



## CATH'S CHAT

(July 2014)

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Hi everybody, and welcome to all of our new families. We hope you are surviving the wind and the weather! A big congratulations to the Mills and Flynn/Williams family on the births of their beautiful babies, we can't wait to see them!

I have quite a bit to unload so I thought a newsletter format was easier to read and digest than an email.

**Medicare Immunisation Updates:** Thank you all for getting back to me, I know I'm still waiting on some but given the changes to the Regulations Medicare would have been inundated with requests Australia wide. As soon as you get your updated copies after your child gets vaccinated please provide me with an updated copy as I will chase annually now.

**Hours of operation for Cath's Kindy:** As previously emailed, we have been trialling the opening 6.30am and closing 6.30pm and found that 6.30am was not being utilised as much as what we thought, however, I appreciate that me changing this back to 7am did affect the families that I mentioned in my initial email and that is not my intention. I believe, eventually, Cath's will be 6.30am to 6.30pm but to be cost effective our hours will be Monday and Tuesday 6.30am to 6.30pm and Wed through to Friday we will be 7am to 6.30pm. It's not just an operational issue it's also a CCB issue and these times affect families whom have 24 hours care if they are 3 days and 50 hours eligible care if they 5 days per week. With that in mind I'll got to my next point below.

**Introducing Kiosk:** Due to the issues with regards to hours of actual care, as the current database from CCMS (Child Care Management System) that is the live system with Centrelink called Quikkids that I use, is only hard coded with current hours. Those being 11 hours, this needs to be changed. As this will affect families as mentioned above, I am introducing a new live electronic system called Quikkids Kiosk. I don't have the time necessary to go into everybody's account daily and data enter sign in and sign out times so that CCB is not affected. Kiosk is like an electronic sign in and out system. It will run via Ipad or Laptop in the foyer and once operational you will login and sign your child in and out electronically with the click of the mouse or the tap of the screen rather than signing in and out. This information will be fed into the database live and will record times so that only the times you are here will be used against your CCB.

It alleviates not signing in or out, or signing in and out in the wrong area and as it populates my database it alleviates my time in data entering and also recording attendances daily that I have to submit so that you guys get your CCB and CCR entitlements on a weekly basis. It also alleviates the sign in and out sheets that I have to keep for 9 years and provides a more sustainable, electronic register of attendances that comply with the Dept and the Regulations. Regular contacts such as Mum, Dad and only regular guardians that are able to pick up will be set up in the system. Only you will be linked to your child as it is in my current database. It will allow you to login via your nominated telephone number and you will allocate yourself a pin number and that's how you will log in. It is also a great tool for us as our rosters are implemented according to ratio so it gives us a clear indication of when to have staff start and finish as per the regulations. If you want to know more about this, please let me know and I'll be happy to send you a demo link. I will let you know when this system is operational.

At the moment we write down if you need to see staff re: an issue/accident report/we need more nappies etc. Kiosk doesn't have that functionality in it at the moment, but will do in the next version. In the interim we are going to have a notice next to the Laptop or Ipad that will advise if you need to see a staff member, please keep an eye out for this note.

**Introducing QuikPay:** As we update our current database to a more "cloud/web" based facility, I am introducing QuikPay which is an extension to the current Quikkids Database which is where your account lives, statements etc and is the portal to Centrelink (CCMS). As I spend a lot of time data entering in everybody's fees payments daily, chasing parents whom are late in paying or not frequent payers, trying to sort out CCB and CCR I am finding that I am spending more time doing this than working in the business on the more critical areas. QuikPay uses Ezidebit to provide payments which happen each week like the majority of you do now however, rather than you setting it up, it is set up through the database and takes payments weekly and populates into the Quikkids Database on a daily basis. The beauty of this system is that you can set it up how you already have for direct deposit via your bank account but will only bill you for "amount due" not a set weekly payment amount. So for one week you owe \$50 and the next week you owe \$100 because you had an additional day or your CCB/CCR has changed it will know this automatically. I am going to absorb the cost of setting this up as well as the cost per week that each transaction incurs but only from bank accounts/credit unions. If you wish to set this up via a credit card there is a fee for this that will need to be paid by you. There are no fees from your end only if the payment bounces. You can set the frequency up how it suits you, we will still be running fees one week in advance, it pretty much won't change what you are currently doing, but will streamline the system and alleviate my time debt collecting as well as data entering. If you have any questions re: this please let me know. This will be implemented globally, we can't have some on or some not on this system and we cannot accept cash anymore under the regulations. Once I set the system up from my end, a form will go out and that will need to be returned urgently to streamline this integration.

