

Families and Community Newsletter October 2011



Director's Update from Rachel

With Ashley off on Maternity Leave, Rebecca and I have been stepping in as Acting Directors. We would like to send out big *Congratulations* to Ashley, her husband Matt, and now big brother Adam on the birth of Kaeden back on 13th September. All are doing really well. Ashley will continue to pop in regularly, keeping in touch with happenings in and around Norwest, as she gradually steps back into Directing.

Child Care Week was a great success here at Norwest and our applications have been submitted for the National Child Care Week Awards. We have been recognised as finalists in:

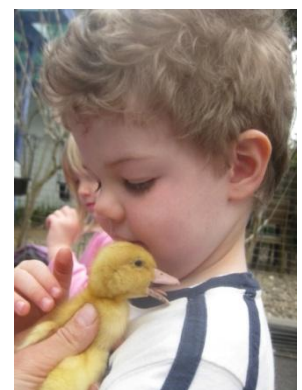
- * Best Program or Activity Illustrating Children's Health & Safety
- * Best Program or Activity Illustrating Educational Program and Practice
- * Best Program or Activity Illustrating Physical Environment
- * Beary Good Friends
- * Outstanding Contribution by an Individual - Michele Booth

The big Child Care Week Awards Dinner is 22nd October 2011. Please feel free to have a look through our submissions located on the desk in the foyer. Some of our Child Care Week activities included a Teddy Bears Picnic, Animal Farm visit, Pasta Making and Local Excursions to spread the feeling of Spring in the air! Below is a snapshot of some of the experiences.

This newsletter is action packed with lots of key information. Any questions please do not hesitate to ask, you can pop us an email, give us a call or have a friendly chat when you come in.

DATES FOR HOLIDAY CLOSING

Many of you are beginning to plan your end of year holidays so we thought it would be timely to update everyone with our closing dates and times. Norwest will close down at **4pm sharp** on **Friday 23rd December 2011**. **Norwest** will be closed on **Monday 9th January 2012** for a **Pupil Free Day** and will reopen at **7am** on **Tuesday 10th January 2012**. If you have any questions about the end of year, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Admin note from Sarah...

Just a friendly reminder fees need to be paid on the child's first day of attendance for the week. The easiest way to do this is through Ezi-Debit. If paying cash please make sure your money is put in an envelope and placed into the red fees box – **DO NOT HAND TO STAFF**. The fees box is emptied regularly throughout the week.

With a large majority of our **communication** happening through email, it is highly important that you update your contacts here should your details change. If your home or work details change please fill out the appropriate form which can be collected from outside Sarah's office. We often have emails bounce as a result of wrong email addresses and inboxes being too full. With so much information being shared it is vital you receive all of our communication.

Thank you to our Norwest families for the following donations...

Kazangi – Envelopes

Lewis– Envelopes and Paper

Eivers – Computer screen

Macarthur – Paper

Bugay – Fabric

Howes - Plastic bags

Johnson – Fish tank

Rae – Costumes

Educators with Red Shirts

Just a refresher, our new staff as well as students wear "red shirts". We are continually supporting new entrants to the industry by mentoring **University** and **TAFE students** on 'prac placements' - where they get to put all of their theory into practice. You'll see some of them around the centre. Some may visit once a week whilst others are here for longer blocks of time. They are often a little shy, as this is often their very first practical experiences of child care so if you see one of them please say hi!

