

Norwest CCC News – May 2008

2 Maitland PI Baulkham Hills NSW 2153* Ph 02 8850 2833* F 02 8850 2844 * E norwestccc@optusnet.com.au

Setting the Standard for High Quality, Affordable Child Care in the Hills District

Director's Update

We are delighted to have been awarded the 2008 Hills Shire Local Business Award for best Specialised Business. With such a broad category we were up against some very strong competition, and were very proud to have been judged the best in the area. This is yet another opportunity for our wonderful team to get recognised for the fantastic work we do everyday. Thank you also to all the wonderful parents who took the time to nominate us.



Dates for your diary:

- 9th June – Public Holiday - Centre Closed
- 24th June – Pyjama Day
- 27th June – Red Nose Day



Works of art to take home

Don't forget that your child's art and craft folders are available in their rooms, and that this is where we place their art work to go home (so that it doesn't get squashed). If you're not sure about where they are, please don't hesitate to ask one of your teachers.

Spot Check confirms that we're 'spot on'

As a part of their ongoing assurance that we're doing everything according to the regulations, the Department of Community Services conduct unannounced 'spot checks'. During these visits, 2 advisors turn up and check that all aspects of the centre are running well – as well as some specific checks. We had a spot check last week, and got a 'perfect score' from the assessors – what a fantastic result for the team.

Parent Surveys

The link to our online parent survey will be sent out later this week – we are looking forward to getting your feedback. As always, if there's anything on your mind (big or small, good or bad) let us know.

Families Week

We had a fantastic time during families week this year. We kicked off with a Mother's Day morning tea, and it was great to see such a big turn out from all our fabulous mums. We also had a great jumping castle which the children absolutely loved. To finish off the week we had a Families Morning Tea and thanks to those parents who made the effort to come along.

The key message from families week was to try and help families maintain a work/ life balance And by the way, we hope you loved the mouse mats!

Meet our new staff.....

Samantha Rice

Sam has begun a traineeship with us this month! Samantha finished high school in 2006 and tried her hand at hairdressing but decided that child care was where her passions lay. She is working in the Ocean Room with the babies and so is fitting in really well!



Dana Brown

Dana will be working with us part time while she studies her Diploma in Childrens Services. Dana has a one year old daughter called Lara who will be in the Ocean room. She also has a seven year old daughter. Dana has had previous child care experience, mainly as an office administrator in a child care centre in New Zealand..

Home Safety Check list

We've include a 'home safety checklist link from Westmead Children's Hospital – it's a good way to stop and think about how your home is set up for your kids.

http://www.chw.edu.au/parents/kidshealth/safety_facts/heets/pdf/home_safety_checklist.pdf

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Spotlight on.....Lyn

Some of our staff have been with us for a long time, but you might not get to see them day-to-day, so we thought we'd do a quick Q&A with them.

Name: Lyn Binning
Started at Norwest:

When it opened -
March 2003

Working in: The
Ocean Room

Family: Married with
3 teenaged children

Favorite thing to do
on a weekend:

Gardening, going out
for tea, catching up with family and being a taxi driver
for my children (they play a lot of sport)

Something you didn't know about me: I used to be a
model.



50% Child Care Rebate

What a great result from the budget – the government has increased the child care rebate to 50%, and it will be paid quarterly. HOWEVER to get this, you must be registered with the Family Assistance Office, and provide us with your CRN, and them with our provider number. Call the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50 for more details.

CCMS (Child Care Management System)

The government will be changing the way CCB (Child care Benefit) and CCR (Child Care Rebate) are administered. This huge national project has involved overhauling the computer systems for every child care centre. As you can imagine, the project has had some hiccups. However, at some point soon, we will be switching over to the new system. We'll let you know when, and how this will affect you, as soon as we know details. In the meanwhile, we thank all families for completing their updated enrolment forms (the additional information – eg parent date of birth and middle name, is required for the new system).

Immunisation Update

A quick reminder to you all to bring in an updated copy of your blue books. Most of you would have provided an update when you completed the updated enrolment forms – however, if your children have recently had shots, please don't forget to bring in the book so that we can update our records.

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/diets_yn.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?p=284>

The NSW food authority has some Food Safety tips
<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumer/c-food.asp>

Nutrition Australia has some handy advice
<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org>

Annual Meeting

Thanks to those families who came to our Annual Meeting. We got some great feedback and ideas, and we'll be moving along with those in the coming weeks. The minutes of the meeting are pinned to the notice board in the foyer, and we welcome any other ideas or feedback.

