



MERINO COURT

Childcare Centre

FEBRUARY 2016

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

Welcome to the February 2016 edition of Merino Court News.

It has been quite a few months since the last edition of the newsletter. Apologies for that, but we have just been so busy having fun with all the kids here and haven't gotten around to doing a newsletter.

Since the last newsletter we have had some great additions to the Merino Court team. Tammy has joined us as our Educational Leader and will be monitoring and managing the implementation of our curriculums as well as mentoring, guiding and supporting our educators. We are very happy to have Tammy on board and excited for the future of our curriculums and the impact that it will have on the children's learning. Some of you long standing family members may recognise a familiar face-Mel. Mel was with us 4 or 5 years ago until she decided to take a break from the industry. She really missed working with children and has decided to come back and join us for a while, which we are happy about. Sadly Ayten will be leaving us at the end of this month, as she is expecting a little bundle of joy. We are so happy for Ayten and her husband and wish them all the luck with their baby boy. To fill in for Ayten, we will be seeing another familiar face-Melody. Melody was one of the original Merino team in the early years of Merino Court and will be doing some casual work with Merino when we need her. We mustn't be treating our staff that bad if they keep returning like boomerangs lol.

-Cal

SUSTAINABILITY SPOT: RECYCLING REQUEST

We are very interested in setting up a nature garden out the back of Merino Court, so the children can explore and get in touch with nature. We want to set up some little boulders and logs for the children to sit and climb on, a dry river bed with stones and pebbles as well as plant some trees to shade the area. If anyone knows of where we can source some very cheap (or even better FREE) natural items please let us know.

We are really passionate about recycling here at Merino, so we also want to recycle items and provide the children with some extra interest outdoors, so if you have an old sink we could then reuse as a planter or as a water trough for learning experiences. If you have an old small chest of drawers we could repurpose that into surprise drawers where we fill them with items of interest for the children to look at and learn from. If you have old gum boots, we could recycle them into flower pots. If you have left over bank notes (\$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 even \$100) Cal can take them to Dan Murphys and recycle them into something different too ☺

Just a little reminder too, of the little white recycle wheelie bins we have in the foyer. One of them is for batteries and printer cartridges, so we welcome and encourage you to bring in your old batteries and printer cartridges and when we have filled the bins up, we will take some of the children on an excursion to drop them off at a recycling point.



We love this quote!!!



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POLICY NEWS-REMINDER

Emergency and Evacuation Policy

Policy Statement

If an emergency or natural disaster occurs at the service the children and educators/staff will be well practised in the required procedures to ensure as far as possible the safety and well-being of each person present.

Policy Principles

The emergency evacuation floor plan and instructions will be clearly displayed near the main entrance and exit in each room, to be followed by the nominated supervisor or educator/staff member in the event of fire, natural disaster or other emergency.

All fire hydrants, blankets and smoke detectors will be tested in accordance with Government regulations.

Safety drills involving educators/staff and children will be regularly practised randomly without warning and at different times of the day.

The centre will conduct at least four fire/evacuation drills in any 12-month period or within two months of any new staff starting.

A record of each drill of emergency procedures will be made on an **Evaluation of Emergency Evacuation Drills form**, and retained for a period of 3 years from the day on which the record was made.

Issues identified during drills will be addressed

REMINDERS

- Please close all gates and doors behind you when you are entering and exiting the building
- Morning tea is at **8.15am**. If you want your child to be fed in the morning, please be here for this time so they can sit with their friends and have a meal. We unfortunately don't have the staff or facilities to feed the children as they come in at various times of a morning so please be here for **8.15am**.
- We close at 6.30pm. Please make sure you arrive in time to gather your child and his/her belongings and then leave the building at 6.30pm. Those that haven't left by 6.30pm will be charged a late pickup fee which according to our 'Delivery and Collection of Children Policy', is charged at a rate of \$25 for every 15 minute block. Families are also to call and notify staff if they will be later than 6.15pm. If staff haven't heard from families by this time, they will call the emergency numbers on the children's enrolment forms.



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GOANNA'S GOSSIP

Sue was so proud of how well the Goannas did with their song at the Christmas Party and since then the group have learnt an Aussie classic- Give Me A Home Among The Home Trees, we are sure a lot of you have heard your Goanna singing this lol.

Lots of our Goannas have started school, but luckily most are still coming on alternate days so we can still somewhat keep the Goannas family together.

We are focusing on our literacy and practising our letters and names.

February is Dental Health month so we are focusing on looking after our teeth, making sure we eat the foods that are kind to our teeth...not too many lollies and sugars...they are just for sometimes as a treat.

We are starting to prepare for a mini garden makeover as we all love to dig and get dirty and play with plants. We plan on creating a little nature garden to explore. We will have some excursions coming up to source and obtain some resources for the garden as we are relatively quiet in the room at this time of year so we will make the most of it and get out into the community.

POSSUMS

We have all been busy little Possums of late.

We have started our group pond art and craft project. We have painted a blue pond with textured brushes and each made our own individual ducks to add to the pond. We will be adding more throughout February.

Our farm animal theme has been popular recently with us all singing Old MacDonald and practicing animal sounds...Oink Oink...Quack Quack...Mooooo

We celebrated Straya Day and National Bird Day this previous month also. We sang songs, did art and craft and read stories relating to these things. We also celebrated Izaiah and Bridgette's birthdays too. Doesn't time fly?

