

Cubby House Toy Library

A History *1979–2001*

by Nan Bosler

CUBBY HOUSE TOY LIBRARY INC.
for children with special needs

cubby house toy library A HISTORY 1979-2001
First published March 2001

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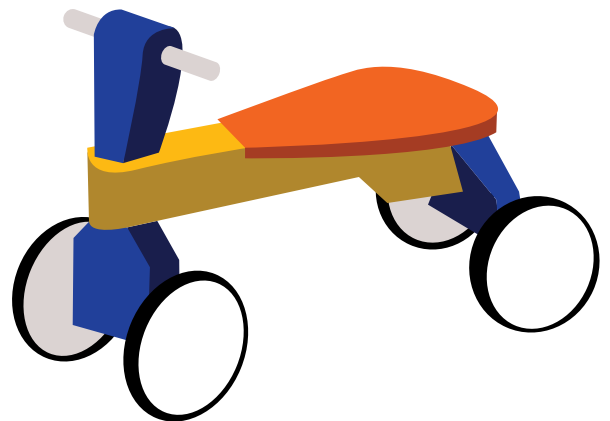
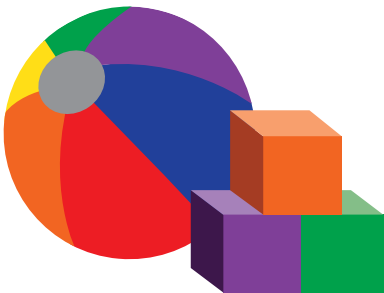
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***This book is dedicated to
the members, their families and
the volunteers and staff
of cubby house***

Acknowledgments

This book might never have been written if Sandra Gillett, Janet Black and Pat Frater hadn't taken the time to go through the newsletters and minute books of the Management Committee of cubby house toy library to note happenings, events, changes and the correct dates.

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Everyone associated with cubby house is special and I do apologise for not being able to include each and every one of them in this record of cubby house's first twenty-one years.

Nan Bosler OAM BEd GDLAH MLGM
February 2001

The Management Committee of cubby house toy library acknowledges with appreciation
the support of the following organisations who provided funding
for the printing of this history



Foreword

This book is a wonderful story about dedicated people with the interest of children very much at heart. It all began when the United Nations proclaimed 1979 as the International Year of the Child. Warringah Shire Council formed a co-ordinating committee chaired by Councillor Noel Berrell. Two visionary members, Nan Bosler and Pat Frater, realised the need for a toy library for children with handicaps and so the *cubby house toy library* was born.

It opened on 18 March 1980 and has now served the community for more than twenty years. This book gives an accurate account of the trials and tribulations of the many volunteers and the staff who looked after the running of the library. It tells us about the lack of funding and the problems of accommodation and the shortage of toys. It is a story about dedicated people with perseverance who in the end overcame all difficulties. They proved that where there is a will, there is a way. Cubby house has become a model for other volunteers in the State who adopted our well-tried procedures.

Above all, this book tells us about the hundreds of children with special needs and their parents who found enjoyment and assistance at cubby house.

The community of the northern beaches owes a great debt to all the people who unselfishly worked for this library. We are deeply grateful and congratulate each and everyone of you.

May the *cubby house toy library* long continue to serve our children.

Paul Couvret OAM

February 2001



Introduction

Cubby house is a community based toy library open to children with special needs. These special needs may be physical, developmental, learning, speech, emotional or social. Its objective is not only to provide an early intervention programme for children with special needs but also to support their families.

Each year more than 70 families are helped by cubby house. Over the past 21 years more than 800 families have been members of the library. Schools, playgroups and preschools with enrolments of children with special needs and professionals working in this field may also join.

Cubby house is the only toy library for children with special needs on the northern beaches of Sydney from Mosman to Palm Beach. The range of toys, books, play equipment and cassettes is for babies from six weeks old to primary school age children. The ABC system is used to classify the toys. There is also a collection of reference books for parents and carers to borrow.

Cubby house is run by a Management Committee of the volunteers who work in the library. It is responsible for the efficient operation of the service and its ongoing evaluation. Volunteers are essential to the service as they work in the library during opening hours on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Their role is to process the loans, check, clean and re-shelve toys as well as other administrative tasks. They also often take care of the children. Additional work includes sewing of library bags, promotion of the programme and repair of toys. Currently 50% of the volunteers have been with the library for over ten years. They contribute more than 80 hours of service per week.

The Management Committee employs 4 part time staff who work a combined total of 37 hours per week. These staff members are an Administration Manager, a Librarian and two Occupational Therapists.

The Occupational Therapists offer professional guidance to parents on the appropriate toys and activities for their child's stage of development. They also provide ideas for play to gain maximum developmental benefits. Appointments can be made by members to see the therapist.

Government grants are received to fund the salaries of Occupational Therapists. Members pay an annual subscription of \$80 per family. However, these amounts only cover approximately 50% of the cost of providing the service to members. Each year the Management Committee is required to raise another \$20,000-\$25,000 to meet essential expenses such as salaries for Librarian and Administration Manager, administrative costs and purchase and maintenance of toys.

Individuals and groups in the community continue to financially support and contribute time and effort as well as resources to cubby house. It is this support that enables cubby house to offer such a high standard of services.

Cubby house is a member of the Toy Library Association of NSW and the Australian Toy Library Association. As a member of these organisations, cubby house has been able to assist other developing toy libraries by sharing its experience and expertise.

The library plays a small but significant role in developing community acceptance of children with 'special needs', highlighting their qualities and abilities.

Cubby house has become part of a support network that endeavours to help families having a child with special needs achieve a better quality of life. When parents hear about cubby house they often come for the first time expecting just another service. Not so – cubby house provides a warm, welcoming and non-threatening atmosphere and gives children the opportunity to realise more of their potential through toys and play.

February 2001

The First Decade

1979

The United Nations proclaimed that 1979 would be the International Year of the Child (IYC). Warringah Shire Council, under the Presidency of Cr. Paul Couvret, set up the Warringah IYC Co-ordinating Committee chaired by Cr. Noel Berrell, with Nan Basler as Secretary and Pat Frater as Treasurer.

The NSW International Year of the Child Conference of Local IYC Committees was held on 10 and 11 November 1979 at the Sydney University. Mrs. Anne Gorman, Director of the IYC Secretariat and Executive Director of Family and Children's Services Agency, addressed the conference and summarised the wide range of IYC activities throughout New South Wales. Special projects had included a Foster Care Conference, Kids' Council, Telephone Counselling Service and Youth Forum. Issues such as children and the media, corporal punishment in schools, advocacy for children, and children in institutional care had been identified. Ongoing programmes were planned to reexamine and reassess these needs.

The importance of local involvement in IYC was stressed. The aim of local groups had been to establish a framework for the development of children's services.

The NSW Children's Services Study had been completed, the first comprehensive investigation undertaken to determine the need for children's facilities. It would be a guide to areas of special need and would be useful when future services were planned.

WARRINGAH NOTED AS HAVING INADEQUATE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Warringah was one of four localities given special mention as having inadequate children's services in relation to the population of children. It was also interesting to note that few committees had received support from their local councils such as the Warringah Committee had received from Warringah Shire Council. The committee was also commended for its newsletter *Roundabout* which was the only regular publication produced by any of the local IYC groups. Pat Frater was co-editor of *Roundabout*.

One of the last submissions made by the Warringah Committee was to the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services for funding to establish a toy library for children with handicaps. A further submission was made to the Handicapped Persons Bureau for toys for such a library. The results of these submissions were unknown by the time the committee was wound up at the end of IYC. However, members of the committee undertook to give on-going support if the submissions were successful.

The Warringah IYC Committee was one of the most successful convened for IYC and it was alarming to realise that some committees had been disbanded.

The International Year of the Child had been an opportunity to focus on children, to place them at the centre of world concern. It was a year supported by all members of the United Nations to promote lasting action to improve the lives of children everywhere and a time for governments, organisations and individuals to work together in constructive practical programmes for the benefit of children. Even more importantly, IYC was a time for children themselves to undertake projects to benefit other children and to gain knowledge to help them as they accept the responsibility for tomorrow.

"The well being of our world tomorrow depends on the development, health and understanding of our children today. If our children can gain even a little personal knowledge by involvement with children of a different culture and way of life, surely this must be an influence in the way each individual will help keep the peace of their world tomorrow!"¹

1980

The submission to the Handicapped Persons Bureau was successful and Warringah received one of the 'kits' of toys that went to 28 community-based groups in New South Wales to establish toy libraries. In due time, several large cardboard boxes containing 250 toys, 50 large plastic bags, 30 books and a stack of blank catalogue cards arrived. No funding was received to start the library. **The cardboard boxes were 'the library' !**

NAN BOSLER IS PRESIDENT

A Management Committee was formed and two members of the IYC Committee continued with the project: Nan Bosler as President and Pat Frater as Co-ordinator. Terry Burke was Secretary, Lyn Lumley Treasurer and Lois Greenwood Minute Secretary. Also on the committee were Margaret (Marge) Rawlings, Joan Paton, Joyce Dawson and Mabel Marsh.

The committee was informed that the application to the Department of Services for exemption from registration under the provisions of the Charitable Collections Act had been granted.

"The Warringah Toy Library for Children with Handicaps" opened its doors on Tuesday, 18 March 1980 in one room of Warringah Shire Council premises, 14 The Kingsway, Dee Why. Three members enrolled on that first day: Sarah, Andrew and a group member, Fisher Road School. The library initially operated one day per week (Tuesday) from 10.00am to noon. Fees were 20c per borrowing. On 24 March, less than a week after opening, the library's first newsletter was produced.

Good publicity surrounding the opening of the library was given by *The Manly Daily*, which has continued its support throughout cubby house's 21 years. This publicity attracted the attention of an Occupational Therapist, Sue Terry, who volunteered her services. Sue was to remain with the library until May 1996.

In June 1980 the library moved to 8 The Kingsway, Dee Why to two rooms also made available by Warringah Shire Council. At this time the name was changed to *"cubby house - Warringah Toy Library for Children with Handicaps"*. A logo, which is still in use today, was designed by Cedric Logan. **Lois Greenwood had suggested the name cubby house and it had sent imaginations racing.**

WHAT IS A CUBBY HOUSE? What does your imagination see when you think of a cubby house?

In your childhood was it a place of your own where the most wonderful and secret dreams were played out? The cubby houses that Nan Bosler remembered as a child were in Yass. The first was in the pattern of roots from an enormous old pine in the grounds of her school.

*"We used to play happily there until our imaginings were brought back to reality with the clanging of the school bell. The second was in the woodpile that stretched right across my backyard. It was during World War II and Dad would regularly take our old Ford out into the country and collect fallen branches and logs to feed our fuel stove and copper. The wonderful cubby holes formed by the branches and logs as they were tumbled into the backyard promoted many hours of happy play. Best of all was the willow tree in the paddock across the street. It would become a palace and I would be at least a princess, complete with daisy crown and gown of flowing curtains. Or it would, in the heat of summer, be a train taking me to the seaside, or even my very own house. So to me a cubby house is a happy, secure place where a child can develop his or her imagination or creativity, or just unwind and relax."*²

Cubby house - what a perfect name for a toy library. Pause for a moment and close your eyes. Go back in time and visualise your first cubby house.



Nan Bosler and Pat Frater, co-founders of the toy library, wondering where to begin. March 1980

Photo courtesy The Manly Daily

Cr. Paul Couvret, President, Warringah Shire Council and Mr. Tom Webster MLA, Member for Wakehurst, were asked to be the first Patrons of cubby house.

FRIENDS OF CUBBY HOUSE IS FORMED

"Friends of cubby house" was formed to support the library. Annual membership was \$2.00. The first fund raising project organised by the Management Committee was a concert featuring the Warringah Stage Band held on Sunday, 13 July at Dee Why Public School. A much needed \$300 was raised.

SOUTH CREEK ROAD

In August 1980 cubby house moved to two rooms at the rear of the Uniting Church at 12 South Creek Road, Dee Why. These premises were provided rent-free. Community support was obtained to meet the necessary expenditure and work involved in setting up the library. Volunteers repainted and made minor repairs to the premises. Students and staff from Brookvale Technical College built the shelving in the toyroom as a work experience project. The Lions Club of Brookvale, with Ken Hird as President, adopted cubby house as one of its projects. The Lions repaired the fences and paths, tidied the outside area, installing a timber cubby house and a concrete patio. **A play area had been created!**

Opening hours were increased to two days per week (Wednesday and Saturday) from 10.00am to noon. The committee also decided to open the library during midyear school vacations but to close during the December/January vacations. There was still no government funding available to help meet expenses.

MINI FETE AND OPEN DAY

The next fund raising event was more ambitious and a Mini Fete and Open Day was held on Saturday, 11 October 1980. Thirteen year old Donna Stewart organised and baked for the cake stall, raising an amazing \$127 of the total proceeds of \$900. Street stalls and sales of donated items have been a continuing source of income for the library.

