

FAMILY DAY CARE NEWSLETTER



CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AID

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2008

EXCURSIONS AND EXCITING VISITORS

A visit to Fairfield City Farm gave some children an opportunity to see farm animals up close, to touch and hear and smell. For some it was really wonderful, others were not at all sure about the big pigs and cows. The chickens, ducklings, lambs and goat kids seemed to be a big success with everyone.

The visit from "Something Wild" was very exciting. On three mornings the children were introduced to a variety of native animals. There was a mother possum called "Blossom" and her twin babies, some lizards, a baby crocodile, a beautiful green tree frog, a carpet snake and a tawny frogmouth.



PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

The most recent edition of Early Childhood Australia's Webwatch: webwatch@earlychildhood.org.au reports that Australia is only one of two countries without paid maternity leave. If you would like to read more or add your name to a petition follow the links on the website.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Thanks to everyone for getting the surveys back to us so quickly. We are waiting to hear about our validation visit and will let you know more when we do.

Glancing through the surveys we have seen that a few parents are unsure about the support provided to Carers and children. We thought it might be helpful to tell you a little about home visits and what they aim to achieve.

HOME VISITS

Each Child Development Officer has a group of Carers that she will visit for 3 to 6 months. Some part time CDOs work as a team. The aim is to see each Carer fortnightly although staff shortages and things like arranging alternative care for a sick Carer may stretch the interval occasionally.

The main focus of the visit is to support the Carer in her job and to observe the children's development and wellbeing. They may discuss particular children and their needs, offer strategies to help with guiding children's behaviour, bring a book or an activity to enjoy with the children, suggest ideas for activities and give the Carer any information or paperwork that is current. They will write a Home Visit Report which describes what they have observed that day. A copy goes to parents and the Carer, as well as on the child's file. It is not always possible to leave them that day, but they will give them to the Carer as soon as possible. They will always be alert to safety issues, and will draw the Carer's attention to anything that needs changing.

RELIEF CARE

Staff also provide relief care (where possible) if a Carer has a specialist or other important appointment.

TRAINING

Another aspect of our support is training for Carers. Every year Carers are provided with training that helps them to upgrade their skills, learn about regulatory requirements (e.g. quality assurance, changes to CCB etc.) On 6 September there was a Carers Conference at Meadowbank which 50 Carers attended. Carers have also attended training in the evenings throughout the year.

RAISING CONCERNS

A few surveys also indicated that families were not aware of the procedure for raising concerns. A copy of our grievance policy is included in the Policy Handout that is given to each family at the enrolment interview, and there is also a full Policy Manual at every Carer's house. To ensure that everyone is aware we will distribute a copy of "Your Right to Lodge a Complaint" which is a summary of the process.

REFERENCE GROUP

There is also a Reference Group which we encourage parents to join. It is mostly an email feedback group and we receive some excellent suggestions from that group. If you are not involved in the Reference Group and would like to be, please email: toni.scott@ccas.org.au for the information to be sent to you.

COMMUNICATION

Communication with families is usually through the Carers. We have 650 children enrolled at this time, and so it is not possible to be in regular phone contact with each family. The Home Visit Reports are one way that we try to keep you informed and we are always delighted to have a parent contact the visiting CDO for more feedback.

However, if we ever have concerns about any aspect of a child's development, we will always discuss this with the parents and if appropriate refer them to other services for further assistance.

IMMUNISATION REMINDER

Is your child turning 4? Then it is time for their four year immunisation. (Unless exempt)

ALL CHILDREN ARE NOW REQUIRED TO HAVE COMPLETED THE CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION AT FOUR YEARS OF AGE.