

# Newsletter

## Term 4, 2011

I can hardly believe it is nearly the end of the year - term 4 has really flown. We have had a very busy final term.

The term began with an in-house staff day where we looked at the new **Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)**. The EYLF is part of the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) reform agenda for early childhood education and care and is a key component of the Australian Government's National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care. The EYLF is being implemented into preschools and child care centres across Australia.

It is important that EarlyEd staff are familiar with new trends in mainstream early childhood settings. This ensures that we can better meet the needs of your children when we visit them at their preschool or child care centre.

EarlyEd has a strong commitment to providing regular professional development opportunities to staff. This included the attendance of all EarlyEd staff at the ECIA (NSW Chapter) Annual Conference.

In the last newsletter, families were offered the opportunity to apply for ECIA sponsorship to this conference. Two families from EarlyEd were successful in their applications. A copy of the report that one of the parents wrote for ECIA appears on page 2 of this newsletter.

Workshops were also held at both centres on behaviour management and using visuals.

Our AGM was held on December 1st and a list of the newly elected Management Committee can be found on the back page.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and happy and hopefully relaxing holiday season.

*Simone Gerber*  
Director

Term 4	
First day for Early Learners Groups	10th October
First day for Music Therapy at North Sydney	10th October
First day for Music Therapy at Rosehill	12th October
Behaviour workshop - Rosehill - day session	21st October
Staff Development Day	25th October
ECIA State Conference - no groups/ sessions	27-28th October
Behaviour workshop North Sydney - evening session	2nd November
Visuals workshop at Rosehill -morning session	11th November
Visuals workshop at Rosehill -evening session	15th November
Visuals workshop at North Sydney -evening session	23rd November
Term 4 ends for children	16th December
Term 4 ends for staff	20th December
Term 1 2012	
Staff Development Day	24th January
First day for Early Learners Groups	30th January
First day for Music Therapy at North Sydney	30th January
First day for Music Therapy at Rosehill	1st February
Review week - no groups	28th March
Planning week - no groups	2nd April

### Thank you

- to the volunteers who spent a day at North Sydney making much needed resources, such as visuals and puzzle bags, for us.
- Robyn Delander of Health & Safety Advisory Service for her generous donation

The group was organised through United Way's Corporate Volunteer programme.

### Donations

ALL DONATIONS TO EARLYED OVER \$2 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE



## STAFF NEWS

**Jenny Berry and Mary Robinson (physiotherapists)** will be leaving EarlyEd at the end of 2011.



Jenny has been at EarlyEd for 22 years, working at both our North Sydney and Rosehill centres.

Mary has had two stints at EarlyEd. She worked here in the "early days" and again from August 2003. She has now decided to retire and spend time with her 4 grandchildren and travelling with her husband Steven



We are going to miss them both very much ...their vast experience and knowledge, their wonderful ways of working with children, families and staff.

### PARENT REPORT

*The 2 days I had at ECIA Conference was a roller coaster of emotions, a whirlwind of information, and a time of connecting.*

*From the very start, beginning with the earth-shattering 'Welcome to Country', and subsequent eloquent response from Sylvana, the NSW ECIA president, I knew that this was going to be an experience to be remembered! Being one of a handful of guys among a sea of amazing women certainly added to the intensity of my experience... It was soon clear that I was among a group of amazing dedicated, overworked, under acknowledged, underpaid, passionate women who are providing life-changing opportunities and experiences for the next generation.*

*The keynote on day 1 provided a fantastic introduction to the past/present and future challenges in the ECI arena. The passion that Tim Moore exuded was to be repeated in every other presentation/keynote that I attended. It didn't seem to matter that much if a person was a great 'presenter' or not, because their passion came through immediately, and that is what really engaged me.*