Important Dates for your Diary

Oct: 10th National Nutrition Week

13th World Sight Day

14th Bush Room Sports Day

16th Teddy Bears Picnic

17th National Water Week

21st Children's Week & Pink Ribbon Day

31st Halloween

Nov: 9th National Recycling Week

11th Remembrance Day

13th World Kindness Day

20th Universal Children's Day

23rd 2010 School Reunion

27th Baby and Kids Market in Kellyville

29th Ocean Room End of Year Party

Dec: 2nd International Day of People with a Disability

6th Rainforest End of Year Party

13th Bush End of Year Party

23rd Last day for 2011

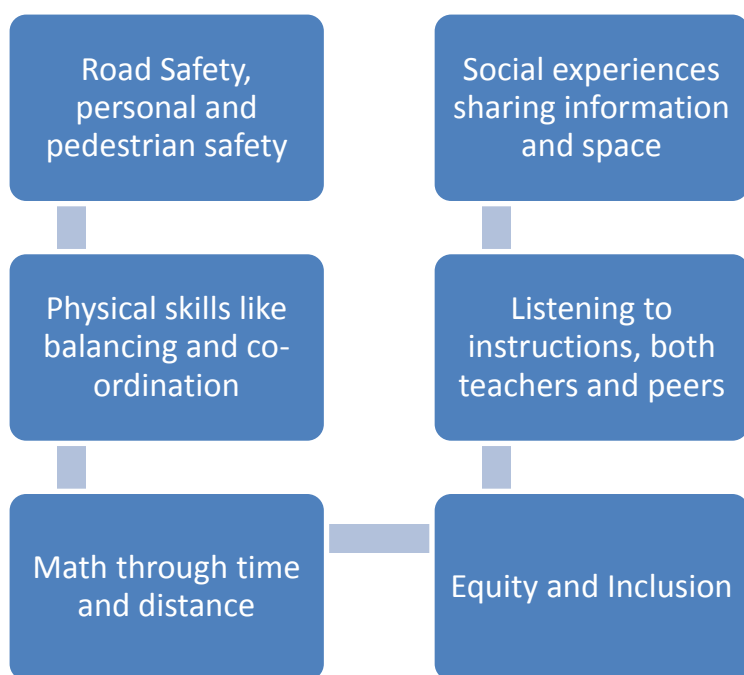
Jan: 10th First day for 2012

26th Australia Day Public Holiday

The team at Norwest would like to say a huge THANK YOU to the **Swansborough** family for their massive donation of several laptops, computer supplies and box loads of paper. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and it means that all rooms have direct access to computers making documenting and researching a quick and easy process. THANK YOU!

Road safety...Bike Day

Road safety was recently explored as part of our Child Care Week celebrations. The Bush room children were invited to a fabulous "Bike and Scooter Day", where the children each brought in their favourite sets of wheels from home. With the help of their friends and teachers, the children were able to safely explore some key aspects of Road Safety. It was great to see most of the children already adhering to key road safety rules with nearly all children bringing in their helmets too! There are many key messages and concepts being explored including:



Fernanda...

Have you seen the yummy treats on the front counter on behalf of the lovely Fernanda? As you may know, Fernanda is from Brazil and recently undertook her IELTS (English) exams and passed with flying colours. As such, she has decided she would like to call Australia home and apply for permanent residency. With her IELTS up her sleeve, all that is left is do is complete her application - which has a rather large fee to process. This is where the treats come in...because we love her dearly and would miss her terribly; we want to help her to stay! So if you would like a yummy treat (for you or the kids) please take a sample and place in a gold coin donation. We are also doing a big shout out to anyone with a business who would like to help Fernanda, by perhaps matching or beating our first big donation from Brenrose Property Inspections (Clever family) of \$200! Amazing and so thoughtful! Fernanda was in tears! We thank you in advance for helping us and look forward to many more years of seeing Fernanda's bright and bubbly face around the centre!

Arrivals

Please make sure your children are here by 10:30am as we need to ensure all numbers are catered for. If your children have transition to school activities happening as we head towards the end of the year, please just give us the heads up on dates and times. And don't forget to sign in.

Driveway Safety - Car Reversing and 4WD

In light of a couple of recent tragedies which have attracted media attention, we thought it might be a good idea to review driveway safety. Tragically one child, often a toddler, is run over in the driveway of their home every week in Australia. 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.

What can you do to keep your child safer?

- ALWAYS SUPERVISE your children whenever a vehicle is to be moved - hold their hands or hold them close to keep them safe.
- If you're the only adult around and need to move a vehicle, even just a small distance, PUT CHILDREN SECURELY IN THE VEHICLE WITH YOU while you move it.
- ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO PLAY IN SAFER AREAS AWAY FROM THE DRIVEWAY & CARS - the driveway is like a small road and should not be used as a play area.
- MAKE CHILD ACCESS TO THE DRIVEWAY DIFFICULT – for example use security doors, fencing or gates.

For more information please visit:

NRMA <http://www.nrma.com.au/keeping-safe-secure/car-safety/driver-visibility/index.shtml?ref=reversing>

Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program <http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au/>

Family and Child Resources

There are numerous child and family services available to parents in the local area, as well; many are now taking up the opportunity to communicate via different social media like Facebook. These sites and networks provide useful information on things like development, eating, sleeping, play and learning, forums for connecting with other families, health and wellbeing and much more!