Lois Greenwood became volunteer Librarian on 20 October and Marge Rawlings took on Lois' previous role as Minute Secretary.

Cubby house joined the Toy Library Association of NSW (TLA) and the Australian Association of Toy Libraries for the Handicapped (AATLH).

A most welcome visitor to cubby house in December was Mike Nacard from Caltex. He presented the library with a cheque for \$2,600 from the NSW Caltex Youth Fund to fund the Fun Club, one of two new programmes to be started in February 1981.

1981

At the first AGM held on 19 January the elected committee was as follows: Nan Bosler President, Pat Frater Co-ordinator, Lois Greenwood Librarian, Joan Paton Treasurer. Joan continued as Treasurer until 1989.

The Honorary Auditor was Scott Somerville who held this position for nine years.

1981 was International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) and a submission was made to the Handicapped Persons Bureau for funding. The submission was unsuccessful. **There was still no government support for cubby house.**

Membership had grown to 53 (44 Families, 2 Schools and 7 Playgroups/Pre-schools) and the membership of "Friends of cubby house" totaled 72. An amount of \$2,818.14 had been expended on the running of cubby house during 1980 and there was \$356.84 in the bank.



Toytime with Sue Terry at South Creek Road, 1981.

*Image courtesy Margarey Olah
official photographer for the IYDP*

TOYTIME & FUN CLUB

Two new programmes were commenced in February. The first was Toytime, a play session for pre-schoolers with special needs and their families held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10.15am to 11.15am. Toytime was led by Occupational Therapist Sue Terry, working as a volunteer.

The second was Fun Club, an afternoon hobby and activity group for school-aged children and adolescents with handicaps. The grant from the NSW Caltex Youth Fund allowed for the employment of 3 specialist staff: Occupational Therapist Carolyn Cooper, Michael Somerville and Kim Matteson. It operated on alternate Saturday afternoons from 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

The first Saturday of the month was for teenagers and young adults while the third Saturday was for younger children. Approximately 30 children aged from 5 to 23 years, including several from Collaroy Hospital and Sunnyfield, enjoyed the Fun Club. **Special activities included a bush dance, a clown fun day, a magician and puppet show.** Unfortunately this initiative ceased at the end of 1981 as no further sponsorship for this programme could be found.

Warringah Shire Council's 75th Anniversary Ball was held on 12 August in aid of the toy library. President Cr. Paul Couvret was pleased to present to cubby house the proceeds totaling \$250 and there was an additional grant of \$200 from the Council's children's services allocation.

Manly Municipal Council also made a grant of \$584 from its IYDP funding.

Cubby house continued to be supported by many of the local Lions, Apex and Rotary Clubs, Beta Sigma Phi, Zonta, churches, playgroups, schools, businesses and organisations. Funding from the Warringah IYDP Committee and the Lions Club of Brookvale made it possible for cubby house to send Pat Frater and Lois Greenwood as delegates to the 5th National - AATLH Conference at Wangaratta, Victoria. The theme was "Toy Libraries in the 80's".

1982

In February 1982 cubby house employed its first paid staff member. Occupational Therapist Sue Terry was employed for 4 hours per week to lead Toytime, the play session for pre-schoolers and their families. Sue was also able to begin the appointment system with the parents. This was made possible by a donation of \$1,100 raised at a highly successful Art Show of paintings by local artist Penny Lyras. The Art Show was organised by Jill Johnson. Both Jill and Penny continue to support cubby house.

The Management Committee had also recognised the needs of siblings and was beginning to develop strategies to help these youngsters. Siblings were able to borrow from the library and come to Toytime. During that same month, cubby house gained its 102nd member and the name was changed to "cubby house -Warringah Toy Library and Leisure Centre for the Handicapped".

FIRST AWARD RECEIVED

During Volunteer Week there was great excitement when cubby house received its first award from the Volunteer Centre of NSW for training and support. Workshops for volunteers had become a regular part of the library's programme.

Even though there was recognition that cubby house was providing a needed service for children with handicaps and their families there was still no government funding. Toy libraries



**Two young borrowers discussing children's books at
South Creek Road, 1981**

*Image courtesy Margarey Olah
official photographer for the IYDP*

were not being funded. There had been no decision as to which government, State or Federal, was responsible for such programmes! However a \$500 grant (the maximum allowable) was received from the Department of Youth and Community Services, Dee Why office, as part of its Field Officer's Community Initiative Scheme.

Sue Terry took six months maternity leave from July 1982 and Ceri Ritchie acted as her locum.

Cubby house now had 600 toys and 350 books available for borrowing by its members.

Guidelines on care of equipment were drawn up and a policy on loss and damage was adopted. An application for funding was submitted to the Office of Child Care but it was unsuccessful.

Lois Greenwood and Pat Frater attended the 6th National AATLH Conference which was held in Southport, Queensland. The theme was *"Support for Children With Special Needs - How, When, Where and Why?"* Airfares were paid by the Lions Club of Brookvale.

CONTINUING TO GROW

Cubby house was continuing to grow and now had 35 volunteers. Borrowing charges per visit were discontinued and annual fees introduced: \$10 for families, \$20 for small groups and \$40 for schools. Membership was standardised to run from 1 February to 31 January of the following year. Half yearly fees were available. Over the years 1980-82, 134 members had joined the library.

Processing of toys is extremely time consuming and a processing team was enlisted to help the Librarian on regular processing days, usually Saturdays. This ensured toys and books were on the shelves for borrowing as soon as possible. Several members of staff from Warringah Shire Library volunteered to assist in this way.

1983

Cubby house was acknowledged as a toy library of high standard. At a Seminar of Toy Libraries for the Handicapped, arranged by the Handicapped Persons Bureau in July, Sue Terry and Pat Frater were guest speakers. The management strategy developed by cubby house was used as a best practice model. Representatives from metropolitan, country and interstate toy libraries continue to be referred to cubby house.

Finally, in July 1983 cubby house received a grant of \$5,880 from the Handicapped Persons Bureau, NSW Department of Youth and Community Services, to assist with employing an Occupational Therapist on Wednesday and Saturday.

This enabled cubby house to use its own funds to employ the first Administrative Assistant for 3 hours per week to be increased to 5 hours several months later. Helen Stark was appointed to this position. She had been doing the job of Administrative Assistant since October 1982 as a volunteer.

The library staff was now:

- 2 paid part time Occupational Therapists (Sue Terry & Chris Haupstein)
- 1 paid part time Administrative Assistant (Helen Stark)
- 1 voluntary Toy Repairman (Geoff Chapple)
- 24 voluntary staff

On 22 to 24 August the 7th National Conference of AATLH was held in Adelaide, the theme being *"Working with Families as Co-Therapists"*. Lois Greenwood, Librarian, co-led a workshop session dealing with methods of toy analysis. Pat Frater also attended.

There was still the ever present need to raise additional funds to maintain cubby house. On 14 October a very successful *"Cavalcade of History and Fashion"* was presented by the Northside Cavalcade Group at Freshwater High School. This event, organised by Jill Johnson, raised \$480.

On Saturday 29 October during NSW Children's Week Tricia Ryan and Chris Haupstein presented an "Aussie Animal Puppet Show and Storytelling" using hand puppets from the toy library. The performance, which was held in the Uniting Church, was a repeat of the show presented by Tricia Ryan in April during NSW Heritage Week. Lois Greenwood played the piano to accompany the show.

HUSHATHON

A novel fund raising event was a "Hushathon" by the Balgowlah, Dee Why and Narrabeen branches of the Girls' Friendly Society (GFS), a church group for girls. Imagine girls being absolutely silent for 1 hour! Funds raised were used to purchase large wooden floor puzzles.

Two of cubby house's volunteers were recognised and honoured in 1983. Pat Frater received a Certificate of Outstanding Service from Warringah Shire Council and Geoff Chapple received a Pride of Workmanship award from the Rotary Club of Dee Why. Geoff, as well as being Toy Repairman, was also a very popular Santa Claus at Toytime Christmas parties.

Tricia Ryan, who had commenced as a volunteer with the processing team in 1982, was employed as Circulation Librarian for 3 hours per week.

For the first time a questionnaire was sent to parents. Thirty-five percent of these questionnaires were returned and the major requests were for:

- More holiday activities
- Small 'parent group' discussions
- more variety of toys

At the end of 1983 a limited Home Visiting Programme was commenced by Occupational Therapist Heather Crowley. Her role was mainly to contact organisations, laying the groundwork for visits to families the following year, in the hope that funding would be received to commence a mobile toy library service.

1984

At the Annual General Meeting in January Pat Frater stepped down from her volunteer role as Co-ordinator. Helen Stark, Administrative Assistant, became more responsible for the day to day running of the programme. The position of volunteer Roster Secretary was created and filled by Nancy Purches.

Opening hours were extended to include Thursdays. Limited home visiting continued. Toytime resumed for the year and was now held weekly. Sue Terry led the group on the first Wednesday of the month while the other sessions were taken by a volunteer, Kathryn Cowley who was a qualified preschool teacher.

A new system was introduced in March with members being given their own exercise books in which to record toys and books borrowed with suggestions for use at home.

A valuable resource had been developed by the staff consisting of five albums of photos and brochures. They covered the topics of "Toys", "Equipment", "Caring for Kids", "Community Programmes" and "Family Support".

Department of Social Security funding was finally received in mid year. The grant was for \$9,354 for the year 1984/85 - \$1,890 for purchase of equipment and the balance to pay six hours per week of the total time worked by three part time staff. These positions were:

- Director/Manager - Kathryn Cowley
- Circulation Librarian - Tricia Ryan
- Administrative Assistant - Helen Stark

There were now 17 volunteers, including a second Toy Repairman, Lou Brown.

In August the National AATLH Conference was held in Sydney for the first time. The theme was *"Toys are not just Play Things"*. Occupational Therapists Sue Terry and Chris Haupstein presented a paper *"Toys and Playthings in Remediation"*. Cubby house President Nan Bosler was elected NSW State Representative to AATLH.

KITS FOR KIDS

Kits for Kids, an eight page booklet full of ideas for making up play kits for children, was launched in October during NSW Children's Week 1984. This publication was compiled and illustrated by Tricia Ryan. A grant from the NSW Children's Week Committee helped with the cost of publication.

*Kits for Kids*³ detailed how to make simple kits that provided ideas for making original gifts geared to a child's individual needs, tastes and abilities. It was suggested that each kit could be kept in a cloth bag or a small school case according to the type and size of the kit. The booklet described nine kits on topics such as Cooking, the Post Office, the Carpenter, Science and Dressing Up.

The Science Kit could give children with inquisitive minds hours of fun exploring the world around them. All that was needed was a magnifying glass, magnet, notebook and pencil and a butterfly net which could be made from an old coathanger and mosquito netting. An empty pickle jar could be used as a terrarium to observe such delights that are found in the garden. Activities around the Science Kit included collecting different shaped leaves, petals and grass; observing ants, insects, caterpillars or snails through the magnifying glass; collecting different types of soils, looking for colour and texture; working out what things stick to a magnet; drawing pictures of birds, flowers and butterflies.

Other Children's Week activities were a display at Warriewood Square and a workshop for families, *"Making Simple Toys at Home"*. This was devised and conducted by Tricia Ryan on Saturday 27 October.

Librarian Lois Greenwood was very involved in the writing of *First Steps in Setting up a Toy Library* which was published by the Toy Library Association of NSW.

Hours on Wednesday were increased to 4.5 hours, 10.00am to 2.30pm. The library was also open on the first Sunday of the month from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Tricia Ryan, Circulation Librarian, commenced compiling statistics on the number of items borrowed each month. By the end of 1984 there were 49 family members and 14 groups. Volunteers numbered 25.



Sue Terry (R) and Chris Haupstein following the presentation of their paper at the 8th National AATLH Conference in Sydney, August 1984.



Christmas Party at South Creek Road, December 1984

1985

The name was changed to "*cubby house toy library - for children with handicaps and special needs*" at the AGM which was held on 11 March.

Commonwealth funding from the Office of Child Care and the Schools Commission was granted for Toytime staff. The requirement for funding was that the programme should have an educational component and that staff should have teaching qualifications.

Funding from the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services was reduced. As this grant paid the salaries of the Occupational Therapists the Management Committee had to decrease the therapists' hours. The grant application had in fact been made for increased funding to develop an outreach programme into the community!

Cubby house was a foundation member of Manly Warringah Interagency Association when it was established in 1985 and has continued to be involved with Interagency (now Manly Warringah Pittwater).

In July a grant was received from the Fairbridge Foundation for \$3,000 which enabled cubby house to spend \$1,200 on shelving and \$1,800 on toys and equipment. **The loan quota for individual members was increased to 3 toys and 3 books per visit.**

Vicki Boddy was employed as Librarian in May replacing volunteer Lois Greenwood. Dorothy Andrews was appointed volunteer Assistant Librarian. Sue Terry was appointed Director of Therapy Programme, a new position.