*In between sessions I had the privilege of speaking to various educators, and it was heart-wrenching to hear the frustrations that so many seemed to share - a lack of resources, both financially and in terms of staffing. Despite recent funding initiatives, I heard many stories first hand, about children having to wait ridiculously long periods of time for therapy. One story told to me was of a child diagnosed at two years of age with an intellectual disability, but because he fell through the cracks of government agencies, he had to wait four years before receiving any therapy! Other educators told me of how there were drastic shortages of therapists (speech and OT), with a two year wait quite common - and that's for a private therapist! At first I thought this must just be in areas out of the major cities, but then 5 minutes later I heard a similar story from an ECI educator based in Canberra... I heard stories of children not receiving the services they needed because of the 'system' not being able to 'label' their disability... I heard stories of parents experiencing personal shame, guilt and denial, and because of their refusal to receive help, that meant their child wasn't receiving the assistance they required.*

*I learnt about how individualised funding has its benefits, but also poses several challenges... It became clear over the two days that a multi-disciplinary approach involving communication between parents, between therapists, and between parents and therapists provided for an optimal environment (I especially loved Janelle Gallagher's presentation about what she has done and continues to do at Kurri Kurri pre-school, using a multi-disciplinary team). However, it appears that individualised funding may actually disempower those it is intended to help - parents - by unintentionally taking away the crucial planning and coordination role that ECI centres and educators provide. Many questions exist regarding the future, and how the field is going to evolve. I heard about the NDIS, and have been inspired to do a letterbox drop, and tell all our neighbours! An idea that should have been implemented a long, long time ago...*

*It became apparent that the not-for-profit organisations were losing out to the private sector, as well as primary schools, where educators and therapists are provided higher rates of pay, and clearer career paths. This situation has created an amazing group of highly dedicated, motivated but underpaid people, providing services to those kids who need them most. It seems that a lot has changed recently, and that children with special needs are being acknowledged, recognised and included more than ever before, yet it also seems that there is a long way to go before the light at the end of the tunnel becomes bright.*

*Overall, I was moved and touched to the core, and wanted to tell every single educator how amazing they are. I wanted to hear more about educators honouring themselves - acknowledging the tremendous work they are doing, the changes they are achieving - both at the individual child level, as well as at governmental, organisational, and academic levels. You are to be congratulated and I salute you! Well done, and thank you.*

Michael Stone  
Father of Jarrah

*Jarrah is turning 3 in January. He was diagnosed with developmental delay, and since attending the care of the wonderful staff at EarlyEd, North Sydney, has shown dramatic improvements in all areas. And a shout-out to my wife, Jarrah's mum Monique, who works tirelessly to ensure Jarrah's environment at home is nurturing and loving.*

## To Kinder-gym or not? That is the question.

There are quite a few different kinder-gym programmes around, and on the whole these can be a worthwhile addition to your child's activities.

Most programmes follow a similar format - starting with group-based music activities before moving on to a gross motor circuit. The circuit consists of a number of activities using equipment suited to the age of the children attending.

*Jumping Jacks Playtime - Kinda Gym* is a physio designed and operated programme. *Gymbaroo* also has trained staff. Check what qualifications the staff have at your local kindergym and check they have knowledge and understanding of child development. Both have a number of centres across Sydney. Check to see what other groups may be in your area.

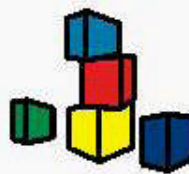
Is it right for my child?

Kinder-gym programmes tend to be geared towards children who are following typical developmental milestones so it is important to check that your child will be supported during the sessions and that they can cope with both the activities and the situation.

It is a good idea to discuss your child's special needs and therapy goals with the person running the group to assess whether the group will be suitable.

Jenny Berry- physio

## Play ideas



### Block Fun

Playing with blocks helps develop fine motor skills.

- Make disposable blocks out of milk cartons. Tape the ends together and cover with coloured paper. Use different size cartons for variety.
- Encourage your child to decorate the blocks with crayons or stickers.
- Play a stacking game
- Remember he/she will have more fun knocking down the stacks.

