Home Messy

Red paint in the hair? Blue paint on the jeans? Sand in the shoes? Food on a favorite shirt? White socks that look brown? Sleeves a bit damp?

YOUR CHILD PROBABLY....

- Worked with a friend
- Solved a problem
- Created a masterpiece
- Negotiated a difference
- Learned a new skill
- Had a great time
- Developed new language skills



YOUR CHILD PROBABLY DIDN'T....

- Feel lonely
- Become bored
- Do repetitive tasks that are too babyish
- Do worksheets that are too easy
- Do sit down work that is discouraging



Young children really learn when they are actively involved in play.....not when someone is talking to them.

There is a difference between "messy" and "lack of care." Our team made sure your child was fed, warm, offered new skills and planned fun hands-on things to do because that's how young children learn!



Please remember to dress your children in clothes that can get dirty and shoes that are appropriate for running and playing outside. Please remember to pack labeled clothes that suit a range of seasons so your child can change if necessary!