It was decided in September to cease opening on the first Sunday of the month due to lack of patronage.

Sue Terry, Lois Greenwood and Nan Bosler attended the 9th AATLH National Conference in Canberra from 26 to 28 September. The theme was "*Our Special Children - Are we meeting their needs in the 80's?*". The delegates returned with the recommendation of producing a brochure outlining cubby house services to distribute to therapists, doctors and Baby Health Centres.

MOBILE SERVICE STARTED

The Management Committee started a mobile service which was funded by community donations. Heather Carrington was employed to make monthly visits to locations including Collaroy Hospital, The Spastic Centre of NSW, St. Joseph's School Special Education Centre as well as individual families unable to visit the library. Home and Community Care funding had been sought for the Mobile Service but the submission had been unsuccessful.

The Play Pamphlets written by Sue Terry, with TLA members Annabelle Andrews and Karen Ansted, were published by the Toy Library Association of NSW (1985/86).

1986

Toytime was still operating to the benefit and enjoyment of borrowers and parents, with Margaret Tilden as Toytime Leader.

Movement was afoot with the news that Warringah Shire Council was to build a children's services centre between Sturdee and Pacific Parades, Dee Why. In April, Pat Frater and Sue Terry attended the first of several meetings at Council with the architect and staff.

On 1 August 1986 cubby house became an incorporated body thanks to the efforts of Nan Bosler and Helen Stark.

Chris Haupstein, Nan Bosler and Pat Frater attended the 10th AATLH Conference from 19 to 23 August, held in Melbourne University. The theme was *"Toys, Play and Families"*.

1987

Nan Bosler who was President of cubby house for 13 years received the 1987 Advance Australia Award for outstanding community service. At this time Nan was also President of AATLH and involved with the Creative Leisure Movement, InterChange Respite Care for Handicapped Children, Kookaburra Play Therapy Group, Australia Day Committee, Girl Guides, plus many, many more organisations.

An Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 9 February. The purpose of the meeting was to wind up the financial affairs of cubby house toy library. A motion moved by Pat Frater, seconded by Joan Paton and carried, stated that *"...all assets and liabilities are now accepted by the organisation to be known as cubby house toy library incorporated."*

Funding continued from the Department of Youth & Community Services and Schools Commission. Services now included an Occupational Therapist on Wednesday and Saturday, Toytime 10.00am to 11.30am each Wednesday and the Mobile Service once per month. The Mobile Service was now being run by Margaret Tilden and Occupational Therapist Pauline Hole.

New Borrowers Kits were introduced. These kits contain a selection of leaflets to assist families by providing them with information about other useful organisations and services.

The 11th National Conference of AATLH was held in Hobart from 1 to 4 September, the theme being *"Who Else Can Help?"*. Helen Stark, Nan Bosler and Sue Terry attended.

1988

The mothers attending Toytime had formed good friendships with each other and a 'support' group had developed. Several children were exhibiting behavioural problems resulting in the need for greater emphasis on structure and routine. The assistance of a psychologist was made available to Toytime staff and volunteers.

SPECIAL TOYS MADE

Special toys and play equipment requested by the therapists were made by Toy Repairman Lou Brown. These included a clacking windmill, horizontal ring toy and T-stool for balancing.

Staff attended a "Mobile Meet" at Jindabyne organised by the Mobile Resources Association of NSW. They returned with the recommendation to establish a mobile outreach service at the Mona Vale Baby Health Centre in the northern peninsula area.

Towards the end of the year the decision was made to keep cubby house open during mid-year school holidays but without an occupational therapist in attendance. There were very few borrowers during the holidays and the money saved was earmarked to employ an occupational therapist when the Mobile Outreach Service commenced visiting the Mona Vale Baby Health Centre the following year.

1989

In March 1989 Toytime Leader Margaret Tilden resigned and was replaced by Maryanne Tait. The Mobile Outreach Service continued with the addition of a regular visit to Mona Vale.

CUBBY HOUSE HELPS ESTABLISH OTHER TOY LIBRARIES

Cubby house has made a significant contribution to the toy library movement. The office bearers of the Toy Library Association of NSW have included Sue Terry as President, Chris Haupstein as Vice President, Estelle Laybutt as Executive Officer and Pat Frater as Treasurer and Information Officer. The publication of *First Steps in Setting up a Toy Library* and the series of Play Pamphlets produced by the State body owe a great part of their creation to cubby house people. Life Membership of the Toy Library Association is an honour that has been reserved for only a few of the most dedicated members – Pat Frater is one of the select few.

As well as taking a leading role in the State organisation, the task of running the National Secretariat of the Australian Association of Toy Libraries for the Handicapped had been accepted by members of cubby house in 1986. Nan Bosler was elected National President of AATLH, Helen Stark Executive Officer and Neal Palmer Treasurer. When Helen completed her term as Executive Officer this position was accepted by Lois Greenwood, who later took on the role of Journal Editor.

Not satisfied with this involvement in State and National bodies, it was a cubby house team of Pat Frater, Nan Bosler, Helen Stark and Lois Greenwood who organised the 13th National AATLH Conference at Wentworth Falls, New South Wales, held from 28 August to 1 September. The theme was "*The Next Ten Years*".

Even a national plane stoppage could not prevent the outstanding results of this AATLH conference. The stoppage, however, did give some very good stories to remember – Alice Springs to Wentworth Falls by car; from Nowra by mobile toy library; from Tasmania by Air Force Transport, train, greyhound bus and taxi! And so on ... The conference also incorporated the first toy library training seminar. Pat's attention to detail ensured that nothing was overlooked.

The organising team received a NSW Children's Week Award in October 1989 for "the most innovative conference addressing the needs of children."

At the conference Tricia Ryan presented her paper on *"The Day to Day Running of a Toy Library"*.

This paper said in part that:

"In the running of a toy library many of the processes become second nature, often done without a conscious thought as to why or how. It can therefore become very easy to skip over things or cut corners in order to get things done more quickly especially when there is only limited time available.

Every task in the library has a specific reason and purpose. Organisation and attention to detail are the key points, not only in a toy library, but in every library from the small community ladies' group to the State or National Library.

We mustn't forget that although toys are used with an emphasis on "therapy" we are primarily dealing with a library. Items are stored, retrieved, lent, returned and replaced. Each step has a separate set of rules to follow and records to be made in order that there is a clear flow from one step to the next. Items need to be stored in a logical sequence in order to make retrieval quick and efficient in both time and effort. In lending toys, information is needed as to who has borrowed what and when it is to be returned and to where exactly on the shelves. Who is responsible for making all of this work? We all are! It is every person's responsibility to see that these steps are carried out correctly. It only takes one person doing the wrong thing to put the whole scheme out of synchronisation.

The overall responsibility, however, remains with the managing body, be it institution or an elected committee. They have the job of drawing up the constitution, setting up policies such as opening hours, eligibility of membership, fees, system of classification to be used, the responsibilities of the staff rules and regulations. Then comes the fun part -dealing with government bodies for funding salaries, taxation and insurance both for premises and staff. "⁴



Tricia Ryan presenting her paper on *"The Day to Day Running of a Toy Library"* at the 13th National AATLH Conference 1989, Vicki Boddy (L) assisting.

MOVE TO THE KIAH FAMILY CENTRE

Following earlier discussions with Warringah Shire Council, cubby house was offered space in the newly built centre at 16 Sturdee Parade, Dee Why. The property extended through to 23 Pacific Parade. Warringah Shire Council developed this complex next to the Dee Why Children's Centre to centralise children's services in the area.

With the help of the Kiwanis Service Club, the move was made from South Creek Road and cubby house re-opened at the Kiah Family Centre on 26 October 1989. Cubby house occupied two rooms – an office and toyroom. It also shared the use of a large multi-purpose room which opened onto an outside fenced play area.

Use of the multi-purpose room meant no more worries about rainy Toytime days! **The site occupied by Kiah Family Centre was in the early 1900's the property of the Ponton sisters Elsie, Alice and Vera. The three sisters were progressive, professional women dedicated to the welfare of children with a concern for the local community and an appreciation of nature.**

The Ponton Family owned tracts of land in both Pacific and Sturdee Parades, Dee Why. Ms. Marisha Kelly, a neighbour, remembers that as children Elsie, Alice and Vera had developed a love of books.

The sisters became teachers in schools in the local area. Alice taught at Manly West and Brookvale and Elsie at Dee Why. Vera Norman, the only married sister, opened the first Infants Department in Narrabeen North in 1935. It was in the local Welfare Hall (later a wire factory) in Garden Street and the children moved on to Narrabeen Public School for their primary education.⁵

*"Mrs. Norman was a very dedicated teacher. She left a lasting impression on her many charges over the years. Many stories are told about her love of nature, her concern for the children and her interest in the community. She would give the children cocoa and soup in winter. When Mullet Creek was flooded, so was the schoolyard and on these occasions, she would take off her shoes and stockings, tuck up her skirt and with a child on each hip she would take the children to the toilet and back."*⁶

In 1922 Vera bought 16 Sturdee Parade and in 1923 Alice Ponton bought 23 Pacific Parade. Ms. Jeanne McGlynn, an associate of Elsie's recalls the sisters' pride in their garden which featured native flowers, especially rock lilies. Every spring their colleagues were invited to picnic in the garden to enjoy the flowers.

In 1969 Alice transferred the Pacific Parade property to the Presbyterian Church and in 1972 Vera transferred the Sturdee Parade property to Elsie Ponton and Frederick McKass of the Presbyterian Church as joint tenants.

Alice requested that the natural flora be retained and that the property be used for the good of the community, especially for children. Over the years the property changed hands. At the time of Elsie's death Alice's requests were long forgotten.

In 1984 Warringah Shire Council obtained the property and began negotiations to build a centre for a number of children's services:

- cubby house toy library
- Early Childhood Health Centre
- Warringah Family Day Care South

The building was completed in 1989 and the beautiful trees that graced the Pacific Parade portion of the property were incorporated into the children's play area to become a feature of the centre.

The centre was named “Kiah”, which means ‘beautiful place’ in one aboriginal language.

In 1980 cubby house had been given its first space with Warringah Family Day Care at The Kingsway and ten years later would again be with this service at the new centre.

The Kiah Family Centre was officially opened on 8 February 1990 by Warringah Shire President Cr. John Caputo. The centre developed the original concept of the Ponton sisters and reflects their life long philosophies regarding education, care and nurture of children.



Volunteer Jean Leeson (R) with Shirley McDonald in the library office at South Creek Road.

Into The Nineties

1990

Toy library hours were Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, 10.00am to 2.00pm. Toytime was changed to Thursday 10.00am to noon.

Cubby house held a fete on Saturday 17 March to celebrate its 10th birthday. Cubby house's first borrower, Sarah Van der Sluice, cut the birthday cake assisted by another very early borrower, Matthew Dickey. Pittwater Trefoil Guild distributed soft toys made by its members to the children present. Everyone was entertained by David the clown and the Lions Club of Brookvale provided refreshments. Treasurer Arthur Greenwood was able to bank more than \$1300 as proceeds of the day.

Cr. Paul Couvret, cubby house's first Patron, presented Warringah Shire Council Community Service Awards in recognition of ten years service to seven members of staff and committee: Nan Bosler, Joyce Dawson, Pat Frater, Lois Greenwood, Joan Paton, Margaret Rawlings and Sue Terry.

A guest at the fete and a neighbour of the Kiah Family Centre was Senator Bronwyn Bishop who has continued supporting the work of cubby house.

When the library began in 1980 with cardboard boxes of uncatalogued toys there were no paid staff members. Cubby house began 1990 with the following paid staff:

- *Director of Therapy Programme:* Sue Terry - 5 hours per month
- *Occupational Therapist 1:* Sue Terry - 9 hours per week
- *Occupational Therapist 2:* Chris Haupstein - 5 hours per week
- *Wahrooga visits* - 2 hours per month & *Relieving Occupational Therapist* Pauline Hole
- *Administrator:* Helen Stark - 16 hours per month
- *Librarian:* Vicki Boddy - 36 hours per month
- *Toytime Leader:* Maryanne Tait - 6 hours per week
- *Relieving Occupational Therapists:* Mandy Ryan and Jenny Rix

Annual fees were increased to \$25 for families, \$60 for groups and \$100 for private practitioners, with special arrangements for families having difficulty paying membership fees. Annual membership of the Friends of cubby house was increased to \$5 and Enid Morris took on the role of Secretary of the Friends.

A system for members to reserve toys, play equipment and books was also introduced.

MOBILE SERVICE DISCONTINUED

The Mobile Service to Mona Vale was running at a very high cost but with low patronage so it was regrettably discontinued. Visits to Wahrooga Playgroup for mothers and children at risk were continued.

Toys to the value of \$1500 were donated by the Variety Club of NSW, one of several similar donations over many years.