From: Silberg, J ((2002) Brain games for babies, toddlers and twos Hamlyn, London ISBN 0 600 60582 5

### Sensory Play Ideas

- Cover a small table with black contact. Place glitter, coloured stars etc on the black table. Cover the stars and glitter with clear Contact, sticky side up, securing the edges of the Contact with masking tape. Children can make the stars "jump" as they tap the sticky surface.
- Draw a picture of a man's "hairy" face on an A3 size paper and laminate or cover with Contact. Rub shaving cream over the picture and let the child "shave" the man's whiskers with their hands.

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## Starting School DVD



A new DVD, 'Starting School: Stories from parents of children with a disability', is designed to help families who have a child with a disability starting school. Produced by the Lady Gowrie Child Centre, with financial assistance from the NSW government, the DVD features the stories of six families who tell of their experiences as they prepared for their child to go to school for the first time.

The DVD has translations in Arabic, Cantonese, Dari, Dinka, Korean, Mandarin, and Vietnamese

EarlyEd has a number of copies available for loan. Please ask a staff member if you would like to borrow a copy.

## Websites

### Time to Start School: a Parent's Guide to Starting Kindergarten

This new School Starters Guide For Parents and Carers produced by the NSW Department of Education and Training is a practical parent's guide to help make the first days of school as trouble free as possible. It provides information on starting school, important dates, healthy eating, uniform, preparation for learning, tips on school life, bullying, infectious diseases, absences, head lice, parent involvement, and enrolment documents. [www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/primary/newschstartguide.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/primary/newschstartguide.php)

### How to Choose a Child Care Centre - NSW Department of Community Services

This NSW Department of Community Services website provides information for parents choosing a child care centre for their child. Parents are advised to check the centre's policies, activities program, accident/sickness procedures, record-keeping, and more. [http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents\\_carers\\_and\\_families/child\\_care.html](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents_carers_and_families/child_care.html)

**NSW Ombudsman:** Report of consultations with families of children with disabilities on access to services and support This can be accessed at: <http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/show.asp?id=652>

### Siblings of children with disabilities

The Royal Australian & NZ College of Psychiatrists has developed a Position Statement titled: Addressing the needs of siblings of children with disabilities or chronic illness. The background to its development and a link to the Position Statement itself can be found at: <http://www.ranzcp.org/policy-advocacy/addressing-the-needs-of-siblings-of-children-with-disability-or-chronic-illness.html>

## HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD'S FINE MOTOR SKILLS?

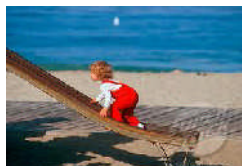
Fine motor skills involve the use of the small muscles in the hand and the control and dexterity of fingers. You can help your child develop these skills through a range of fun activities that can be incorporated into daily routines and activities at home.

Many of the activities suggested below help your child practise several skills at the same time. You can be creative and add fun ideas of your own. Remember every child's progress is based on what you do every day rather than what occurs at therapy or play sessions each week!

### Shoulder and upper body stability.

Children need strength in the shoulders and body to be able to use their arms effectively. Activity suggestions include:

- o Hammering games
- o Climbing up a slide, up a ladder etc
- o "Animal walks" crawling on hands and knees.
- o Crawling through tunnels
- o Rolling and pushing balls



### Bilateral Co-ordination

Children need to learn to use both hands together, often using one to stabilise and one to control. Activities include:



- o Imitating actions to songs using both hands
- o Stacking toys, cutting velcro fruit or cutting real fruit (bananas)
- o Play with dough or pastry using rollers and cutters
- o Drawing: one hand to draw and one to hold
- o Using two hands to hold a watering can and watering the garden

### Sensory awareness

To use their hands effectively children need to develop their sense of touch and an awareness of their hand and finger movements. Activities include:

- o Rubbing hand lotion into hands, fingers and arms
- o Sensory play with shaving cream, finger-paint, goop
- o Painting hands with a brush and paint or water
- o Finding games: hide objects in amongst rice, sand, beans, cotton puffs
- o Play with dough, warm water, cold water, soapy water etc



### Hand and finger strength

The strengthening of the small muscles within the hand helps that child's hand to mature in preparation for drawing, cutting etc

- o Play with dough pinching, poking, squeezing, using rollers and cutters
- o Do as above when cooking with pastry or making biscuits
- o Squeezing sponges in the bath,
- o Using spray bottles to water the garden or playing in the bath
- o Squeezing pegs to hang out washing, squeezing squeaky toys



### Wrist strength and position

Stability at the wrist joint is essential to be able to draw, write and make accurate and precise hand movements necessary for daily living.



- o Drawing at or above eye level e.g. at an easel, on a brick wall, on a chalk board
- o Painting on a wall outside with a bucket of water and a brush or "washing" the tiles next to the bath at bath time.
- o Standing up to push down on play dough, make hand prints, pushing mummy down in "rough and tumble" play etc
- o Unscrewing lids off plastic containers, playing with wind-up toys
- o Pushing doors and draws shut at eye level, cleaning windows at eye level

### Control of small muscles of the hand

Movements of the hand are controlled by extrinsic muscles that begin in the forearm and intrinsic muscles that are found within the hand. The intrinsic muscles are important in developing a mature grasp of pens, pencils etc. Activities could include:

- o Threading beads or pulling grapes off the stem
- o Finger rhymes (, Where is Thumbkin, Twinkle, Incy Wincy etc)
- o Play with pegboards and small pegs, picking up sultanas
- o Pushing buttons with one finger (phone, piano remote control, etc)
- o Peeling stickers, peeling mandarins (get started)



There are many activities that would assist in developing your child's fine motor strength and control. Using the above "building blocks" think about the many opportunities that occur at routine times (meal time, bath time etc) and in play with your child that you can promote the development of fine motor skills based on your child's interest and enjoyment.

# Parent to Parent Programme

## *Parents Helping Parents*

**Would you like the opportunity to talk to another EarlyEd parent - to someone "who understands"?**

Parents of children with disabilities/delays can provide invaluable support to each other by sharing experiences, frustrations, knowledge and joys.

EarlyEd is now offering a parent-to-parent support programme which is a network of volunteer parents who are available for personal contact with you if you would like to talk to someone "who understands".

This support will be by phone and the "supportive parent" will keep in contact with you for up to 6 months. The "supportive parent" is not a counsellor or therapist, but is someone to talk to who has experienced first hand many of the same issues you may be facing.

If you are interested in talking to one of our "supportive parents" or would like more information about this programme, please talk to your service co-ordinator OR contact Lesley by phone on 9897 1511, or email [lburnett@earlyed.com.au](mailto:lburnett@earlyed.com.au)

**Lesley Burnett**  
**Family Support Worker**



## Siblings groups

### North Sydney

On Wednesday 28 September our third Sibling Group for the year was held. We had a great turn out, with eight siblings attending for three jam packed hours of fun! This Sibling Group had a nature theme and we planted some carrot's for the siblings to take home and care for.



EarlyEd as a family-centred service recognises that brothers and sisters of children with special needs may need benefit from having the opportunity to meet other children who also have a sibling with special needs. Siblings groups allow children to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context.

EarlyEd's sibling groups are usually run every school holidays for approximately three hours, and have a small cost attached.

For further information, contact your family support worker.