Policy/ Procedure changes

We have recently carried out a review of our centre philosophy in collaboration with parents and staff and have made very few changes. Our philosophy guides the way we do things at the centre and the decisions we make. There is a copy on display in the foyer if you are interested in re-reading it (you also have a copy in your parent Handbooks)

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What a Team!

It's been an exciting month for us!!!

Rachel won the **Child Care NSW Outstanding Achiever** award

Lauren was a finalist (and close runner up) in the **Child Care NSW Trainee of the Year** award



Rachel was shortlisted for the **Australian Family Fisher Price Child Care Worker of the Year** – and our other centre in Epping – Midson Road Child Care Centre won the award for Australian Child Care Centre of the year. Both of these are outstanding results as there were over 1500 entries from across Australia!

Ashley, Louise, Lauren, Alison and **Amy Potts** were all nominated as **Outstanding Young Achiever in the Local Business Awards**.

And finally, we won the **Specialised Business Category in the Local Business Awards**.

Once again, thank you to those parents who wrote testimonials for us – we appreciate your support.

Green Thumbs Up!

Lyn is following on from a project with the babies and helping to manage the replanting of our garden around the edge of the yard. Keep your eyes on our gorgeous (and interactive!) plants – many of them are herbs that we'll use in our cooking, or have a lovely smell or foliage to touch.



If you've got some plants at home and you'd like to donate them to our yard, speak with Lyn – she'd love some more edible plants, or kid friendly

plants such as lavender, cordyline, sage, rosemary and sacred bamboo. We'll spend some time with your children nurturing their plant at the centre!

Lyn also has a copy of the KidSafe list for gardens. You'd be surprised what plants are poisonous and toxic (we were!), and there are some lovely suggestions for your gardens. She'd love to share the list with you – grab her in the mornings for a chat.

Training

As always, our team have been busily attending workshops and courses and up skilling themselves
Nesha was finally (!) awarded a Diploma in Childrens Services
Lauren – has completed her Certificate III in Childrens Services

Nesha – attended a Child Care NSW Conference, and as well as presenting a workshop on Crucial Conversations, and attending sessions at the Child Care NSW conference. She was part of a 'hypothetical 20/20' panel talking about the direction child care is heading in the coming years.

Professor Michael Keane an economist presented details of his research into the effects of child care on children

"...informal care used after the first year leads to significant reductions in child achievement. Formal care (i.e centre based care) does not have any adverse effect on cognitive outcomes. In fact, our estimates imply that formal care has large positive effects on cognitive outcomes for children..."

Nesha can provide more details if you are interested

Lorna and **Amanda** also attended a number of workshops at the conference.

Louise and **Lauren** went to a workshop on Outdoor Set Up and Programming.

We've also had a huge number of students at the centre lately. This is part of our commitment to supporting new entrants to the child care industry and is a great way to find fantastic staff (e.g. Dana)

THANK YOUs

The Barry Family – books

The Zambrano Family – paper

The Lindsay Family – balls

The Schloss Family - clothes

Ron the Reading Bear

What an amazing success!

We have been absolutely delighted by the adventures that Ron has been having with the Kangaroo Group.

Ron has had a great time reading all sorts of things with his friends – and sharing this with everyone by writing in the book. Thanks to the

parents who have participated so far - and for those who are on the waiting list, don't get overwhelmed!



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Entertainment Books

Thank you to all of the families who bought an entertainment book. We have a couple left to sell – so if you've used yours, and were so excited you have friends who want them now, just speak with Rachel or Jayne.

Don't forget that you get a 5% discount at Coles by buying the vouchers online through the entertainment book – so log on and save!

What are your kids interested in?

Our emergent approach to programming means that we integrate the children's learning with the things they're interested in. This means that we can plan activities and experiences based on the feedback you give us. So grab a pen and, in the 'parent comments' space in the Day Books let us know what your kids are into!

We love digital photos that we can load onto the computer or even print outs that we can make into books! Brochures, posters anything !

Turn Rainy Days into Happy Days...