Officers and men from HMAS Albatross and HMAS Harman held their first Navy Cycle Ride from Brisbane to Nowra to raise money for children with special needs. A donation of \$1,000 was received from the money raised by the ride.

Petty Officer Rick Meehan was the driving force behind the Navy Charity Bike Rides which continued every second year from 1990. The funds donated to cubby house increased with each subsequent ride.

Present at cubby house's welcome to the sailors at the Kiah Family Centre was Warringah Shire Council Deputy Mayor Cr. Julie Sutton. It was her immediate representations to Council that led to fans being installed in the toy and multipurpose rooms. These were greatly appreciated, improving the air circulation in the building. Cr. Sutton has maintained her strong support of the toy library.

In August Charles Morris was appointed Honorary Auditor (1990 to 1994).

The Australian Association of Toy Libraries for the Handicapped (AATLH) had become the Australian Toy Library Association (ATLA). The 14th National Conference was held in Geelong, Victoria, from 2 to 5 September and was attended by Nan Bosler, Pat Frater and Lois Greenwood.

Ms. Miyoko Urano, Manager of the National Toy Library Committee of Japan, visited cubby house together with 17 visitors from Nagoya on Saturday, 17 November. Many ideas from cubby house were eagerly- noted for use when they returned to Japan. Other international visitors to the library over the years have been from South Africa, Brazil and the United Kingdom.

School, university and TAFE students have also visited cubby house seeking information and material when researching children's services.

The Toytime families and staff went on several excursions including Waratah Park at Terry Hills to see "Skippy", Golden Ridge Animal Farm at Dural and Manly Quota Playground in Lagoon Park, Queenscliff. This was the first playground on the north side designed to give children with disabilities equal access to the equipment that other children enjoy. Everything is at a height handy to children in wheelchairs.

Parent information and discussion groups have been held during the day and evening. Topics have included "Starting School", "Play Ideas" and "Communicating with Your Toddler".



LEFT: Sandra Gillett and daughter Lisa.

Photo courtesy The Manly Daily



ABOVE: Member and mother choosing toys.



Junior cooks being helped by Maryanne Tait (C) during Toytime in the Kiah Family Centre multi-purpose room, 1991.

1991

In February the National Secretariat of ATLA was transferred to Melbourne. Nan Bosler relinquished the role of National President but continued as State and International representative. Lois Greenwood completed her term as Executive Officer but continued as Journal Editor.

The government grant received by cubby house to pay the occupational therapists' salaries was cut by 20% in 1991. The service being provided by cubby house was greatly valued by the parents of borrowers who could see that their family was benefiting but it was becoming even more difficult to obtain government funding.

FUND RAISING CONTINUES

Raising funds was a necessary and never-ending activity for the Management Committee - guessing competitions, toothbrush and Christmas toy catalogue drives and Market Days. Fund raising stalls were held at Community Days such as Northside Carnivale, Manly Colonial Day, at Warringah Mall and Dee Why Shopping Centre.

Income from the sales stand, a fixture at cubby house since 1980 and stocked with donations from volunteers, staff, families and people in the community, averaged \$100 each month. The Lions Club of Pittwater, through Ann and Hylton Sawtell, provided the library with an extensive range of quality new and recycled goods.

Donations of toys and books after assessment by the occupational therapists have been added to the library. The Senior Citizens Toy Repair Group supplied toys and equipment and continue to support the library.

In April Chris Haupstein accepted a full time position at Mona Vale Hospital and it was with regret that her resignation was accepted. She was replaced by Occupational Therapists Kerry Gibbett and Mandy Ryan sharing the job.

During the year the Apex Club of Terrey Hills cleared the outside area at the Kiah Family Centre and the Dee Why and Harbord Garden Clubs revitalised and replanted the gardens.

Sue Terry and Lois Greenwood attended the 15th National ATLA Conference in Brisbane from 26 to 29 August. The Conference endorsed the National Action Against War Toys and its belief that toys should enhance children's creativity and skills. ATLA and the TLA of NSW oppose the manufacture and distribution of toys of inherent violence and toy weaponry. The Management Committee maintains the policy that "cubby house is a War Toy Free Zone".

President Nan Bosler was Keynote Speaker at a three-day conference organised by the Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs at Cottesloe Beach, Western Australia. Nan's work was acknowledged as the theme of the conference, *"A Touch of Magic for the Handicapped"* was taken from the title of one of her books.

THE TOY REPAIRMEN

Cubby house kept its Toy Repairmen Geoff Chapple and Lou Brown extremely busy repairing broken toys, modifying new toys and making pieces to replace missing parts. **They never seemed too busy to do anything asked of them. So, it was with great pride that cubby house heard that Geoff and Lou had been awarded NSW Children's Week Awards for 1991.**

A Commonwealth grant of \$2,432 was received to purchase furniture and playground equipment.

As the year ended there were several resignations from the staff. Vicki Boddy, Librarian, resigned in November. Maryanne Tait, Toytime Leader, moved to Bellingen and Helen Stark, Administrative Assistant, took up a position at Belrose Branch, Warringah Library Service.



Tricia Ryan and Lou Brown, volunteer Toy Repairman (C) at the annual presentation night of the Rotary Club of Dee Why

1992

With this turnover of personnel the Committee introduced changes to the staffing structure. Tricia Ryan was appointed Library Manager to co-ordinate overall running of the programme (10 hours per week) and Sandra Gillett became Administrative Assistant (3 hours per week). When Toytime recommenced in 1992 the new Leader was Celia Grace with assistants Estelle Laybutt and Narelle Stewart.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA HONOUR FOR NAN

Nan Bosler was further honoured by the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia for her services to the community.

Cubby house funding received a welcome boost when Shirley Berquist, Dee Why Rotary Charity Queen, generously donated the results of her fund raising, \$5,096, to help the work being done by cubby house.

It was decided to again try opening on Sunday morning. Funding was not available to employ an Occupational Therapist for the session but parents were requesting the chance to change toys.

The Navy Charity Bike Ride Team held their second ride in February and again visited cubby house where they received an enthusiastic welcome. The team of Navy cyclists, led by PO Rick Meehan, donated \$3,000 to cubby house and a further amount of \$1,600 was received from local sponsorship.

Kerry Gibbett and Mandy Ryan both took maternity leave and Pauline Hole and Joanne Ford assisted as Occupational Therapists during their absence. Pauline has continued to work as Relieving Occupational Therapist at the toy library when required.

AWARDS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS

In October a NSW Children's Week Award was again made to a member of cubby house - this time to President Nan Bosler.

Warringah Shire Council Community Service Awards in recognition of Ten Years Service were presented to Geoff Chapple, Dorothy Andrews, Jean Leeson, Enid Morris, Tricia Ryan, Helen Stark and Eileen Ewer. Eileen also received a NSW Premier's Award in recognition of her service to the community.

The library was sorry to lose the services of Geoff Chapple as Toy Repairman when he moved to Baulkham Hills. He did however return each December to continue his role as Santa Claus at the Toytime Christmas parties. Lou Brown was presented with a Pride of Workmanship Award by the Rotary Club of Dee Why, nominated by cubby house committee.

1993

Fee structures were changed at the beginning of the year. A joining fee of \$10 was introduced which contributed towards the cost of the large material library bag members were required to use. Annual fees were \$50 for families, \$100 for groups and \$150 for private practitioners. Proportional fees were also introduced for members joining throughout the year.

Opening hours were Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday 10.00am to 12 noon and Thursday 10.00am to 2.00pm.

Due to the resignation of Celia Grace, the role of Toytime Leader was added to the responsibilities of Tricia Ryan in early 1993.

Elgin and Lou Brown were presented with Outstanding Citizenship Awards from Warringah Council in recognition of their contribution not only to cubby house but also to a wide range of community programmes.

Cubby house received the inaugural ATLA Award for “the most innovative approach to Toy Library Development” for its programme of volunteer staff training and a subsequent Staff Manual. The Manual had been developed through the work of Library Manager Tricia Ryan.

The World Play Summit was held in Melbourne in February 1993. President Nan Bosler and Occupational Therapist Sue Terry attended along with over 500 delegates from 39 countries. The cubby house Staff Training Programme and Manual were tabled at the Conference and Nan presented a paper *“A Touch of Magic – Creative Development in Young Children”*.

Her paper said in part:

“...We shouldn’t aim at just entertaining children with special needs through play but we should try to stimulate them, work through their creative development and help them to realise a little more of their potential – all under the guise of enjoying themselves. It is up to us to add a touch of magic to their lives.

This stimulation, it is hoped, will lead to better communication skills, more cooperation and the satisfaction, even delight, that the children we are working with are happy and achieving according to their abilities.

Children deserve every possible opportunity to enjoy enriching experiences. We are not dealing with identical, cut-out paper dolls. Each child is an individual, with particular needs to satisfy, and it is up to us to do our best to meet those needs. If a child is deprived of early stimulation, an interesting, challenging environment and the opportunity to play, then that child is seriously disadvantaged.

Play is just so important.

Child’s play suggests something very easy, a bit of fun and probably without much value. Don’t be deceived! Play is one of a child’s earliest means of learning, not always easy but vitally important.

They learn to get along with other children. They often seem to spend more time organising a game and giving directions than they spend actually playing the game. They also learn to make use of whatever materials are available. A backyard barbecue may be planned using leaves and twigs for sausages and chips; for a game of shearing sheep they may even pick up a whirring friction toy and pretend to shear the luckless family cat.

My children had a cubby house in the backyard and this was the venue of hours of play, most of which revolved around the children’s make believe role as housekeepers. We have a snowball tree in the backyard and the flowers became cauliflower. Funny thing our camellias never seemed to have flowers on the lower branches. Then we realised that peas were also on the menu when the camellia began budding – luckily they could only reach the lower levels. And the tea parties ...

To some children, this imaginative way of expressing themselves has such a strong appeal that they develop a keen observation of the movements and expressions of people and animals.

For all children, at their individual level of ability, dramatic play provides an unsurpassed opportunity for developing skill in language fluency, expressiveness and vocabulary.

Involvement in spontaneous play can well be an outlet for expressing feelings and a way of increasing understanding of the world about them –by doing, touching, experimenting, thinking and construction... ”⁷

In April 1993 an application for funding was made to the Fairbridge Foundation to improve office amenities. In June a donation of \$3,562 was received to purchase new office equipment.

A successful submission had also been made to the St. George Foundation. \$4,904 was received in May 1993 for a research project into toys and their suitability for children with special needs.

A major stocktake of the library commenced – old toys were discarded, amalgamated with others or with books, some were improved by adding new instructions and records of lost toys were updated.

The second member questionnaire was also circulated. A calendar of events for the coming year was compiled and each year one is distributed to members, staff and volunteers.

October was an extremely busy month! Sue Terry, Occupational Therapist, received a NSW Children's Week Award. A Market Day was held at Kiah Centre raising approximately \$2,000 for the library. Mandy Ryan, Occupational Therapist, moved to Port Macquarie and Tricia Ryan, Library Manager, moved to Bathurst. Their contributions to the programme were greatly missed. Tricia, a Teacher-Librarian, had played a key role in the development of cubby house.

STAFF RESTRUCTURE

A restructuring of staff positions was made with the Library Manager's responsibilities being divided into three separate roles. Sandra Gillett was employed in the new position of Administration Manager (42 hours per month). Jill Abrahams, who had been the Toytime Assistant, was appointed Toytime Leader. Julie Maloney was appointed Librarian (21 hours per month).

Commonwealth funding for Toytime which had been received from the Department of Social Security, Office of Child Care and Schools Commission now came from the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). Its guidelines and accountability requirements were being tightened and more reporting was being required on the progress of each individual child attending Toytime. This resulted in a complete change in the direction of Toytime, from an opportunity for children to socialise and for parents to share concerns and support each other to a teacher-centred programme requiring reports on specific outcomes on each child's progress.

To improve communications within the library a Staff Bulletin was introduced. Bulletins are issued after bi-monthly committee meetings and workshops.

Regular workshops have played an important part in training and supporting volunteers, giving them the opportunity to exchange ideas and concerns, learn new skills and become informed about issues relating to the families using the library. Guest speakers are invited to the workshops. Topics have included "Communication", "Who Else Can Help our Families", "Dealing with Conflict" and "Listening Skills".

Volunteer Marge Rowlings with member and mother in the cubby house office at the Kiah Family Centre, 1993.





**LEFT: Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, Governor of NSW at the reception
RIGHT: President Nan Bosler and PO Rick Meehan (R) at the reception for the
Navy Charity Bike Ride Team, February 1994**

1994

Cubby house was abuzz with excitement on 16 February when the Governor of New South Wales, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair and Mrs. Sinclair arrived to join cubby house staff and members in welcoming the Navy Charity Bike Ride Team. This was their third ride from Brisbane to Nowra. The reception organised by cubby house was the official welcome to Sydney and was also attended by Cr. Henry Tsang, Deputy Lord Mayor City of Sydney, Cr. Brian Green, Mayor of Warringah, Cr. Geoff Smith, Mayor of Manly and Cr. Lynne Czinner from Pittwater Council. Other guests included members of the Down Syndrome Association of NSW.

