

## Secure transitions: helping children and families feel supported and confident at Elder Street ECHC

Transitions are an important part of the childcare day. They should provide children a sense of wellbeing through consistency and predictability. The message we want children to receive when they arrive each day is "I belong here, I am safe and mummy and daddy are comfortable with me coming here". Inevitably children will often find it difficult to transition from parent/carer to educator. This is very normal for children of all ages and with firm partnerships between educators and parents we can work together to build trusting and resilient children. To help explain what is happening for children I would like to share a fantastic metaphor created by Cooper (2011). It is called the two row boats metaphor.

I feel it explains the tender and tenuous experience of transition from a child's perspective beautifully....

### The two row boats metaphor

Imagine two little row boats coming next to each other. And the child steps out of the parent's row boat and into the educator's.

The problem for the child is that there is a moment where they have a foot in each boat. And if the boats drift apart they get stuck. Or when children come in and they are not quite sure whether they are in the school boat or the parent boat, then they are stuck. The drop-off procedure is a way to help them to make that step from one to the other.

What we want is for children to know that the parent and the educator are in charge and they are going to take care of this. The children can need what they need and feel what they need and be OK. They don't have to act like they are OK when they're not, or feel more than they feel or take charge themselves.

We would like the children to experience that there is a clear negotiation where the child goes from feeling secure with the parent to secure with the educator, and it is pretty seamless.

(Cooper, 2011)

To help with transitions we have some tips for families:

\*Communicate any concerns with educators so we can develop a plan that suits all parties as soon as possible;

\*The plan may involve some preliminary steps that take place at home at any time i.e., sharing the day book email together, talking about educators and friends—this gives the message to the child/ren that you are confident and happy for your child to attend.

\*Discuss experiences and fun things that may happen that day at school with your little person whilst on the way in the car; then share these ideas or discussions with educators on arrival ie, we were wondering if Annie might be able to do some puzzles today after I leave for work? Share events/activities that have been happening at home so educators can talk about that when they are spending time with the children during the day—building a connection between home and school is

crucial for children's wellbeing and sense of belonging;

\*Chat and engage with educators with your child on arrival (if it's busy you may have to wait a little bit so give yourself time for this)

\*Have a consistent goodbye or separation message when you are ready to go ie, "Lauren is here now so have lots of fun with everyone, I (or daddy/mummy/Nanny etc) will be back this afternoon, I love you, have a fun day" - then a kiss and hug and into the educator's row boat to sail off into their day....

Remember, your child may well cry at this point....they love you and it can be hard to leave you. If they don't cry, they still love you but they have found a way to manage leaving you. A very common response is crying and some resistance and then settling and enjoying their day. We always acknowledge feelings and then work to support and build resilience ♥

## MANAGING COVID-19 AT ELDER STREET EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE

We have made it over half way through this crazy year—well done to everyone! As discussed in previous communications with our community, in response to the pandemic our operational procedures have changed drastically since March and we are committed to ensuring an ongoing balance between health and safety wellbeing and connection and emotional wellbeing for children, families and our team. For this reason we have again re-visited the responses from the community survey on these changes and also sought advice from health professionals on ways to move back to a more connected yet safe experience for all.

- **EXCLUSION OF ALL PEOPLE WITH RUNNY NOSES AND COUGHS**—the clear advice from public health to us is to continue to strictly adhere to the exclusion of children and adults who have cold and flu symptoms and to advise them to be tested for COVID-19. We do not insist on testing or require proof of testing, but we will continue to exclude children and adults who are displaying these symptoms for the benefit of all.
- **ACCESSING THE CENTRE**—We will continue to permanently access the centre the way we have since March this year. Preschool and Nursery parents to access through the side playground, Joey parents through the original front door. We are now just waiting on Airview to advise us of an install date for the second permanent security door that will access the side playground. When this arrives and is installed it will provide us with the front entrance security that we feel is best for our community. It will be the same as the original door with a doorbell to ring so families can be viewed to gain access.