**Kinderloop:** Well I hope you have seen an increase in what has been loaded onto your Kinderloop Account. Last week alone was over 5 hours loading those on, so to try and alleviate time in other areas, which is what we are doing, I should be able to do more "live" Kinderloop experiences. The test phase on the new version is currently being undertaken whereby you can comment on these posts. I would like to see more comments from families which can only be done if you login via pc not tablet form. It's a great way to see what your thoughts are and also links us to the Quality Standards in the Early Years Learning Framework which becomes part of our quality assurance. So, if you get time, pop on your pc and make a comment, it goes back to the Educators and allows them to see your thoughts and feelings also. We take over 1000 photos a week at the Centre, so it's the few chosen ones that get posted and we are going to try and achieve 1 post per fortnight per child and would like it to be in more "real" time, thus the reason to start saving time in other areas, as currently, I am responsible for all of the Kinderloop management.

**Parent/Teacher interviews:** As some of you are aware, we commenced Parent/Teacher Interviews last year and ceased report type paperwork going out. This was very well received by all Caterpillar and Butterfly families. For our Snails families, your child's portfolio is available at any time for you to have a look at and discuss your child's development with Sharon at any time. Your child's educators and your child's portfolio is their "report". We will be holding these mid-September and a booking sheet will be in the foyer shortly regarding this.

**Kindy photos:** We are using a new photography company this year called Little Pix and will be held on Wednesday 3 September 2014. For the children that attend just bring them in as per normal in their photo clothing. We will change the children out of their "good" clothes are their photos. Any requests like change them, take their jacket off, leave their jacket on etc, we will provide a note in the foyer on the day for these special requests. Last year we had the Snails at 9am the Caterpillars at 10am and the Butterflies at 11am. Unless anything changes, this will stay the same this year as we hold all the photos on one day. Photo envelopes will start going out next week and for any families interested in sibling photos, please let me know. A sample package will be in the foyer for you to have a look at. They do a group i.e. Butterflies, Caterpillars or Snails, then individuals and then if ordered a sibling photo.

**What have we been involved in since June:** We have had such a busy 6 weeks. We have participated in:

Road Safety Week, Emergency Services Week, Outreach Story Time from the Library, PJ Week, Healthy Harold and Red Nose Day, Dress Up Week, Combat Day and Naidoc Week. National Tree Planting will be held next week. I would like to thank Narellan Police Force, Wollondilly Rural Fire Service and Paul and Hayley Turner from the NSW Ambulance Service for their time.

**Long Day Care VS Preschool VS Early Years Learning Centre:** I just wanted to explore some of the "myths" with regards to the facilities for Early Education and Care Centres. There is a perception that Preschool is better than a Long Day Care Centre because they offer a more "preschool type program" or that a Learning Centre is better than a Long Day Care Centre for the same reason. Or sending your child to purely a 2-6 year old Centre because they focus more on "getting ready for school" or a Centre that operates 9 to 3 is best because it's like a school and they take their own lunch box (for working parents I'm unsure how 9 to 3 accommodates that). All of these statements are incorrect. Regardless of the name of the Centre we all operate under the same National Laws and Regulations and the same Early Years Learning Framework. Even though we now come under the umbrella of the Department of Education, we do not have a "syllabus" to follow as you would in Primary School. The EYLF and that National Quality Standards are what provides a framework and the rest is interpretive and is dependant upon the commitment and level of passion from not only the owner but the Educators at the service. It is based on your staff's knowledge, Centre Management and the knowledge of the Educational Leader (Miss Karen).