- Make some muffins / cookies (grab the anzac day bikkie recipe we gave you..and if it goes a little wrong it's easily make into 'anzac slice')
- Build a cubby house out of chairs, towels
- Pull out all of your glamour clothes and play dress ups
- Put on your wet weather gear and find some puddles (you have to jump in them too!).
- Use shaving cream and a plastic mat (a garbage bag stuck down with masking tape) to do some finger painting
- Put on some relaxing music and do some yoga stretches together
- Read every single one of the books on your shelf
- Have a party with your toys – invite everyone in the house, prepare and decorate and then have a great time
- Grab your old nail polish and paint everyone's fingers and toes
- Write a shopping list together and go shopping, take as much time as you need to make it fun and relaxing (make sure everyone has a big snack before they go!).
- Write a book together about your rainy day – include photos and drawings, and read it together that night



Playdough Recipe

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups flour
- 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 cups water
- Powder paint or food colouring
- Saucepan

Method

- Place all the dry ingredients into a bowl.
- Boil kettle and add coloured water when boiling.
- Knead with hands until nice consistency, add flour if too sticky.
- Store in airtight container in refrigerator.
- (Additionally colour may be worked into dough. Essential Oils/Glitter can also be added for that little bit of extra sensory excitement).

What are the benefits of playdough?

- Strengthens and develops the small muscles
- Provides a sensory experience/exploration of texture
- Encourages creative thinking and imagination
- Allows children to represent ideas through dough in their own way
- Encourages mathematical thinking such as – part /whole; big /small, together / apart

Loud Shirt Day / Red Nose Day

Thank you all for your participation in Loud Shirt Day. As a part of our ongoing commitment to supporting our community through charities, we will continue to participate in one fundraising event each month or so. Next month is Red Nose Day for SIDS and Kids.

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Ocean Room



There is a lot going on in the Ocean Room at the moment... The Penguins and Dolphins have been really busy exploring nature. There has been lots of gardening going on such as digging in the dirt, planting seeds and watering the plants. We are

currently looking into going on an excursion to see some other gardens within the community. We have also said farewell to a number of Dolphins who have transitioned up to the Rainforest Room. Well done and good luck.

The Rainbow Fish have also been quite busy with many interesting goings on. Some of the younger bubs are beginning to crawl and are moving a lot on their tummy. Other babies have been interested in bubbles, which lead to some fun water play.. We've also had some transitions within the room with some Rainbow Fish becoming Penguins and some Penguins become Dolphins. It's all happening in the Ocean Room!

Rainforest Room

The 2-3's have been very busy over the past couple of weeks. We have become very interested in families – who is in our family and drawing pictures of our family members.



This has led to naming and labeling body parts. Also a few weeks ago some of us went on an excursion to the Nexus Café up the road. It all started with the children wanting to make baby chinos for their friends in the home corner. So we organised to walk up the road with our money ready and we ordered some baby chinos and muffins, they were very yummy and it was lots of fun. We will look forward to organizing another one soon.

The jumping castle come on Monday the 12th which was very exciting, this led to us finding out what things are hard and soft. We did an experiment with feathers and stones to see which one would sink and which would float, the feathers felt nice on our face "I like that" commented Jordan M.

Another interesting fun activity we have all enjoyed is colour sorting. We have 4 coloured bears and 4 coloured bowls and we have to find the matching colours, but it gets a bit tricky because the bears are also different sizes so we are learning the difference between big and small. We are adding some coloured stones for sorting this week.

Just a quick thank you to all the families who have brought in photos of their holiday adventures, we love looking at them and hearing about your time away.

Bush Room

With the end of daylight savings the Bush Room routines and the playground shade allow children to play outside for longer periods of time. With this in mind, and from a suggestion from one of our parents, we are encouraging the children to take responsibility to recognise the appropriate clothing for different weather. For this we need your help in ensuring children have an adequate variety of clothing like shorts, t-shirts, long sleeve shirts, long pants like track pants, jumpers, and socks and underwear. Excluding sheets, these are the only items that should be in your children's bags on a daily basis.

The last couple of weeks have seen many interests come to life through play and discussions. The Joey children have been exploring some signs through Makaton. Keep watching for our notice board to see which signs the children have been learning. The Joey children have been actively exploring signing at mealtimes, and learning to sign songs like "I can sing a rainbow". Ask your children to sign these songs for you. The Joeys are also big on going on adventures and have recently travelled to the Post Office to send letters across the world to family and Evan who left us back in March. The Wallabies have been exploring Space and are trying to learn the planets. There's a great Space display around near book corner, make sure you go and have a look. The Wallabies are also big on dressing up and dramatising their understandings of life and people. Finally the Kangaroos are heading in leaps and bounds getting ready for their school lives. This year the Kangaroos, along with Amanda have been studying literacy concepts such as sight words, the alphabet letters, writing a book and reading. The Kangaroos have also been exploring cooking, tastes and learning mathematics like halves and quarters! Learning fractions already!

Amanda is also part of the local Transition to School Networking Forum which has been very valuable for making links with local schools and building on ideas for easing the transition to school.