PO Rick Meehan and his team made a generous donation of \$4,000 to cubby house.

ELGIN BROWN ELECTED AS PRESIDENT

At the AGM on 18 March Nan Bosler stepped down as President. Elgin Brown was elected the new President and Nan accepted the position of Patron.

At this meeting a change was made to the library's name – the words “handicaps and” were deleted. The title now read – *“cubby house toy library – for children with special needs”*.

Warringah Council Community Service Awards for Ten Years Service were presented to Lou Brown and Betty Bessell-Browne. Betty had taken on the position of Co-ordinator of the Friends of cubby house in 1993 and still holds that position.

Regular newsletters had been a part of cubby house's culture since its first week of operation. The newsletters not only give families and supporters details of what is happening in the library but they also include information about other children's services and activities in the community.

Pat Frater was Editor from 1980 to 1985, followed by Heather Carrington. Elgin Brown undertook this role from 1989 to 1994, when it became the responsibility of the Administration Manager Sandra Gillett.

From the March 1994 edition each biannual newsletter included a supplement, written by the Occupational Therapists, focusing on different aspects of children's development, such as self esteem and gross motor skills. These supplements were limited to one per year from 1999.

Tower Australia Pty. Ltd. (now Danka Australia Pty. Ltd.) offered to support cubby house by printing the newsletters, all forms and brochures required by the library. This valuable support continues in 2001.

To keep the library running as efficiently as possible and to maintain a quality range of toys for the borrowers, regular culling of the library collection took place and a general stocktake was undertaken in the first part of 1994.

Long time volunteer Dorothy Andrews had been working whenever the library was open on Sundays. After her resignation in May due to ill health it was not possible to find a replacement volunteer and the committee decided to reduce Sunday opening hours.

In July cubby house commenced Transition Planning to meet the new requirement of the Department of Community Services for continuation of funding for the Occupational Therapists' salaries. This process necessitated the review of all policies and procedures of the library, producing them in written form and creating new policies for those areas required by the Department that had not already been addressed by the committee. This was a very long project undertaken by Arthur Greenwood and completed over three years.

Sue Terry presented a paper at the 1994 ATLA Conference in Perth on the results of research carried out at cubby house by Occupational Therapists Kerry Gibbett and Mandy Ryan. The research, funded by a grant from the St. George Foundation, resulted in the publication of a booklet entitled ***"Which Toy? - Selecting and adapting toys for children with special needs for inclusion in a Toy Library."*** Copies of the booklet were sold and remain available for purchase from cubby house.

It said in part:

"...Before toys can be selected for a toy library it is necessary to define the needs of the borrowers.

There is a strong commitment within the staff of cubby house toy library that each child and family is unique in their likes and needs. Occupational Therapists are available to guide parents in the selection of appropriate toys. It is considered essential that the therapist takes time to get to know each child and their preferences within the context of their family situation. Needs, it is acknowledged, will change continuously as the child grows and develops and new goals will be set.

The Occupational Therapist gathers information about each child, including history, therapy aims and progress. Parents' knowledge about their child and what may appeal to them is combined with the therapist's knowledge of development and the toys available within the library, to identify toys which are potentially useful. It is then important to share information which will allow this toy to meet the child's unique needs. Ideas on positioning and stabilising toys and presenting a toy at a child's level can be important. This may mean simplifying a task initially or making it more complex in order to maintain sufficient challenge and motivation.

Thus, much information is built up about each child and family which we feel is of great importance. However, this provides us with little information about borrowers as a group and whether our resources are adequately meeting their needs.

The limitations of assigning individuals to discrete groups are acknowledged. Children within the same category will have very different needs from one another. However, there are many benefits for the library in terms of identifying gaps or shortfalls in resources and directing funding towards these. The information gained can assist greatly in setting priorities for spending and in planning future areas to be targeted.

Specific areas within a library which are under-resourced are not always immediately apparent. Therapists may sometimes have a feeling that additional resources are required or it may be evidenced in long waiting lists for certain pieces of equipment. The latter situation can be very frustrating for parents whose children develop an interest in attaining a certain skill e.g. jumping or climbing. The timing of borrowing the appropriate equipment can be important. If there is a lengthy waiting time, a valuable learning opportunity may be missed. If, however, a system is in place which can identify broad areas of need, these can be compared with existing resources...⁸

Sue Terry also presented this paper to the AGM of the Toy Library Association of NSW the following year.

1995

On Australia Day Arthur Greenwood, cubby house's Public Officer and Treasurer, was presented with a Warringah Council Outstanding Community Service Award.

A capital grant of \$6,200 had been received from the Department of Community Services in late 1994 to enable cubby house to become computerised. Julie Maloney and Sandra Gillett put in considerable effort facilitating the changeover. **Computer hardware and a specialised library software package were purchased to enable computerised records to be kept of all toy library stock, members and loan details.** Many hours were spent from October 1994 to January 1995 entering all library records in time for re-opening after the Christmas holidays. Detailed instruction sheets were written to complement the special training given to all library volunteers, many of whom had never used computers before.

At the March AGM, 15 Year Certificates of Service were presented to Sue Terry, Marge Rawlings, Joan Paton, Lois Greenwood, Pat Frater and Nan Bosler. Helen Robertson was elected as the first Parent Representative on the Management Committee. She was followed by Sarah Carlson (1996-97) who also worked as Toytime Assistant and a library volunteer. Parent Representative from 1998 to 2001 was Kerry Head-Toussaint.

In June a grant of US\$3,000 (A\$4,070) was received from the Paul Newman Foundation (USA) for the purchase of new toys and books.

COLOUR CODING BOOKS

Children's books were graded as to their suitability for a specific developmental stage. A colour was designated to each category. Three categories were determined. Early picture books (blue) simple stories (red) and more detailed stories (green). A square of adhesive 'contact' in the corresponding colour was attached to the back of each book and the book shelves were brightly painted with the colours. This enabled parents to select books with more ease and volunteers found they had no difficulty reshelving them in the appropriate place.

Books about concepts such as size, shape, colour, number and opposites were designated yellow and shelved together.

GRANT FOR OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Cubby house was continuing to operate a highly respected, professional toy library and it was essential that the office maintain the same high level of professionalism. So it was a boost when an amount of \$2,500 was received from the Department of Community Services to enable cubby house to purchase the additional equipment required for the office - a photocopier and a phone/fax/answering machine. The grant also provided for the purchase of \$1,500 worth of toys.

From August, the library ceased opening on Sundays because of lack of volunteers. Hours were Wednesday and Thursday 9.45am to 1.00pm and Saturdays 9.45am to 12 noon. The committee decided to close the library during all school vacations.

In September 1995, Librarian Julie Maloney resigned to take up a full time position at Willoughby Library. Janet Black, who had been assisting Julie in a voluntary capacity for the previous 16 months, was appointed Librarian.

Cubby house Charity Golf Day was held at Long Reef Golf Club on 24 October thanks mainly to the efforts of Elwyn Heber and Vicki Jeffiess. The day raised \$3,550.

In May 1992 the northern area of Warringah Shire was formed into a new local government area named Pittwater.

Financial support was now given to cubby house by the three Councils on the peninsula. For

example during 1995 a grant of \$2,876 was received from Pittwater Council, \$1,000 from Manly Council and \$2,000 from Warringah Council. In addition to ongoing financial support Warringah Council also provided the premises at the Kiah Family Centre.

1996

Appointments (half hour) with the Occupational Therapists were introduced in 1982, a free service to cubby house members. In 1996 it was decided that new members would be given a one hour appointment on their first visit to allow sufficient time for the initial consultation.

Petty Officer Rick Meehan led the fourth Navy Charity Bike Ride Team to a special welcome held at James Meehan Reserve, Dee Why in February 1996. The team was made up of personnel from HMAS Albatross, Nowra and HMAS Harman, Canberra. Presentation of a special plaque was made to Rick, in acknowledgment of his efforts in instigating the rides and participating in all four events. The timber plaque, featuring an inlay of the cubby house logo, was designed and made by Lou Brown. \$4,200 was presented to cubby house by the Team.

Michael Lee, who had been Honorary Auditor in 1995, was elected Treasurer at the AGM in March. Arthur Greenwood remained Public Officer and took on the new position of Assistant Treasurer. Tony Sheekey was appointed Honorary Auditor (1996–99).

A 15 Year Certificate of Service was presented to Eileen Ewer. Marge Rawlings received a Certificate of Appreciation from Pittwater Council. Marge was a volunteer at cubby house from 1980, resigning in 2000 due to ill health.

Administration Manager Sandra Gillett was recognised by the Rotary Club of Dee Why in its 1996 Pride of Workmanship Awards. Sue Terry was presented with the Rotary Club of Brookvale's Inaugural Community Service Award.

SUE TERRY RESIGNS

In May 1996, after sixteen years of dedicated service and leadership, Sue Terry's resignation from cubby house was accepted with deep regret. Sue was farewelled with grateful thanks for all she had been and done at the toy library.

From starting as a volunteer in 1980, through all the stages of development of the play therapy programme, her vision and understanding of the children's and family's needs and her gentle and supportive manner had endeared her to all – children, parents, staff and volunteers.

Sue started Toytime, a play session for pre-schoolers with special needs, introducing parents to varied ways of using toys with their children to help the specific skill development they were working on.

From this sprang the whole therapy programme which was developed by Sue and the other occupational therapists who worked with her. She introduced to cubby house consultation with a therapist at each visit and gave talks and presented papers on toy library matters at high profile seminars and conferences.

Sue was very much missed when she resigned. She left a valuable legacy with cubby house in the directions and understandings of the central purpose of a toy library – to help each child through play and enjoyment to develop to his or her best potential.

Jo-anne O'Neill was employed as a Locum Occupational Therapist to work on Wednesdays until the end of the year.

EXCELLENCE IN ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL

On 29 July 1996 cubby house received a National Award for "Excellence in Organisational Renewal" from the Non-Profit Management Institute. Mandy Ryan, who was then living in Brisbane, attended the Awards dinner held in Brisbane during the Institute's Annual Conference and accepted the award.

The award recognised cubby house's achievement in conducting a three year programme of improvement in the library. This commenced in 1993 with the research project and resultant *Which Toy?* booklet, followed by 18 months' work involving the computerisation of the library, stocktake, re-evaluation of all library stock, purchase of new toys and improvement of existing presentation of toys. There was an increase in usage of the library of 20% over the three years. Funding for all of this work had been provided by the St. George Foundation, Variety Club of NSW, Paul Newman Foundation, Department of Community Services and Warringah, Pittwater and Manly Councils.

Finally news was received from the Department of Community Services that the Transition Plan had been accepted pending the adoption of a few additional requirements. This ensured the library's continued funding for three years before further review. From next year the funding body was to be the Ageing and Disability Department (ADD).

President Elgin Brown was nominated for a Community Spirit Award conducted by Energy Australia for her volunteer work, not only with cubby house but also with the Tramshed Arts & Community Centre, Manly Warringah Community Information Service Centre and Rotary Club of Dee Why. Elgin was one of four finalists for the Northern NSW Region and received a certificate at a special awards dinner at Taronga Zoo on 29 October 1996.

The St. George Foundation gave an additional grant of \$2,500 for the purchase of toys to enable further updating and expansion of the toy collection.

During Term 4, a guessing competition was conducted by Jill Lennon who made and donated a porcelain doll for first prize. Proceeds from the competition were \$564. In 1981 Jill had organised a Doll Show of her antique and reproduction dolls, raising \$300 for cubby house.

1997

In February Jenny Anscomb joined cubby house to share the role of Occupational Therapist with Kerry Gibbett. Jenny worked on Thursdays and Kerry on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Funding for Toytime now came from the Department of Training and Education Coordination (DTEC). Restructuring within the Department meant funding was not received as expected at the beginning of 1997. During Term 1, Toytime was able to continue because of a small grant from Pittwater Council. DTEC funding was finally received during Term 2. However the chances of continued funding were decreased with the introduction of tighter restrictions on what were termed 'types of disabilities' that would attract a grant. As a result of decreased funding the committee was forced to reduce the hours of the Toytime Leaders Estelle Laybutt and Jill Abrahams to 4.5 hours each per week. When Estelle resigned in April Jill continued as sole leader for the remainder of 1997.

A grant of \$3,000 was received from the Frederick Palmer Archer Trust to cover general library expenses. A regular donation is made by Mrs. Betty Wickens from a trust she administers to be used to assist children with vision impairment.

ASSISTANCE FROM THE COMMUNITY

Regular donations were received from many individuals and community groups, including service clubs, schools and sporting associations. **The Curl Curl Women's Bowling Club has been cubby house's most consistent supporter. Without the community's ongoing assistance the toy library would not have been able to continue.**

In April a third members' questionnaire was distributed. One of the major problems identified by parents was the need for more space within the library and the facility for confidential consultation with the therapists.