We welcomed some new Possums to the room in January- Aisha, Gurnaaz, Izaiah, and Romeo and we have had a few visits from a potential new Possum too who came for a play with us. Amelia left us for the Goanna's room in January also as she has grown up way too fast.

We have had lots of outdoor play including water play, sandpit play and ball games.

Hopefully all you parents have noticed some developments in all of our language. We have been working hard with words and sounds.

Lindsey has joined the Possum's room full time this month. She was previously with the Goannas mostly with some occasional visits to the Possums but is now always a Possum.



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SCHOOLIES STUFF

Hey there everyone

We had a great school holiday period. We took it easy these holidays and rather than come up with a structured planned program, we just chillaxed and followed the children's interests. We went on some fun excursions to the zoo, inflatable world (thankfully Cal didn't split his pants this time), the movies, the park, nature walks, the city and more. When we were at Merino for the day, we had Just Dance competitions on the Wii, did lots of art and craft and just hung out and chatted about life's ups and downs (apparently it is really hard work being a kid in this day and age- this always started Cal on a rant "What? When I was a kid..." lol).

Back to school now for term 1 of 2016. We have had Alicia, Shravani, Raphael and Mackenzie join the room full time as fully fledged Schoolies. We have had Kai join the room as a part time Schoolie. We sadly said goodbye to Shakheia in January after spending most of her years at Merino since she was in nappies.

We look forward to all having fun together this term.

What's on in February at Merino:

Possum's Room: Pond Group Art Project, language development, farm animals

Goanna's Room: Dental Health Month, Gardening, excursions

Schoolie's Room: Children's choice- ball games, colouring pages, art, cooking, learning about health, hygiene and hospitals.



BIRTHDAYS:

6th Feb- Isabella 3 years old



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Family Involvement at Merino

The staff here at Merino, respect and appreciate the relationships that we have all developed between ourselves and you families.

These relationships are important to the quality of education and care that the children receive.

All families are different and unique and the relationships that exist between the educators and families allow us to be knowledgeable of the individual needs of each family and child(ren), and then the type of care and education that we give to the children. We encourage and welcome feedback regarding the care and education of your children as it assists us to develop plans that meet your needs.

This is why we appreciate that you all spend time talking with us at drop off and pick up times. And also just the general laughs, gossip and stories we share.

Feel free at any time, to talk to Cal or any staff member, give us a call, send an email, whichever method you would like, to give us your feedback.

If you are interested in being more involved in Merino Court, we also encourage that. If you would like to come in and read stories with the children, have a play, do some art and craft you are all more than welcome to!!!

National Quality Standards

The National Quality Standard (or NQS) is the benchmark for the quality of Early Childhood Education & Care in Australia.

The National Quality Standard aims to promote:

- the safety, health and wellbeing of children
- a focus on achieving outcomes for children through high-quality educational programs
- families' understanding of what distinguishes a quality service.

The NQS is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF is part of the Australian Government's agenda for early childhood education and child care focused on providing Australian families with high-quality, accessible and affordable integrated early childhood education and child care. The NQS consists of seven quality areas, each containing standards and elements, that children's education and care services are assessed and rated against.

The seven quality areas covered by the National Quality Standard are:

- Educational program and practice
- Children's health and safety
- Physical environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management

NQF, NQS, EYLF, all of this can get very confusing, so throughout the year, we will summarise each NQS Quality Area and EYLF (Early Years Learning Framework) Outcome, to make it simple for families to understand and hopefully gain an understanding of. This month we will start with:

NQS Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice.

Put very simply, the NQS ensures that a program/curriculum is provided that engages and stimulates the children, helping each child to learn and develop.

The Early Years Learning Framework (we will explain EYLF in future newsletters) informs the development of a program for each child that enhances their learning and development. The program for each child takes into account their strengths, capabilities, culture, interests and experiences.



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5 minutes with...Lindsey



What is your background and how long have you been at Merino?

I'm originally from the north of England, I came over when I was 7 years old. I started at Merino in 2008, left in 2009 and returned in 2010, have been here ever since

Tell us about your family life

I have a big family both here and back in England. I live with my husband Duncan, 15yo Jasmine and 13yo Cameron. We also have a fur - child, 6yo Lucy the Labradoodle.

What do you enjoy most about working at Merino?

Funny children, great parents and awesome staff make it a really enjoyable job.

When can parents talk to you if they need to about anything?

I am at Merino Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

What's your best memory/funniest story from your time at Merino?

Quoting Pinocchio to the Goannas one day - telling them if they tell fibs their nose will grow. Mackenzie comes out with "Is that what happened to you?" - Cheeky!

What are your hobbies and what do you get up to in your spare time?

We moved house last year, so love to spend my time and money decorating the house and garden. When not doing that we spend lots of time with the kids at their sports games.

What is the funniest thing that has happened to you lately?

A short while ago, we were driving to the Shopping Centre in the rain, I was going to jump out and run to the ATM while Duncan my husband went to park. I got out without realising my foot was in my handbag strap which was also looped around the gear stick, I fell straight out of the car onto the soaking wet road. My family were killing themselves laughing as I looked really funny. Unfortunately I found out later that night I had fractured my elbow :- (not so funny after that. However whenever I told anyone what happened, first thing they said was "Were you drunk". Hmmm.