Facebook Contacts: Rouse Hill Families Connect, The Hills Parenting Centre, Kidspot, Parenting Australia, Essential Baby, Bubhub, Johnson's Baby Australia

Some useful web links are provided below for you to follow through at your leisure:

- The Hills Parenting Centre – www.hillsparentingcentre.com
- Pregnancy and Parenting Wellbeing Centre- www.pregnancyandparenting.com.au
- Wesley Mission www.wesleymission.org.au/centres/Family/familiesconnect.asp
- Kidspot – www.kidspot.com.au
- Huggies Australia – www.huggies.com.au
- Blackmores – www.blackmores.com.au

We also have a wealth of resources available for you at the centre through our children's library, staff resources and information folders in our foyer. Please speak with staff should you require any specific information from allergies to sun safety, immunisation to nutrition.

Open Door Policy

This is a friendly reminder that Norwest has an Open Door Policy. This means you can come and go as often as you like! You are most welcome (provided your children are settled) to stay for morning tea, come in for lunch or even come for a play in the afternoons. On this note, do you have special talents you would love to share? Maybe you're a budding chef or are super crafty; maybe you love reading stories, play an instrument or even just have some spare time. If this is you then we would love to take this opportunity to remind you that we thoroughly enjoy parent input in our programs. It is a wonderful experience for both children and staff alike!

End of Year Party Dates

To celebrate all the wonderful achievements throughout the year, Norwest hosts a party for each room late in November and December. These events are big and due to the enormity of these events, they are run over three weeks, allowing you the opportunity to share in some great experiences with the children including singing, concerts and for the children off to school, a graduation! As we get closer to the dates we will update you with more specific information but for now, mark these dates in your diary. Friends and family are warmly invited to join us on the night.

OCEAN ROOM – TUESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER
RAINFOREST ROOM – TUESDAY 6TH DECEMBER
BUSH ROOM – TUESDAY 13TH DECEMBER

Staff Training

All staff attended Conflict Resolution Training run by Colin Slattery from Semman and Slattery

Several of our **New and Ocean room staff** took place in learning more about “Where’s my Mummy gone” and “Being educators of Babies and Toddlers”

Monique and Fernanda travelled to Wollongong for a wonderful creative arts convention

Monique has recently attended two Leadership courses and a Road Safety course on linking the Early Years Learning Framework

Becky, Jess, and Louise went to effective communication course on Augmentative communication

Amanda and Becky participated in an all-day seminar from Expect A Star on implementing the Early Years Learning Framework, and Amanda attended another training workshop on Arts and the Early Years Learning Framework.

Many of our team updated their **Senior First Aid and CPR Training**

Nesha was recently elected to the executive board of Child Care NSW (the peak body for privately run children’s services – representing 85% of the children’s services industry) as their secretary. She will also be speaking at upcoming conferences in Canberra on attachment and the EYLF framework, as well as a Leadership Conference in Sydney.

Current Policy changes

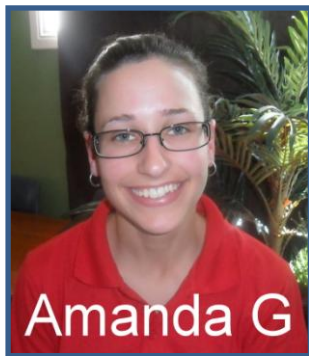
Our current policies on the notice board for your review include: Abusive and Bullying Children and Staff Training. Our Policies go through a rigorous review every year and we invite you to have input and provide feedback on these policies. You can find out about all our policies in the red Parent Policy folder out the front on the shelves.

SLUMBER PARTY

Our Slumber party was a big success with quite a few families taking up the opportunity to let their children have a “sleep” over at Norwest. The night was a fun and enjoyable experience with children enjoying movies, exploring play dough and craft and having a good veg out in pyjamas!



Spotlight On:



Started working at Norwest: August 2011

Currently working in the Rainforest room

Family: Lives with Mum, Dad, Brother, Sister and Niece

Favourite thing to do on weekend: Hang with my bestie and shopping

Previous Child Care experience: 9 years in various child care settings

Something you may not know: I do athletics!



Started working at Norwest: September 2011

Currently working with Koalas as Fernanda's assistant – Has a Cert III in Children's Services

Family: 2 brothers and 2 sisters

Favourite thing to do on weekend: Spend time with family and play cards against friends

Something you may not know: Emily just celebrated her engagement!



Started working at Norwest: September 2011

Currently working: as Internal Relief experiencing all rooms

Family: I have a 6 year old boy named Dylan

Favourite thing to do on weekend: Playing and coaching netball and hanging out with Dylan,

Something you may not know: I like my red hair!