### CHANGES AS OF MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER, 2020

- **MORNING AND EVENING FAMILY GROUPING** — we have been slowly transitioning to grouping the children of different age groups together over the last couple of weeks in the afternoons. **From Monday 21 September we will return to our previous practice of having all children who arrive between 7am and 8am gather in the nursery for family grouping with educators. This will also happen from approx. 5.00pm onwards each afternoon.**
- **FAMILIES ACCESSING THE PLAYROOMS** — **From Monday, 21 September we will remove the restricted areas for families and welcome them back into the playrooms.** We would ask that families only access their child/ren's rooms and do not walk through the centre unnecessarily or walk through the centre to gain access to other rooms or playgrounds —please maintain the access as detailed above. We also remind all adults and siblings to ensure they have sanitised their hands before coming into the centre and of course, remain away if unwell. We also encourage adults to practice social distancing at all times whilst at the centre. Please stay 1.5m apart and be aware of blocking access ways for others. We ask that older siblings coming into the centre refrain from playing with the toys or equipment — thanks :)
- **TOURS OF THE CENTRE** — only families who are being offered a position for 2021 from our waiting list will be offered tours of the centre. We will re-assess this again in 2021.
- **VISITORS TO THE CENTRE** — we will continue to assess the need for visitors to the centre. We will allow eye testing in September and school photographs to be taken at the centre in November. However we will be seeking confirmation that these professionals are well, have them complete a COVID-19 visitors register and confirm they have not been in contact with anyone who has been unwell in the last two weeks. We will also begin external visits to the park and outdoor events from September.
- **CELEBRATIONS**— it is highly unlikely that we will be able to host our annual End of Year Celebration in late November which is very sad, but we just don't have adequate space to ensure social distancing can occur. We are currently thinking of options for the Preschool Graduation that usually takes place in December. At this stage we may be able to offer an outdoor ceremony with parents in attendance, but no extended family. We will discuss this further with families involved closer to the date.

We feel confident that with warmer weather conditions, less local cases and advice from health professionals that we can introduce these measured changes. If anything changes regarding advice on COVID-19 we now have a clear precedent of action to fall back on that can be re-introduced if necessary.

If families have any concerns, feedback, ideas or questions about this information, please email, call or make an appointment to discuss them with myself or Kim.

## 2021 Enrolment Information...

The process of organising places for the new year has begun! We emailed out forms to families for them to amplify what days they would like for 2021 on Monday 17 August. Families that have been on our internal waiting list for extra days or changes to days will be offered any vacancies first and then we will do our best to meet all families needs as we become aware of them. As has been the

case for the last 16 years the centre is full and has many siblings waiting for positions and even more families on our waiting list. Please be prepared for the reality that not all extra days or changes will be able to occur. We can already see that most of the children will be moving down to the next age group which leaves little room for extra days.

We feel very fortunate

to know that our families are all needing places and we will do our best to meet all their needs.

After 31 October, enrolment days are set for the coming year and can only be changed after 2 weeks' notice is given when we re-open in January 2021. Cancellation of care and our usual 2 weeks' notice also does not apply after 31 October 2020.

This means all families

are responsible for their position until we return in January, when our notice period begins again.

We will have enrolment confirmation letters emailed to families later this year once we have completed this process. Families waiting for sibling places will be contacted in the coming weeks too.

Thanks :)

**Possum news.....** Hey everyone!! It is so lovely to have everyone back on board after a crazy few months. Thanks so much for your support with little ones when they are sick. We are so grateful for the understanding and commitment by families to keep children home when they have been unwell so we can all remain safe and healthy. So, what have we been learning and experiencing? Animals!! We know lots and lots about animals and we have been documenting this in our project how the children communicate and express their understanding of their animal knowledge. This project has progressed through many stages and one of the latest has been sharing our family pets through photos and an area set up with small pet figurines. This has been such a favourite learning space for the children. They share their knowledge of who's dog belongs to who and the understanding of how the toy dogs relate to their real life dogs. These association and recognition skills are strong

signs of building many skills in the children, including language, cognition, memory skills and the all important sense of knowing, belonging and meaning making through play based learning. The documentation of this project has

been adjusted too. We did have large panels

of documentation on the walls, but of course our friends really love to pull them off so they can walk around with them. So instead of constantly battling to keep them on the wall, we listened to the children's communication to us through their actions and re-designed the panels into a large display folder that can move around with the children. We would also welcome families to

borrow the documentation folder to take home and

look through with your child. They would love it and have so much to tell you about their learning! Other areas of interest have been vehicle discovery and finding out how they work. We adore dump trucks, fire engines and are fascinated with the concepts of how these work; including hot air balloons! Our favourite group time books are Emergency! and Dig, Dig, Digging! In recent months we have enjoyed playing with older friends in the big backyard and we have been working on independence skills. We will continue with this over the coming months. We do this by the children transitioning from group times to hand washing and meals, helping to pack away, self help tasks and visiting the 2-3 years Joeys room for play time to become accustomed to the space in preparation for next year. We are all so big and clever now!!

**Thanks Carley, Lauren, Liv and Jena :)**



**Joey news....**Hello everyone!! Have we mentioned what amazing learners the Joeys are?? They are all simply bursting with curiosity and love for knowing. We saw this in spades during our project on Transformation which has now finally finished up. We have the documentation currently being made into book form for all to share and explore. Our latest learning interests has been recognising our names, whales and loose parts—such diverse topics that can all be explored beautifully through play based learning and project work! **Name recognition:** we began this learning by introducing name tags for meal times; this quickly grew to recognising our names everywhere and also the understanding of letters and other words. This is known as emergent literacy, which is when children begin to acknowledge all types of literacy everywhere they are. We have noticed this in the playground and the playrooms too. We have added lots of early literacy tools to help build this interest as they play.