Two break-ins at the Kiah Family Centre in March and April 1997 were most distressing for the volunteers and staff but fortunately only very small amounts of cash were taken from cubby

house. A general review of security procedures followed but a major break-in occurred in September 1997. Losses included office equipment and machines which were fortunately covered by insurance.

Cubby house had always been conscious of the need to maintain a high level of communication with members. A Members Information Booklet was collated by Sandra Gillett. This 16 page booklet contained all information in one publication to eliminate the need to give new members a number of 'loose sheets' explaining different aspects of the library's operation. The booklet was trialled with new members who joined during Term 3 and distributed to all members in Term 4.

Through the Peninsula Interest Group for Paediatric Occupational Therapists (or PIGPOT) valuable contact is maintained with other therapists. The cubby house brochure is also widely distributed in the community leading to referrals to the library. A small grant from the Department of Community Services made possible the publication of a multilingual brochure in seven languages.

The publicity over the years in *The Manly Daily* and *Northern Beaches Weekender* – both articles and photographs – was instrumental in creating awareness about the toy library.

In August 1997 Lois Greenwood was presented with an Outstanding Community Service Award by Warringah Council.

As a NSW Children's Week activity a coastal walk was arranged along Dee Why Headland to the bush garden of Don and Pat Frater. On the day Elgin Brown and Estelle Laybutt received Ten Year Community Service Awards from Warringah Council. Jean Leeson was also presented with a 15 Year Certificate of service to cubby house. Jean was responsible for designing and sewing many 'see-through window' bags for puzzles, creating dress up outfits and making the original cubby house banner.

TOYTIME IS DISCONTINUED

At the end of the year the unfortunate decision had to be made to discontinue Toytime. The programme had provided a valuable service and great benefit to borrowers of cubby house and their families for sixteen years. The closure was made necessary by the lack of children who fitted the strict funding guidelines of the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination

Toytime leader Jill Abrahams remained with cubby house as a volunteer in the library office.

For many years the Rotary Club of Dee Why had made regular donations to the toy library. Cubby house volunteers began helping to sell tickets in the Dee Why Rotary Christmas Stocking from 1997 onwards and the proceeds from the tickets sold were donated to cubby house. Over the four years 1997–2000 this totalled \$11,105.

1998

Annual fees were increased to \$75 for families, \$150 for groups and \$225 for private practitioners.

A Civic Reception was held at Warringah Council Chambers on 18 February and more than 80 people welcomed riders from the fifth bi-annual Navy Charity Bike Ride Team. \$8,000 was donated to cubby house by the team. Co-ordinator of the ride, PO Rick Meehan, received recognition of his efforts by being awarded a NSW Children's Week Award in October 1998 and the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Military Division in the Australia Day Honours in January 1999.

The Management Committee recognised the need to promote cubby house within the community. Promotion of the programme included participation in information days, festivals and seminars. These ranged from Volunteer Information Day on Manly Corso to a Disability and Child Protection Seminar at Dee Why RSL Club.

In 1981 the Lions Club of Brookvale had donated a sandwich board which was used very

effectively. In 1998 the artwork was redesigned by Geoff Cummings using a photograph of one of the current members, Riana Head-Toussaint, as a centrepiece. Geoff also donated keyrings featuring this design and these are used for the promotion of cubby house.

The Volunteers Information Booklet was introduced in July 1998. This booklet, which was co-ordinated by Sandra Gillett, outlined the more important aspects of operations in the library and supplemented on-the-job training of volunteers. As had been the case with the Members Information Booklet, the Volunteers Booklet gathered together all the loose pages of information previously given to new volunteers.

On 27 October during NSW Children's Week an Information and Open Morning was held at cubby house. This included displays by other local services such as Northern Beaches InterChange and Kookaburra Playgroup.

Two presentations were made to cubby house volunteers at the end of 1998. Joan Paton received a NSW Children's Week Certificate in recognition of her service to children and Jean Leeson was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from Pittwater Council.



President Elgin Brown (L) presenting Joan Paton, a volunteer at cubby house since 1980, with the NSW Children's Week Certificate at the cubby house Christmas lunch, 1998.

In January 1999 the Radisson Kestrel Hotel, Manly, gave a donation of \$898 towards the work of cubby house. This was part of a continuing programme by the Hotel to support local charities.

In February a new Members Communication Book was launched. This loose-leaf A5 folder included a copy of the Members Information Book, ABC classification of toys, Calendar, and feedback and change of address forms. It also provided a space to keep computer print-outs of items borrowed at each visit.

This system has now been developed further to give members written suggestions by the Occupational Therapists of ways to use the toys being borrowed.

PAT FRATER ELECTED PRESIDENT

At the Annual General Meeting held in March, Elgin Brown stepped down as President of cubby house, a position she had held for 5 years. Elgin was elected Vice President. Pat Frater, who was the original Co-ordinator of the library when it began in 1980, accepted nomination and was elected President. Betty Bessell Browne was awarded a 15 Year Certificate of Service to cubby house.

ITEM ATTRIBUTES IS INTRODUCED

An innovative process called "Item Attributes" was introduced during 1999. These item attributes, which staff added to all toys and recorded into the computer system, indicate the types of skills each toy can be used to develop, e.g. fine motor, eye-hand co-ordination, crossing the midline, bilateral skills. The attributes for each toy are also included on the packaging of each toy, either on a laminated tag or directly onto the container.

Toys are filed in the library using their main skill attribute, although many are useful for building a wide range of skills. Once this system is completed it will be possible to produce complete computer listings of toys with specific 'attributes' across the entire library collection. This will help in selecting the most appropriate toys, that is "The Right Toy at the Right Time".

Warringah Council nominated cubby house for a NSW Children's Week Award and this was presented at Parliament House in October to mark 20 years of service to children with special needs. Cubby house participated in a Community Fun Day at Dee Why Beach organised by Warringah Family Day Care for Children's Week on Saturday 30 October. A display of new children's books purchased for cubby house was also part of the Children's Week activities.

In November Manly-Warringah Rugby League Club Ltd. made a donation of \$2,000 to the library.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AWARDS

Jill Rutherford, a volunteer since 1989, was presented with a Warringah Council Community Service Award for Ten Years Service. Lou Brown received a 15 Year Certificate of Service from cubby house.

Staff and volunteers have enjoyed end-of-year lunches together. The most popular venue has been the picnic area under the casuarina trees at Jamieson Park on the shores of Narrabeen Lake. Also invited to the Christmas lunches were Ann and Hylton Sawtell, supporters since 1980, and Margaret Norman. Margaret, a grandmother of one of the members, has been a regular helper with Market Days.

At a Civic Reception on 8 December Pat Frater accepted on behalf of cubby house a Pittwater Council Certificate of Appreciation.

HOWARD AVENUE DEE WHY

During December, Warringah Council offered the Management Committee the sole use of a three bedroom brick cottage at 32 Howard Avenue, Dee Why next to the Northern Beaches Neighbourhood Service. Following an inspection of the premises the committee requested

certain modifications. These included the removal of a wall between two bedrooms to create an area large enough for a toyroom, addition of ramp access, parking spaces at the rear of the building and painting throughout.

Cubby house was about to enter a new phase in its history - a home all to itself in the heart of Dee Why!



(L-R) Volunteers Lois Greenwood, Pat Frater, Nan Bosler, Elgin Brown and Lorna Barrett after the presentation of the NSW Children's Week Award at Parliament House, October 1999. This award was for 20 years service to children with special needs.

2000 *And Beyond*

2000

In February, the Management Committee changed the membership year to run from July to June instead of January to December. It felt that many families found difficulty paying fees at the beginning of the year when faced with post-Christmas and school expenses. The annual fee was now \$80 for families, \$160 for Groups and \$240 for Private Practitioners.

On 15 February, the 4,000th toy was added to the library. Current stock holding amounted to approximately 1,600 items.

Decisions by Warringah Council regarding the proposed move of the toy library to 32 Howard Avenue, Dee Why, proceeded very slowly during February and March as Council considered how to meet the costs of renovations. Finally in late March representatives of cubby house and Council reached agreement about the work to be done on the cottage. This work was scheduled to be completed by June for a move in the July school holidays' and was to cost approximately \$50,000.

The AGM was held on Monday 6 March. Arthur Greenwood was elected Treasurer and Michael Lee resumed his role as Honorary Auditor.

An amendment to the Constitution was passed to include a "Dissolution Clause" in order to meet the requirements of the Taxation Department for the granting of tax deductibility status for donations received. Final approval of the granting of this status was received on 27 March under Section 30-45 Item 4.1.1 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

20TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Warringah Council hosted a Civic Reception for cubby house on 15th March, the week of the library's 20th Birthday. Approximately 100 people gathered at the Civic Centre and also welcomed the Navy Charity Bike Ride Team. The sailors were taking part in their sixth ride, this time - in the year 2000 - a 2000km ride from Rockhampton to Nowra.



Member Riana Head-Toussaint with sailors from the Navy Charity Bike Ride Team at the Warringah Council Civic Reception, March 2000.

A special guest at this function was cubby house's first member Sarah Van der Sluice with her family. Sarah made presentations to the team, assisted by cubby house member Riana Head-Toussaint and 15 year old Helen Tory the youngest library volunteer.

Cubby house also made a special presentation to CPO Clem Hiscocks of a suitably inscribed inlaid wooden plaque made by Lou Brown. Clem was the only member of the team to have completed all six rides apart from organiser PO Rick Meehan. **This ride was their most successful ever, raising an extraordinary total of \$251,000. This was more than the previous five rides combined.**

Warringah Mayor Cr. Peter Moxham presented 10 Year Community Service Awards to Arthur Greenwood and Lorna Barrett. Lorna held the position of Volunteer Co-ordinator and had the responsibility of compiling the monthly roster and for new volunteers' integration into the program.

To commemorate cubby house's 20th Birthday the Local Studies Unit of Warringah Library Service mounted a special photographic display for the Reception.

On 24 March during Seniors Week a team of six cubby house volunteers participated in a "Pick-a-Box" organised by Healthy Lifestyle and Warringah Council. They won!

Staff and volunteers celebrated cubby house's 20th Birthday at a special luncheon held at the Radisson Kestrel Hotel, Manly. They were joined by PO Rick Meehan and his family. Rick presented a Warringah Council 10 Year Community Service Award to Ann de la Villefromoy and 20 year Certificates of Service to Marge Rawlings, Joan Paton, Lois Greenwood, Pat Frater and Nan Bosler.

During May renovations commenced on the Howard Avenue cottage and continued over the next eight weeks. These were undertaken by Council at no cost to cubby house. However the challenge posed to the committee was to raise the necessary funds to provide some of the furniture and fittings. Approaches were made to local companies and organisations for donations.

On 29 June PO Rick Meehan, CPO Clem Hiscocks and Lt. Cmdr. Jim Reeves representing the Navy Charity Bike Ride Team visited cubby house. They presented a cheque for \$10,000 to Vice President Elgin Brown at an informal morning tea held in the play area. Also present were Warringah Mayor Cr. Peter Moxham and Cr. Julie Sutton.

STURDEE PARADE CLOSSES

Cubby house closed its doors at 16 Sturdee Parade for the last time on Saturday 1 July. Over the next few days many hours were spent packing in readiness for the move.

The main advantage of the move was the extra space. There was a larger office area, a private consultation room for the Occupational Therapists, a separate work and storage area for the Librarian, a larger toyroom to allow more than one family to browse at a time, a separate waiting/play area and more storage for large equipment. The cottage was made wheelchair accessible via a ramp from the car parking area and childproof gates and fence were installed around the ramp.



Presentation of a cheque for \$10,000 at the Kiah Family Centre by representatives of the Navy Bike Ride Team, June 2000. (L-R) CPO Clem Hiscocks, Elgin Brown, Ron Barker, PO Rick Meehan and Lt Cmdr. Jim Reeves.



The cottage at 32 Howard Avenue, Dee Why

The central location in the heart of Dee Why shopping centre had the added benefit of increasing community awareness of the service. A flyer headed "We've Moved" was sent to all families and referring services to inform them about the library's new location.

The move took place on Tuesday 4 July. Over the next two weeks volunteers and staff worked hard and the library reopened on Wednesday 19 July at the beginning of Term 3. Finishing touches to the cottage were made by Lou Brown over the next few months. Lou had gradually been extending his role of Toy Repairman to include 'Handyman'.

With the move an extra opening time of 9.45am to 12 noon was introduced on Fridays for parents to make their own toy selections. No Occupational Therapist is available during this time and the processing of loans is undertaken by the Administration Manager.

GST INTRODUCED

July also saw the introduction of the new taxation system and the Goods and Services Tax (GST). As a charity with an annual turnover under \$100,000 cubby house committee elected not to register for the GST and to absorb the extra costs imposed by the tax. It applied for and obtained an ABN and continuing endorsement as a Registered Deductible Gift Recipient for donations.