Started working at Norwest: September 2011

Currently working with as internal relief – this is Yah's first Children's Service

Family: 5 and I'm the youngest; I have a daughter Christina who is in the Ocean Room

Favourite thing to do on weekend: Go out with friends and family

Something you may not know: I grew up in Liberia, Africa

Preventing access to potentially dangerous products

We use and keep many chemicals in our homes that are harmful to children. Young children are very vulnerable to poisonings. Poisoning is one of the leading causes of injury to children less than 5 years of age with about 40 children a week are admitted to hospital in Australia because of poisoning. The Poisons Information Centres around Australia deal with hundreds of calls each day. Most of these calls are for children aged three and under. Common poisons are medicines, cleaning products, fertilisers and pesticides for the garden, chemicals and cosmetics.

Safety Steps to Prevent Poisoning:

- Lock away all poisons when not in use. When using them, close the container immediately and place up high as a temporary safeguard.
- Install child-resistant catches on cupboards where you store poisonous products. They can be installed quite simply and don't interfere with your normal use of the cupboards.
- Get rid of unnecessary poisons. Clean out anything which you are not regularly using. This includes medicines. Contact your local pharmacy for advice.
- Know what poisons you have. Check the containers if you're not sure whether they're poisonous.
- Keep poisons in their original containers. Never transfer a poison into another container.
- Never call medicines lollies. Remember your headache pills and vitamins can be dangerous to children. Read all labels carefully.
- Choose safer products. Look for products in re-sealable child-resistant containers.
- Use a child resistant medicine cupboard in either the bathroom or your bedroom. Medicines such as sleeping tablets should not be left on bedside tables or in drawers.

Handy Hint:

Put the POISON INFORMATION NUMBER on your phone: 13 11 26. Help is available 24 hours a day Australia wide. If you think a child may have swallowed a poison, take the container and child with you to the phone and call the Poisons Information Centre. They will tell you what to-do. It helps if you can tell them what the substance is and how much has been taken. **From Kidsafe**

Father's Day Breakfast

A big thank you to all our dads who dropped in for a lovely breaky on Friday 2nd September. The children were all thrilled to be sharing the morning with their dads; eating some yummy treats, modeling with play dough and creating some very artistic pictures!



Warmer weather and sun safe clothing

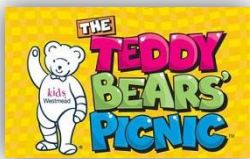
As the weather warms up we need to start being mindful of the clothes we are sending the children to child care in.

Clothing: Keeping your child's skin covered with clothes made from tightly woven fabric such as t-shirt material will protect her from the sun. If you hold the fabric up to the light you can see how much sun will get through it. It is important that children are not over or under dressed, and that clothing suits the temperature. The smaller the child the more easily they can become chilled or overheated.

Hats: A hat is a great way to protect your child from the sun. A full crown hat with a full brim or a neck flap is better than a baseball cap because it provides more shade; a chin strap in child care is a choking hazard so these will need to be removed. Please remember to leave a hat at the centre, as well as pack a spare in your child's bag (if they don't have a hat they can't play outside). Remember to LABEL the hat and any other items of clothing very clearly with your child's name.

Sunscreen: Sunscreen combined with clothing and shade is the most effective way to keep your child safe from sun and reflection. Use a high SPF sunscreen on the face, hands and any other parts of your child's body that aren't covered by clothes. Sunscreen is to be applied by parents each morning and staff will reapply in afternoon.

A friendly reminder your child's bag should only contain hats and spare clothes suitable for any weather changes. There must not be any food, medication or creams kept inside your child's bag as these are accessible to the children at all times. We have children highly allergic to some products and food; therefore, in the interest of safety please check your child's bag on a daily basis. Thank you!



Teddy Bears Picnic

COME PACK IN THE FUN AT THE PICNIC! Everyone's favourite family day out, the Teddy Bears' Picnic, will be held on Sunday 16 October from 10.30am to 4pm at Rosehill Gardens.