**Whales:** Our atelier is like an underwater whale sanctuary at the moment. Soothing whale sounds and a blue haze of ocean images turning the learning space into a peaceful place to explore and observe. We highly anticipate that the children's interest will continue to extend and this new protagonist will become our next project. We are hopeful for an excursion during whale season to one of our beaches to see if we can spot some whales....we will keep you posted on this exciting idea :) **Loose parts:** We are yet to meet a child who isn't captivated by open ended materials that can be anything they want them to be. We call these materials loose parts. These can be cylinders, corks, material, paddle pop sticks, plastic lids, smooth stones, natural materials etc. We have seen the children engaged for long periods of time using loose parts where they demonstrate their creativity, problem solving, imagination and representation of ideas. We welcome donations of safe, clean open ended loose parts from families that the children can add to their play. Have a look around at what you could bring in. We have also been enjoying gardening and now have a thriving community garden thanks to the children's help; we are working on transitioning to prepare for the children's move into the Wallaby room in 2021 with a focus on independence in their routines. Any questions or suggestions please don't hesitate to share them with us - **Thanks Roxi, Bree, Jena and Keely**

**Wallaby news.....** We have had some friends join the Wallaby group over the last few months—a big welcome to Ruby and Jules and their families. Both the children have settled in wonderfully and are enjoying their days building relationships with children and educators, which is so lovely to see. **Project work**—we have wrapped up our project on the children's amazingly inquisitive minds and have now created a book that can be taken home for families to share looking through this wonderful learning. They are so insightful. Moving forward we have noticed that the children are most highly engaged in the process of learning and testing, more so than focused on an end result. Being interested in the 'how' and 'why' is so very important for learning so we are focusing on how else we can foster this type of learning with the children to strengthen their knowledge building skills and confidence. **Developing interests:** the children's ability to use illustration to express their feelings and ideas have really benefited from our intentional strategies to engage them with thinking deeply about what they are wanting to represent. We are seeing and discussing with them the meaning behind their work. It sometimes seems there is endless drawings to take home, but each one is very special and holds great meaning to the children. It's their work for the day. We have seen an increase and change to how the children are building and constructing also. We are noticing that the children will find ways to 'construct' with almost any materials possible and during this will also draw on ideas and teamwork from their peers. This is a fantastic sign of highly attuned social skills and self regulation for children of this age. What we have also attributed to developing social skills is the amount of time the children are spending engaged in socio-dramatic play. This is pretend play including taking on roles and becoming 'method' actors in their own meaning making. It is a playful learning of how to belong and be with others in social settings. We see and encourage endless opportunities for problem solving, talking things out, compromise, critical thinking and effective communication. There are so many chances for them during this play to safely experiment with how things work socially—play is so vital for this type of learning. In the coming months we will have our Transition to School begin in October. We will have information for families with children going to school in 2021 coming soon. Thanks—Donna, Paula, Bec and Ellie



### Observing and Discussing

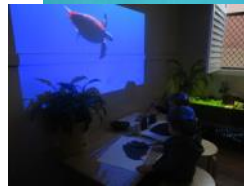
The children used the projection as a resource to provoke an exciting discussion each time the whale squirted water.

"It's a mummy and a baby" Henry pointed out.

"And more baby" Florence stated pointing to the dolphins.

Educators have been reflecting on the children's interest and it seems to be that the whales are a constant and embedded thought in the children's minds. They confidently transfer these ideas into every aspect of their play in the Joey room and outdoor environments.





Joey's at play...



Wallabies at play...

HAPPY  
Father's  
Day



CrossCards

It's the courage to  
raise a child that  
makes you a father.

Barack Obama

GH

Have a wonderful  
day this Sunday :)

### Newcastle School Portraits

Capturing your memories for over **30 Years**



**Newcastle School Portraits** have been booked in for our School Photo Day on **Wednesday, 18 November, 2020 from 8am.**

**All photos are to be ordered online. To view packages please visit**

**[www.newcastleschoolportraits.com](http://www.newcastleschoolportraits.com)**

**and enter your code:**

**101102**

**Orders need to be made before photo day.**

*Please be aware that Sibling photo orders need to be made before 9pm on Tuesday 17 November and no orders can be taken for siblings after that date.*

For children who don't attend on a Wednesday and are brought in for a photo by a family member or friend, we will have their photos taken first when they arrive. We will ask that the adults bringing them in for the photo remain in the side Possum playground whilst the photos are being taken for social distancing purposes. It's always a crazy, busy morning with beautiful results!!

## Happy Birthdays to....

### June

Elijah turned 2, Hugo turned 2, Issy, Alba and Harper turned 4, Flynn and Cruze turned 5

### July

Max S turned 4, Theo P and Lawson turned 5

### August

Theo D turned 2, Marli and Willow D turned 3, Kenzie, Harriet, Lucinda and Addison turned