

Newsletter

The Community Child Care Centre @ FMC

Autumn 2017

The redevelopment of our outdoor environments is both a daunting and exciting challenge.

Whilst we were immensely proud of our naturally shaded play-spaces prior to the FMC carpark development (most of which was built/designed by staff), it was also obvious that more of our curriculum occurs in the outdoors as this is where the majority of children choose to spend each day. This redevelopment is seen as a great opportunity to start afresh with some modern ideas and improvements. The removal of our trees, shade structures and the demolition of our sandpits have provided the impetus for change and we are excited about the possibilities that lay ahead.

The temporary wall *should* come down in the next 1-2 months and at that time new outdoor buildings will be erected in the three separate play yards. These buildings will provide weatherproof areas for meal-times, structured activities and group-times improving the capacity to spread the children out during inclement weather conditions. These buildings are entirely funded (and will be erected by) SAHLN / Hansen & Yuncken as part of the negotiations that also include the baby-house pergola which has recently been completed.



When the centre opened in 1986, it was landscaped with a limited appreciation for the requirements of young children. Mono-use climbing frames, brightly coloured plastic equipment, a rabbit hutch and a tiny sand-pit were the play features up top while concrete pavers were the medium of choice underfoot with treated pine the preferred construction material.

In 2017, we have moved a long way from those ideas. We now understand that young children need a dynamic and multi-dimensional play environment in which to expand ideas, gain the core strength for balancing and climbing yet provide the room for open-ended play. Children's collaboration and enthusiasm should be complimented and encouraged by the environment as a whole.

Alongside these outcomes, children require calm and contemplative spaces where day-dreaming and spontaneous social interactions thrive and where activity and interests can be ongoing throughout a day or a week without the need to 'clean-up' or finish due to finite space and human resources.

Our new play outdoor environments will feature all of these factors within a philosophical framework that sees our children have access to the outdoors all day, every day.

We have begun designing a more challenging and interesting outdoor environment that will improve the lives of our children immensely.

Other features include:

1. natural shade from a mix of deciduous and evergreen mature trees
2. focus on natural resources such as sand, dirt, water, bark/sticks
3. interesting and varied focus areas (sand-pits, bamboo forests etc.)
4. the construction of new cubby houses

A working bee will be announced in the coming weeks (probably a Saturday in August) at which time we will be pulling up hundreds of concrete pavers and painting some outdoor woodwork. Please let me know if you would like to have any input into this ongoing process.

FMC Carpark Construction

The past couple of weeks have seen an increase in building activity immediately behind our temporary fence and with an associated increase in noise levels as well.

On more than one occasion, it has been simply too loud outside for children's safety so we have been confined to indoors for short periods. This has been less than optimal for all concerned but we are over the worst of it now and eagerly looking ahead to a calm and quiet environment.

The building process has been going on for 18 months now and it's fair to say that we are all, (staff, children and parents alike)

getting a little jaded with the noise, dust and overall inconvenience. With a further 6 months until this development is due to finish and a long winter reaching out ahead of us, it is more important than ever that we continue to be positive and patient - safe in the knowledge that we are finally approaching the end of this ordeal.

It is probable that we may need to close the centre for all or part of a day in the coming months as some of the crane work and deconstruction of the temporary wall means we will not be able to use our outdoor environments for some period of time. If this was to eventuate, it would most likely be a Friday in July or August and plenty of prior notification will be provided.



Web Page

We now have a web page, www.fmcchildcare.com which will allow us to communicate more effectively with parents and the wider community.

You will notice that a couple of the pages are password protected. The password for the **gallery** is 2017parents and the **kindy life** password is kindy2017.

As I said in a bulk email a couple of weeks ago, please let me know if you do not wish your child's image to appear on the web page or in the password protected pages.

Winter clothing

The colder weather is upon us and now is a good time for considering what to pack into children's bags. Warm outer clothing that is easy for children to remove themselves and appropriate footwear that is both protective and flexible enough for active play is essential at this time of year. Spare socks and pants are often required as the outdoor environment is damp and children sometimes need a dry alternative by mid morning.

Children can be very active and will overheat if dressed in too many layers, and some clothing restricts movement and may not encourage participation in active play.

Please remember if you would like to discuss any issue regarding the care of your child, please contact either myself or Julianne. We are always happy to meet with you.

Martin