Financial assistance over the following months came from Sidney Myer Fund (\$2,000), Multiplex Corporation (\$2,000), Dee Why RSL Club (\$1,250), Pittwater Lions (\$500) and the Fairbridge Foundation (\$7,813) to help with the costs of setting up the new premises. The Fairbridge grant included \$5,000 to upgrade the computer system to a three terminal network. Funding was again received from Manly, Pittwater and Warringah Councils.

Donations of goods and equipment also came from many individuals and businesses in the community. One of these was a large permanent sign for the front wall of the cottage featuring the cubby house logo. This was donated by Allan Fender of Fender Signs. Outdoor security lights were installed by a parent Chris Elliott who volunteered his time. To help furnish the cottage Pam Ross was able to arrange for the donation of desks, shelving units, chairs and a much needed small refrigerator.

A Monster Market Morning in the front garden of the cottage was held on 1 September. It was very successful, raising \$501 and led to plans for regular Market Mornings on the first Friday of the month. Jill Rutherford made and donated an eye-catching banner to hang outside the library to provide advance publicity for the Market Mornings.

During September, Olympic fever hit Sydney. Cubby house was not to be left out and a gardening bee was organised for Friday 15 September. Volunteers toiled in the morning mulching garden beds and transforming the front garden with new plants. Work stopped at midday to allow everyone to join in and cheer as the Olympic Torch Relay passed the front door.

A later addition to the back garden was a black bean tree which had been grown from a seed from the majestic black bean tree at the Kiah Family Centre. Betty Bessell-Browne had collected this and nurtured it at home.

As part of NSW Children's Week the library held a well-attended Open House and lunch on 27 October. This provided the opportunity to introduce cubby house's new home to people working in other children's services and to families who would benefit from joining the toy library.

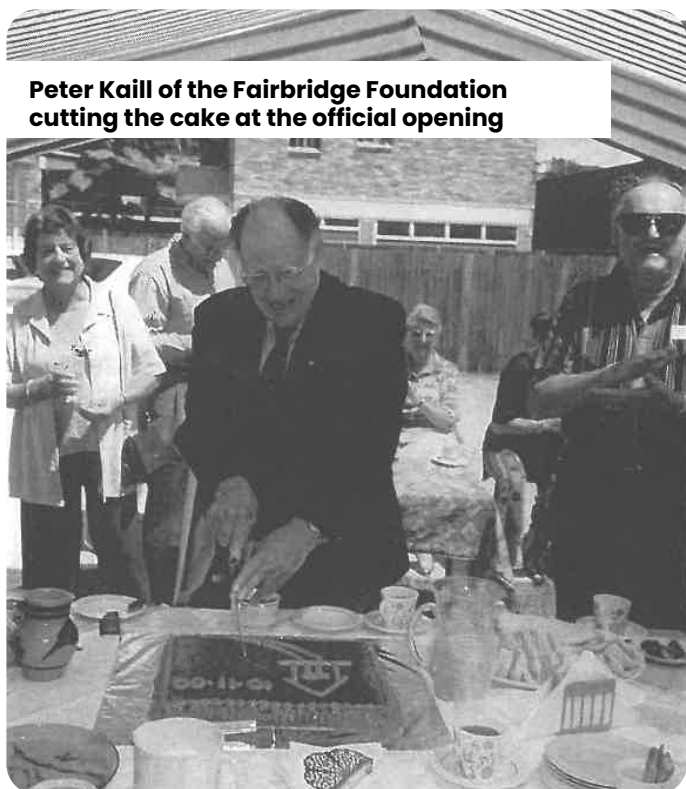
On 30 October, an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Management Committee was held to amend the Constitution to incorporate Life Membership. It was then moved that the first Life Membership should be bestowed upon Patron Nan Bosler.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR NAN

On Wednesday 13 December, at a small informal function in the library, President Pat Frater presented Nan Bosler with the first Life Membership of cubby house toy library.

Cubby house was honoured to receive a Highly Commended Certificate in the Warringah Council Environmental Encouragement Awards held on 2 November at the Civic Centre. This award was in recognition of the work done at cubby house in recycling donated toys and goods, either into the library itself or as a fund raising activity through sale at Market Mornings.

Mayor of Warringah Cr. Peter Moxham officially opened the new premises on Friday 10 November. Beautiful fine weather saw more than 60 supporters, Friends of cubby house, families and staff gather for the occasion. Guests included Cr. Jean Hay, Mayor of Manly, Cr. Julie Sutton, Warringah Council, Peter Kaill from Fairbridge Foundation and representatives from the Navy Charity Bike Ride Team. Cr. Moxham planted a grevillea in the now flourishing garden.



Peter Kaill of the Fairbridge Foundation cutting the cake at the official opening



(L-R) Mayor of Warringah Cr. Peter Moxham with Cr. Julie Sutton and representatives of the Navy Charity Bike Team, Dave Biddle and Steven Wall, at the official opening of the new toy library, 10 November 2000.

It had taken four moves and nearly twenty-one years before cubby house was finally settled into a home which provided the space it needed.

Eileen Ewer was presented with a Commonwealth Recognition Award for Senior Australians by Tony Abbott MP, Federal Member for Warringah, on Thursday 14 December at Mosman Art Gallery. Well-deserved recognition for a long-standing volunteer.

The Management Committee offered to host the 2001 Annual Conference of the Toy Library Association of NSW at the Dee Why RSL Club.. This offer was accepted and planning of the programme began with speakers to be cubby house staff and volunteers. It was decided to launch the history of cubby house at the conference and to invite Sue Terry to launch the book. Sue agreed to do so.

During the months after the move to Howard Avenue, a concerted effort was made to gain increased media publicity for cubby house. This campaign proved very successful. One outcome was that 23 new families joined during the second half of the year. **On 30 August the library had enrolled its 800th member - the Hill family.**



ABOVE: Kerry Gibbett (C) with cubby house families in the waiting/play area at Howard Avenue, 2000.

RIGHT: Volunteers Betty Cleary and Nicole Wilson (seated) in the office at Howard Avenue, 2000.



2001 is International Year of the Volunteer (IYV). **This year, five cubby house volunteers will have completed at least twenty years service and another seven will have given more than ten years service. The dedication of the volunteers is one of the strengths of this special programme.** Even after leaving the toy library a number of volunteers continue their interest and valued support. They are Gwen Campbell, Sally Garman, June Hong, Jill Johnson, Enid Morris, Marie Stewart and Louise Woolford.

YOUNGEST VOLUNTEER

The youngest volunteer at cubby house is 16 year old Helen Tory. Helen, a Girl Guide, came to the library in February 1999 to complete the community services requirements for the Queen's Guide Award. At the completion of her required hours, Helen decided to remain as a volunteer at the library working on most Saturday mornings.

At the 2001 Australia Day ceremony at Warringah Civic Centre, Helen was presented with a National Australia Day Council Award. She is Warringah Young Citizen of the Year. Cubby house Management Committee nominated Helen for this award, not only for her commitment to the toy library but also for the many school and community service activities in which she is involved.

The toy library reopened after the Christmas vacation on Wednesday 31 January. Four new members joined in the first weeks. The 47th issue of the newsletter – a special 21st Birthday edition – was published.

Staff members employed in 2001 are:

- *Administration Manager:* Sandra Gillett – 12 hours per week (Monday and Friday)
- *Librarian:* Janet Black – 8 hours per week (Tuesday)
- *Occupational Therapist:* Kerry Gibbett – 10 hours per week (Wednesday and Saturday)
- *Occupational Therapist:* Jenny Anscomb – 7 hours per week (Thursday)

MARKET MORNINGS

Market Mornings recommenced in February. Elgin Brown and Lorna Barrett had the idea that the cubby house volunteers would be more easily recognised on these days if they wore special aprons. They set about designing and sewing smart aprons in bright blue cotton. These feature very colourful cubby house logos which were embroidered as a donation by Julianne Morgan of Julie's Embroidery.

A grant of \$1,500 to purchase toys was received from Challenge North Shore Inc., a registered charity established by a local benefactor.

The Warringah Mall Community Club invited President Pat Frater to its March meeting for the presentation of a cheque for \$1,000 from money raised by the members. This is the second donation that the club, under the leadership of Jean Hay, has made to cubby house.

The 21st AGM of cubby house toy library will be held on 5 March, 2001. Families and supporters have been invited by the Management Committee to celebrate this occasion and to share in the cutting of a special 21st birthday cake made and donated by Meg Henley.

This story has endeavoured to share with its readers the various threads of dedication, commitment and benefit woven by the members, supporters, staff and volunteers of the toy library so that you can picture those threads creating the rich tapestry that reveals the first twenty-one years of cubby house.

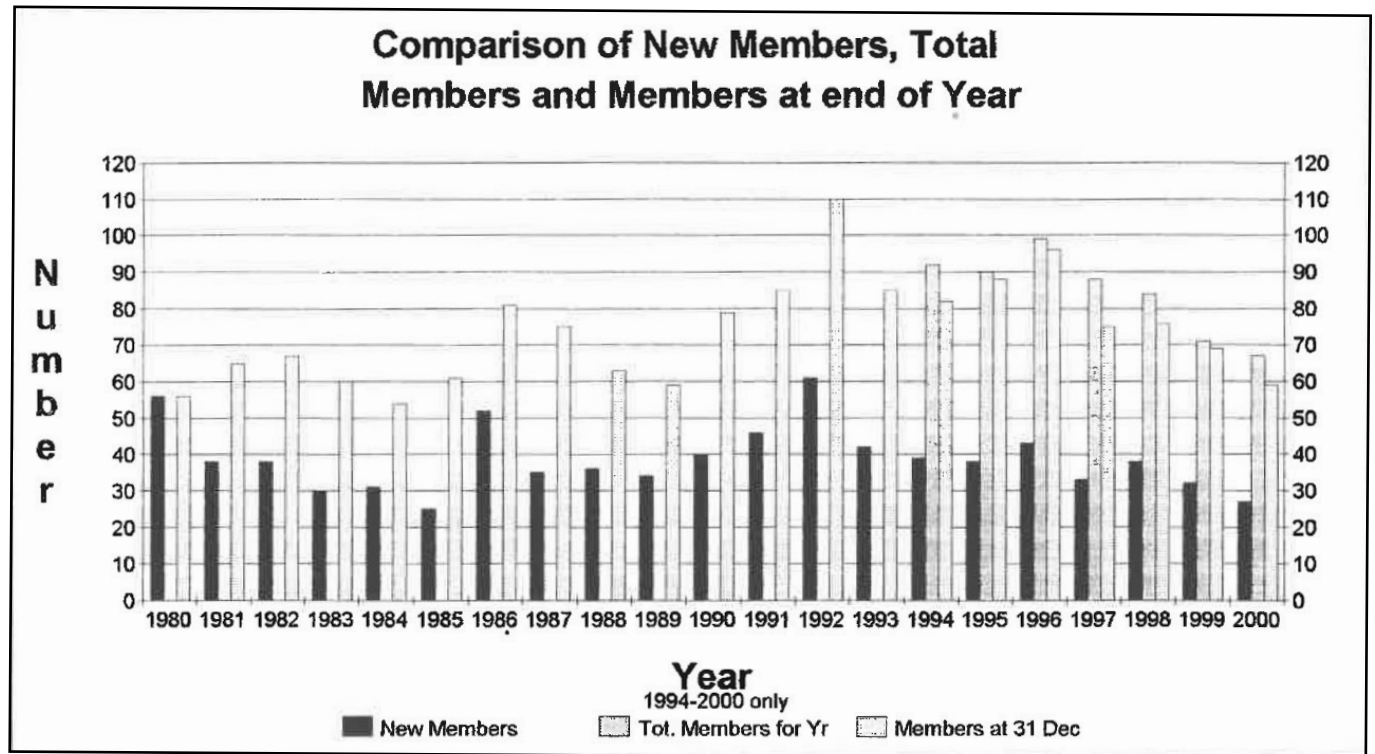


The cubby house cockatoo saying hello to volunteers Helen Tory and Lois Greenwood. Helen is Warringah Young Citizen of the Year, 2001.