North Sydney	Renee Lea	<a href="mailto:rlea@earlyed.com.au">rlea@earlyed.com.au</a>	or 9923 2727
Rosehill	Anu Andrade	<a href="mailto:aandrade@earlyed.com.au">aandrade@earlyed.com.au</a>	or 9897 1511
Playgroup	Lesley Burnett	<a href="mailto:lburnett@earlyed.com.au">lburnett@earlyed.com.au</a>	or 9897 1511

## Staff

**Director - Simone Gerber**

*Accounts/Admin - Maryna Staver*

*Music Therapist*

Jann Birks

**North Sydney**

*Early Special Educators*

Amy Cowden

Julia Liebmann

Stephanie Weatherburn

*Family Support Worker*

Renee Lea

*Occupational Therapist*

Yael Rosman

*Physiotherapists*

Jenny Berry

Mary Robinson

*Speech Pathologists*

Rose Tritton

*Classroom Assistant*

Leanne Forster

*Family Support Worker*

(Special projects)

Lesley Burnett

**Rosehill**

*Team Leader -*

Leanne Unie-Day

*Early Special Educators*

Leanne Unie-Day

Maureen Lyons

Hong Pan

Liz Ryan

*Family Support Worker*

Anu Andrade

*Occupational Therapist*

Namrita Singh

*Physiotherapists*

Kathy Gardiner

Cathy Galbraith

Jenny Berry

*Speech Pathologists*

Margaret Redmond

Sonia Gugnani

Amanda Cox

*Classroom Assistant*

Kim Burdus

### Mobile Playgroup

*Special Educators*

Kylie Holding

Maureen Lyons

*Physiotherapists*

Kathy Gardiner

Jenny Berry

*Speech Pathologists*

Margaret Redmond

Sonia Gugnani

Amanda Cox

*Bilingual Worker*

Louise Mueller

## EarlyEd Management Committee

**President:**

**Janine Lindberg**

(mother of Maili - North Sydney)

**Vice President:**

**Shelley Crumlin**

(mother of Tarini- Rosehill)

**Secretary:**

**Peta Crafter**

(mother of Rory- North Sydney)

**Treasurer:**

**Rosemary Flavel**

(Early Childhood Intervention rep)

**Committee:**

**Kylie Gava**

(mother of Kaitlyn - Rosehill)

**Alex Huntington**

(mother of Arabella - North Sydney)

**Stacey Skoljarev**

(mother of Harry - North Sydney)

**Ashvini Sawleshwarkar**

(mother of Nandika - Rosehill)

**Ruchika Singh**

(mother of Ranbir - Rosehill)

EMAIL: [managementcommittee@earlyed.com.au](mailto:managementcommittee@earlyed.com.au)

## EarlyEd Services

**IFSPs** - individual family service plans are developed with all families and are reviewed regularly.

### Individual Programme (1:1)

- Individual sessions with Special Educator / PT / SP / OT- Fortnightly or monthly
- Phone support to preschool /childcare can be offered
- Family support as needed
- Community visits including preschool / child care / home / other – 2 visits per term in total – may be by any member of team

### Early Learners

- Weekly group session with Special Educator, PT / OT / SP / FSW attend fortnightly
- 1 visit to preschool/childcare per term
- Community visits including preschool / child care / home / other – 2 visits per term in total – may be by any member of team

### Preschool Support Programme

- 3 x visits per term
- May receive a block of SP or PT or OT each term at EarlyEd
- Family support as needed
- Community visits including extra preschool / child care or home / other – 2 visits per term in total – may be by any member of team

### School Readiness Programme

- Weekly school readiness group 6 weeks per term including parent sessions
- May receive a block of SP or PT or OT each term at EarlyEd
- Community visits including extra preschool / child care or home / other – 2 visits per term in total – may be by any member of team

### Home Visits Programme

Rosehill only - for families unable to get to our Rosehill centre

- Initial appointment with 2 members of team, thereafter:
- Fortnightly / monthly visits by primary worker
- May have one off visit by another discipline for assessment and goal development.

### Music Therapy

open to all families

### MOBILE PLAYGROUP

The playgroups are for families who are currently on a waiting list for services, and are currently not accessing any form of early childhood intervention.

Playgroup operate 3 mornings per week at 3 different locations:- Monday -St Joachim's School, Lidcombe  
Tuesday – Westmead Progress Hall  
Wednesday – Auburn North Public School