This year we invite you to come and 'Pack in the Fun' and help raise significant funds to support the life-saving work of The Children's Hospital at Westmead. For over three decades, families have been packing their teddy bears and picnic blankets and enjoying this very special event for a very special cause. The 2011 Teddy Bears' Picnic will be jam-packed with fun activities for families of all shapes and sizes. There will be captivating themed areas this year, Adventure Land, Fern Tree Gully and Hundred and One Acre Wood. Kids of all ages will enjoy rides, art and crafts, sporting clinics, meeting celebrities, face painting, prizes, toy testing and our very special Bear Clinic, where your child can have their bear's health checked by a beary-special bear doctor. Another highlight of the Teddy Bears' Picnic is the centre stage, where you can relax and enjoy some cool entertainment, like The Smurf Show, The Dorothy the Dinosaur Show, The Dodadums and The Bob the Builder Show. One of the very best things about this event is that the one low ticket price covers entry, rides entertainment and parking. Advance tickets, are \$20* each or \$60* for a family of four (kids under 12 months are free). www.moshtix.com.au tickets on sale now!

Some of the girls at Norwest are hoping to do some volunteer work at the Teddy Bears Picnic so we look forward to seeing some of you there!

Ocean Room



Since the last newsletter, the Ocean room have been involved in many different activities all brought on by the children's interest. The Starfish have been working on their gross motor skills by participating in climbing over our crash mats, the use of walkers and the children balancing by themselves. Each child has put in so much effort to try and experience these challenging tasks, but have also had so much fun along the way. Our Turtles group started off picking leaves from the garden, which then was turned into a fantastic experience where the children have been

planting their own seeds to grow a range of plants. Along with this the Turtles have been reciting different stories; one of their favourite has been "Bear Hunt". This test the children's memory as the educators have been asking the children what happens next. The big kids in our room are showing how clever they are with numbers and colours. The Seahorses have been counting different toys in the room. The Seahorses can all confidently count to 5 and some are even making it to 10! They are also confidently labeling their colours. Our group times now often include our "Christmas" songs and the children seem to get quite excited with the bells.



Rainforest Room

The Rainforest Room has been very busy in the lead up to Christmas. We have recently welcomed some new friends who are settling in well and enjoying exploring with their peers.



The Dragonflies have developed a great interest in Fireman and Fire Engines since our recent visit. This along with the children's passion for Fireman Sam has formed the basis of much of their play. They have been exploring this interest through creative experiences such as creating their own fire badges, dressing up as Fireman, and researching what firemen do on the internet. They have also launched into investigating the human body looking into books and singing "Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes". Over the next couple of weeks they will be looking at the skeleton, exploring a medical skeleton and discovering different body parts using x-rays.

The Geckos have continued to follow their interest in Robots and Pirate Ships over the last few months. They too have been busy researching robots on the internet using that information and their knowledge to create their very own robot. The children especially loved dressing up in aluminum foil to be a robot, and further to this dancing as robots. Our pirate ship interest has branched off into many different areas including sketching a pirate ship from the internet, creating a pirate ship, dramatically turning the outdoors climbing frame into a pirate ship, and taking part in treasure hunts in the sand pit. The children particularly enjoyed our recent movie and popcorn morning watching *Peter Pan* and creating their own treasures.



Bush Room

Koala Group

A big interest for this group has been exploring literacy through puppets. Initially Fernanda introduced puppets when she used them during a group time. The children were really interested in these learning aids and a chance conversation with Simone Howes (Sophia's mum) led to an extended loan of some animal puppets.



The children and Fernanda made a puppet theatre together out of material and cardboard. The ensuing dramatic play had children recalling books and having conversations about the order of stories as they took turns performing and being the audience.

This has led to the idea for this group of a performance piece for our end of year concert. This multi-cultural production is being rehearsed and perfected with daily practice runs for your enjoyment in December.



Bilby Group

This very diverse group has been busy on lots of fronts. One of our continuing interests has been the use of face paint to support and enhance the children's dramatic play. Most recently Jess has honed her face painting skills to produce some very authentic and scary pirates. Last week some of these faces were even seen on wanted posters in our Bush Room foyer.

Our art studio continues to delight and encourage all the children and we have been doing a lot of recycled art using boxes and packaging. One example of these are 'bugs' with basket bodies and silver foil eyes and spots.

Finally another noteworthy interest has been the playful investigation of inclines. We have seen children using our slide to launch blocks and other toys comparing their speed. In block corner a dedicated group builds roads incorporating bridges and hills to test how far and how fast their cars will travel.

We look forward to developing these and other interests with the busy Bush room children and honing their numeracy and literacy skills in the lead up to school in 2012.

School Month

We are very excited about the upcoming "Schoolies" events starting 31st October with Kiss and Drop. From 7th November our School Leavers are invited to wear their uniforms to Norwest and from the 14th November they are invited to bring in lunch boxes which we will fill with great lunches and snacks! Further details coming soon.