Photo courtesy The Manly Daily

APPENDIX 1

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS 1980–2000



NEW MEMBERS JOINING

Year	No. Joined	Cumulative
1980	56	56
1981	38	94
1982	38	132
1983	30	162
1984	31	193
1985	25	218
1986	52	270
1987	35	305
1988	36	341
1989	34	375
1990	40	415
1991	46	461
1992	61	522
1993	42	564
1994	39	603
1995	38	641
1996	43	684
1997	33	717
1998	38	755
1999	32	787
2000	27	814

Cubby house TIME LINE 1979–2001

- 1979 International Year of the Child**
Application to the Handicapped Persons Bureau to establish a toy library for children with handicaps in Warringah
- 1980** March 18: Opening of toy library at 14 The Kingsway, Dee Why
March 24: First Newsletter; Management Committee formed
June: cubby house name and logo chosen; move to 8 The Kingsway, Dee Why
August: Move to 12 South Creek Road, Dee Why, rear of Uniting Church
- 1981 International Year of the Disabled**
February: Saturday afternoon Fun Club (funding from Caltex one year only) and Toytime play session began
- 1982** February: First paid member of staff, an Occupational Therapist, appointed for 4 hours per week as a result of fund-raising
Appointment system introduced
- 1983** July: Handicapped Persons Bureau grant of \$5,880 to pay salaries of two part-time occupational therapists, the only source of government funding which still continues in 2001
- 1984** Department of Social Security grant of \$9,354 for equipment and salaries
- 1985** Name changed to include “for children with handicaps and special needs”
First grant from Fairbridge Foundation – \$3,000 – for shelving and toys
- 1986** Mobile Service (ceased 1990) funded by community donations commenced
August 1: Incorporation of cubby house toy library
- 1989** August: Organisation of 13th National AATLH Conference
October 26: Move to Kiah Family Centre, 16 Sturdee Pde, Dee Why
- 1990** February: First Navy Charity Bike Ride
- 1991** NSW Government grant for occupational therapist salary cut by 20%
- 1992** Major restructuring of positions of paid staff at library
February: Second Navy Charity Bike Ride
- 1993** Inaugural Award for toy library development from the Australian Toy Library Association
- 1994** February 16: Welcome to Navy Charity Bike Ride Team by Governor of NSW, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair
March: Deletion of the word “handicaps” from name to now read “*cubby house toy library – for children with special needs*”
Publication of “Which Toy?” following research funded by St. George Foundation
- 1995** February: Department of Community Services grant of \$6,200 to computerise library
- 1996** Fourth Navy Charity Bike Ride
- 1997** December: Toytime play session ceased following withdrawal of funding from the Department of Training & Education Co-ordination
First involvement in selling tickets in Rotary Club of Dee Why Christmas Stocking
- 1998** February: 18 Warringah Council Civic Reception for Navy Charity Bike Ride Team
- 1999** October: NSW Children’s Week Award for 20 years service to children with special needs
- 2000** February: 4,000th toy added to the library
July: Move to Warringah Council cottage at 32 Howard Ave, Dee Why
August: 800th member joined
November: Official Opening of the toy library at the new premises
First Life Membership awarded to Nan Bosler, President 1980–1993 and now Patron
- 2001 International Year of the Volunteer**
March 5: 21st Annual General Meeting of the Management Committee
March 18: 21st BIRTHDAY

CITATION ON LIFE MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE AWARDED TO NAN BOSLER

Nan Bosler has been one of the two 'midwives' responsible for the birth of a special toy library in the Warringah area. In 1979 Nan was Secretary of the Warringah International Year of the Child Committee one of whose last submissions was to the Department of Community Services and the Handicapped Persons Bureau for funding to establish a toy library for children with handicaps.

The submission was successful, Warringah received its 'kit': 250 toys in cardboard boxes and 30 books. So the toy library was born!

Nan became the President of the Management Committee which was formed in 1980 and continued as President for 13 years. She has always been part of cubby house, as the library was subsequently named, in various capacities ever since.

Nan had a wide view of the toy library movement, both in NSW and Australia. She led cubby house management and staff to become involved in the Australian Association of Toy Libraries for the Handicapped (AATLH), to which Nan herself was elected NSW State Representative in 1984.

In 1987 Nan received an Advance Australia Award for outstanding community service. As well as working with a number of other organisations to assist children with special needs Nan was elected National President of AATLH. This position involved the running of the National Secretariat which Nan undertook with her usual efficiency including the organisation of the 13th National AATLH Conference at Wentworth Falls, NSW.

This last venture earned for Nan and the organising team a NSW Children's Week Award for "The most innovative conference addressing the needs of children". Nan continued as President until the Secretariat was transferred to Melbourne.

In 1992 Nan Bosler was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the community.

In 1994 Nan stepped down as President of cubby house and accepted the position of Patron in which role she has continued her ongoing support and interest.

Cubby house owes much to the dedicated leadership of Nan Bosler and the Management Committee has the greatest pleasure in awarding to her the very first Life Membership.

November 2000

APPENDIX 4

cubby house Personnel – February, 2001

Patron: Nan Bosler OAM

Management Committee:

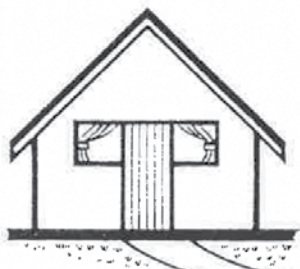
President	Pat Frater	
Vice President	Elgin Brown	
Committee Secretary	Eileen Ewer	
Treasurer/Public Officer	Arthur Greenwood	
Volunteer Co-ordinator	Lorna Barrett	
Friends Co-ordinator	Betty Bessell-Browne	
Parent Representative	Kerry Head-Toussaint	
Committee Members	Bev Bingham Lois Greenwood Jan O'Donnell	Ann de la Villefromoy Meg Henley Joan Paton
Honorary Auditor	Michael Lee	

Volunteers:

Toy Repairman	Lou Brown	
Desk Staff	Jill Abrahams Betty Bessell-Browne Elgin Brown Ann de la Villefromoy Eileen Ewer Pat Frater Katrina Hansen Ann Hurley Jan O'Donnell Jill Rutherford Helen Tory	Lorna Barrett Bev Bingham Betty Cleary Alice Devine Frances Francis Lois Greenwood Meg Henley Shirley Malcolm Joan Paton Pam Ross Sharon Ward

Staff (part time):

Administration Manager	Sandra Gillett
Librarian	Janet Black
Occupational Therapists	Jenny Anscomb Kerry Gibbett



cubby house toy library inc.

for children with special needs

32 Howad Avenue,
Dee Why, 2099
Phone/Fax: 9971-7006

ABN 95 403 085 438

WHICH TOY?

Selecting and Adapting Toys for Children with Special Needs
for inclusion in a toy library

by: Gibbett and Ryan,

How do *you* decide which toys to purchase for your library?

How do *you* know which are the areas of greatest need for your borrowers?

How do *you* decide which toys to throw out to make room for the new?

These were some of the questions which led two Occupational Therapists to embark on a research project to facilitate the decision-making processes involved.

Which Toy? begins by looking at one way of **Defining the Needs of Your Borrowers** through the use of a simple survey.

Next, it addresses the overwhelming task of selecting toys for inclusion in a toy library, through the use of a check-list. The "**Evaluation of Toy/Game for Toy Library**" form, guides your decision-making when looking at new, and currently held, toys.

It helps you to consider the possibilities of adapting the toy for children with special needs. Special emphasis is given to adapting not only the toy, but also the way in which it is presented, and several examples are included.

The booklet includes a discussion on Play, and the various types of toys that may motivate children with special needs to develop play skills. It also briefly outlines methods for teaching play skills.

Which Toy? reflects the belief that toys which are carefully selected and presented will provide positive and successful play experiences for children with special needs and their families.

The authors wish to acknowledge the St. George Foundation whose financial assistance made this project possible.

Please send me _____ copies of "Which Toy?", Selecting and Adapting Toys for Children with Special Needs for inclusion in a toy Library.

Cost \$16.50 per copy including postage.

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Send order to: cubby house toy library, 32 Howard Ave., Dee Why, 2099.

WHICH TOY?

Selecting and Adapting Toys
for Children with Special Needs
for inclusion in a toy library

By: Kery Gibbett, (O.T.)
and
Mandy Ryan, (O.T.)



APPENDIX 6

"The Right Toy At The Right Time"

Cubby house has a wide range of toys and games which can provide opportunity to practise many skills, such as gross motor and fine motor, cognitive and language skills, in a fun way. Ideas and instructions provide guidance and encourage parents to start where children can attain success and gradually work on skill development.

Toys are grouped as follows:

A Activity - gross motor, balance, eye-hand co-ordination.

B Beginners - early toys to encourage listening, looking and early handling skills.

C Co-ordination - range of toys to practise hand skills such as posting, threading, fine motor and bilateral skills, including construction sets.

CM Communication - games/cards to encourage language, turn taking, etc.

D Discrimination - concepts (size/shape /colour) picture matching, pattern copying and sequencing, numbers/letters, music and a wide range of puzzles.

E Expression - great variety of toys for imaginative and social play which can be used to encourage fine motor, cognitive and language skills, eg tea sets, dolls houses, farm sets, cars and trains.

F Fun Games - (easy to hard), useful for encouraging many skills including turn taking.

Books - We have a great range of children's books, (for encouraging communication and visual skills) and an excellent choice of books for parents on many topics including; self esteem, language and general parenting skills.

cubby house has been operating since 1980 and is run by a voluntary management committee. It is staffed by volunteers during opening hours.

Funding is received from the Ageing and Disability Department to pay the salaries of the Occupational Therapists who work at cubby house. All additional costs to run the service, including salaries for the Administrator and Librarian, have to be met by fundraising, donations and membership fees.

Cubby house welcomes donations from the community to support the service. **It is a registered Deductible Gift Recipient and donations over \$2 are tax deductible.**

FRIENDS OF CUBBY HOUSE has been formed to give financial support to the toy library. Membership donation is \$5 per year.

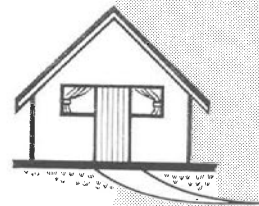


Cubby house is a member of the Toy Library Association of NSW inc. and Australian Toy Library Association.

Printing courtesy
Danka Australia Pty. Ltd.

infosht/Oct 2000

21 Years Service in 2001



cubby house toy library inc.

for children with special needs

32 Howard Avenue
Dee Why NSW 2099

Phone/Fax: 9971-7006

Toy Library Hours

Wednesday	9.45am - 1.00pm
Thursday	9.45am - 1.00pm
Friday	9.45am - Noon
Saturday	9.45am - Noon

ABN: 95 403 085 438

October 2000

cubby house toy library inc

cubby house is a community based toy library open to children with special needs in the northern beaches area. These special needs may be physical, developmental, learning, speech, emotional or social.

Schools, playgroups and preschools with enrolments of children with special needs, and professionals working in this field may also join.

The range of toys is for babies from six weeks old to primary school age children.



An Occupational Therapist ...

is in attendance to help parents to select suitable toys and provide ideas for play. New members are asked to telephone to make an initial 1 hour **appointment** with the O.T. Subsequent appointments (½ hour) are then made on a regular basis. The O.T. works in conjunction with any other therapist your child may be seeing. This is a **free service** to cubby house members.

Initial Consultation Fee Joining Fee

\$20.00 (this is deducted from annual fees if you decide to join)
\$10.00 which includes Library Bag and Communication Book

Annual Fees (2000/2001)

Paid Yearly

Family	\$80
Playgroup, Special Class and Pre-school	\$160
Private Practitioner	\$240

If Paid Half -Yearly

1st Half	&	2nd Half	TOTAL
\$45		\$40	\$85
\$85		\$80	\$165
\$125		\$120	\$245

FEES ARE PAID JULY-JUNE EACH YEAR ANNUAL FEE COVERS LOAN COST OF ALL TOYS
NEW MEMBERS JOINING DURING THE YEAR PAY ON A PROPORTIONAL BASIS.



Loan Period ...

Up to 1 month. Members may change toys more frequently if desired.

No. per Loan ...

Family:	Member	3 toys, 3 books, 1 cassette
	Siblings	1 toy, 1 book each (to maximum of 3)
	Parents	2 reference books

Groups & Private Practitioners:	8 toys, 8 books, 1 cassette
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Resources available ...

include toys, games, books, cassettes, therapy/gross motor equipment and a parent reference library.

Library Bags ...

Each member must use a large material bag the cost of which is included in joining fee.

Hygiene ...

Toys must be cleaned before returning. Members are asked to advise staff if there has been an infectious disease in the home.

Holiday Closures ...

All School Holidays,
All Holiday Weekends & Anzac Day.

October 2000

Endnotes

1. Bosler Nan, "Has the International Year of the Child Been Worthwhile?", *Roundabout*, No. 8, 1979
2. Bosler Nan, President's Report to 3rd Annual General Meeting of cubby house, 1983
3. Ryan Tricia, *Kits for Kids*, cubby house toy library, 1984
4. Ryan Tricia, "The Day to Day Running of a Toy Library" paper presented at the 13th National Conference of AATLH, 1989
5. Ashover Valda & Harding Di, *Kiah Family Centre*, 1990
6. Rutledge Maureen, *Glimpses, North Narrabeen Public School 1939-89*
7. Bosler Nan, "A Touch of Magic - Creative Development in Young Children" paper presented at the World Congress on Play, 1993
8. Gibbett Kerry & Ryan Mandy, *Which Toy? Selecting and adapting toys for children with special needs for inclusion in a toy library*, cubby house toy library, 1994