Each Early Education Care Service must be licensed but also go through Quality Assessment by ACECQA. Cath's Kindy is licensed, has gone through Quality Assurance as the first pilot Centre in NSW, as well as offering the most extensive educational programs in all rooms under the EYLF. You only need to see the programs in the foyer, the collages in each of the rooms, as to what your child's been doing, what quality areas they are linked to and the standards to which we need to identify for each child on an ongoing basis. Our School Readiness Program starts in the Caterpillar Room. Focusing on self-help, hand strength, language, vision, motor skills, concentration and many more areas of development both academically, independently and socially. There are fundamental areas that we ensure each child is able to achieve prior to them going into the Butterflies Room. The Caterpillars room caters from 2years up to 4 year olds and is dependent upon individual children as the program allows for extension in all areas for each individual child.

Once in the Butterflies Room we have Stage 1, meaning they will be with us for longer than that year and Stage 2 meaning they will be going to Big School the following year.

The School Readiness Program was designed by Miss Pauline (35 year Primary Trained Teacher) in conjunction with Miss Karen whom is our Educational Leader in charge of EYLF and the programs in each of the rooms.

Counting, mathematics, science, writing, reading, literacy experiences are just a few of the areas that the School Readiness Program focusses on. Each week throughout each term the children break into groups to go through their own program.

The program is scaffolded in a way that has recurring things to cement in knowledge as well as extension, broadening and testing experiences to challenge and gauge each individual child's knowledge.

When you see a child playing with playdough, you may think "what do they get out of that". Well not only is it a craft experience but it is also a hand strength experience, manipulating is one of the best forms of exercise for children to gain better hand strength. A child standing at an easel, what does that promote? Painting at an easel standing up promotes upper arm strength needed for holding pencils and writing as well as many other activities both fine motor and gross motor. Hand strength is such an important thing for pencil grips and effective writing skills. The children use the whiteboards in their experiences for that reason. The use of iPads to continue learning in an electronic, visual world. Cutting skills, you must have good hand strength to be able to cut effectively. These skills are taught not only with assistance but by having the necessary programmed experiences for these skills to be achieved. This is only one area, there are so many more that your child is being exposed to on a daily basis.

For me, being a mother of 3 boys and being in this industry for over 15 years, socialisation and confidence is of most importance. The developmental and academic milestones will happen automatically based on your child's individual achievements and abilities within the program.

I want your child to be able to confidently play in a playground with hundreds of children; I want them to have the confidence to resolve conflict as well as the necessary self-help skills so that they can independently help themselves with their belongings, their lunch box, toileting etc. I know from their time with us that they will be well prepared for their journey from Early Education to Primary Education and we have built the foundation for them to go on and prosper as confident and happy children whilst having fond memories from their experiences and relationships formed whilst at Cath's Kindy.

**Big School:** Is your child going to "big school" next year? If so, can you please email me and what school they are going to if you don't mind, we network with other parents once we know this information so that if schools differ you can stay in touch. Also if you are thinking about it, and are unsure, parent teacher interviews would be your opportunity to discuss this.

**Re Enrolment for 2015:** Given our waiting lists and future growth in Wilton before the end of the year, I am commencing the re-enrolment process. A form will be sent via email next week. We do have very limited spots for this year, if you were looking to pick up an extra day it would be best to email me or discuss with Karen.

**24 Hour Fight Against Cancer, Macarthur:** On a final note, a lot of you that I am aware of have been affected by Cancer. As some of you are aware, I have lost 4 close friends due to this disease and it's a cause that is very close to my heart. I am interested in submitting and Cath's Kindy sponsoring a team for the 24 hour Cancer Challenge to be held on 18 and 19 October 2014 at the Campbelltown Athletics Oval (next to Wests Leagues Club). For more information if you go [www.24hrfight.org.au/](http://www.24hrfight.org.au/). The cost is \$15 per member to join the team and then you do as many laps, running, walking however you like and we can do fundraisers, you can get sponsors for how many laps you do, or an amount and we get a team t'shirt. I think it's a really worthwhile cause and as a Community together we could make a difference. If you are interested, have a read on the website and Facebook page and let me know urgently as we can't do it if there are not enough people interested. You can invite friends and family there are no limits to the amount in a team.

Well I hope I haven't put you to sleep, as always, if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas you know where to find me. Kind regards, Cath ☺