



The Community Child Care Centre at FMC

Newsletter

Spring 2018

Welcome to the Spring edition of our quarterly Newsletter. There is much cause for optimism as we head into the warmer months if for no other reason, so we can see the Spring growth of our recent plantings. The weather plays a big role in the day to day operation of our program so understandably, the staff eagerly welcome the warmer days!

Intergenerational Program FMC

A selection of our older kindy children have recently begun an Intergenerational Care trial with the Rehabilitation Centre at FMC. Intergenerational Care refers to models of care that bring together older people and children in a shared setting for their mutual benefit through activities aimed at meeting specific life goals. (Wadsworth & Whitehouse, 2007)



These visits involve a 1-hour, weekly session where up to 10 children share activities with a small group of elderly people who are experiencing short term hospital visits. Activities include fine-motor tasks such as play-dough, Lego and cutting/pasting. Communication based activities such as Bingo, Dominos and shopping games are also planned to allow language (verbal/non-verbal) and laughter to feature highly during these sessions.

The benefits of this experience are numerous for the kindy children who not only enjoy the activities and the excursion experience, but also the opportunity to interact, empathise and better understand the life-span development of different people and the important role that we all play in society.

For the elderly hospital patient, these sessions provide a welcome distraction to the sometimes lonely and monotonous reality of a hospital stay and provides therapeutic outcomes pertaining to communication, confidence and well-being.

Natalie and Steph (Kindy) have been liaising/designing this program in conjunction with FMC health professionals/therapists and have identified the following parameters as fundamental to the success of the program:

- No physical contact between children and elderly participants
- Correct hand washing/hygiene practices to be adhered to
- 1:5 child staff ratio
- Equipment to be clean and hygienic
- All participants to be illness (infectious) free
- Program to be evaluated on an ongoing basis

Community involvement is a strong component of our philosophy and the Intergenerational program is just the latest foray into the local community for our kindy children.



Outdoor Update

We have been busy over the past few months rebuilding and designing new & interesting play-spaces in each of the outdoor environments. New paths have been created in both Kindy and Toddler 1 to allow wheelchair access to our outdoor pavilions and many new plants have been planted throughout Toddler 1 and Kindy.

We are close to completing these new play spaces. In the coming few weeks we will be installing plumbing to distribute trickling water to the many 'potion' zones and erecting temporary shade solutions for summer as we await the tree growth which will become a permanent source of shade in the coming years.

The large boat which currently resides in the sand-pit of the kindy yard will soon be moved to the top of the kindy 'forest' where it will be repaired and landscaped into its new position.

The kindy sand-pit will then be redesigned to allow for a more defined digging space for children to enjoy.

Finally, before the end of the year we are hoping to commence work on the new Kindy tree-house which will be constructed around the gum trees in the kindy yard. This will provide yet another climbing activity for upper body muscle development as well as create a new intimate space for children's imaginary and dramatic play.

Toddler 2 Sleep Rooms

In October, we will be installing glass partitions in the Toddler 2 indoor environment to create two new sleep rooms. The original design of the T2 room did have a central partition which was impractical from both a supervision and curriculum perspective. The 2 new sleep rooms which are modelled on the Toddler 1 sleep rooms, will allow for quieter sleep-times in fully transparent and thus observable sleep areas - which is especially important for toddler children requiring more than one sleep throughout the day.

Christmas Closure

This year, the centre will close at **6.00pm on Friday the 21st of December 2018 and reopen at 6.30am on Wednesday the 2nd of January 2019**. This closure is slightly longer than in most years due to Christmas day/ New Year's Day falling on Tuesdays.

No Fees will be charged during this time.

Session Times

Please remember to pick your child up on or before 12.45 pm for the morning session, and not to drop off your child before 1.00pm for the afternoon session. This is important because the overlap of the two sessions could cause a breach of licence for the Centre. Please also be aware of our policy for arriving after 6.00pm to pick up children.



Staffing

Very sadly we will bid farewell to **Sam Briskham** (T2) in October as he again travels the world in an open-ended search for adventure and knowledge. This will be devastating news for the children and families of T2 especially, but also a great loss to the entire centre. Sam's training is in Behavioural Sciences with a particular interest in children's mental health. His ability to bond / communicate with children is a great asset to the centre and not easily replaced. Sam is heading initially to San Francisco then heading down into Central and South America. We sincerely wish Sam all the best and remain hopeful that upon his return, he will consider again joining our team in some capacity or another.

Tanya Smirnova (T1) will return next week from Maternity Leave with her beautiful baby girl, Myah.

Aiko Bennett who has been replacing Tanya during this time, will herself be going on Maternity Leave in the coming weeks. Aiko's first baby is due in November.

We wish Aiko all the best and welcome Tanya wholeheartedly back onto the staff team.

Sun Protection

Now that we are heading into warmer weather it is important that we follow the Cancer Council Guidelines for UV exposure. Please apply sunscreen to your child's exposed skin before attending the centre. During each day, staff will reapply sun screen to children depending on weather and activities. One of the (only) fortunate aspects of being enshrined behind the new multi-storey carpark is shade in the afternoons. It is however, very sunny in the mornings and sun damage can occur very quickly to young skin if not protected. Please provide light clothing that covers the shoulders and footwear that is easily removed and labelled with your child's name. Please feel free to provide a hat for your child if you wish however we do provide ample hats which are regularly washed, and children are reminded (relentlessly) to keep hats on when in the sunshine.

Recent Illnesses

The centre has experienced some very persistent communicable diseases over the past few weeks. Conjunctivitis, Hand, Foot & Mouth and various viral diseases have been present within the centre community despite our best efforts to control their spread. Unfortunately, there are doctors that provide medical clearances for children without taking a swab or considering the group environments that young children exist within. The variance of diagnosis from the medical fraternity for the same symptoms makes it especially difficult to get on top of illness outbreaks. For parents that are forced to take time off from work to care for sick children this is an ongoing issue. Please be assured that we will do everything we can to ensure that children who are unwell do not attend the centre and that when an illness does present, we will follow Federal Government Guidelines in our response.

The focus and philosophy of our work is to make each child's experience as enjoyable and stimulating as possible which in turn, allows you as parents to continue working/studying safe in the knowledge that your children really benefit from attending our service.

We know that this outcome is dependent on continual staff development and ongoing consultation with parents and families.

Every child is different, and each requires unique strategies to ensure we always achieve the highest standard of care. Any advice or assistance that achieves this goal is most welcome.

Please feel free to contact us anytime to discuss your child's needs.

Julianne & Martin