

Major Changes to Early Childhood Education from 2011

UNIVERSAL ACCESS INFORMATION

In 2009, the Australian and State Governments announced **Universal Access** which will enable all children to access 15 hours of a kindergarten program per week. *To give children a flying start, the Government is introducing universal access to a kindy year provided by qualified teachers in community based kindergartens, at schools and through long day care centres.* (A Flying Start p.9)

There will be a new funding system with changes transitioned from 2011.

At Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre (MPC) we believe that this is a highly commendable vision. Over the last few months, staff and committee members at Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre (MPC) have been discussing the proposed changes and gathering information through parent surveys to determine the impact these changes may have on families. We have actively advocated for children and families by

- sending an impact statement to politicians and The Office for Early Childhood and Care
- responding to *Flying Start for Queensland Children Green Paper*
- engaging in discussions with: Geoff Wilson, Minister for Education, Murray Watts, Member for Everton and members of the Office for Early Childhood and Care.

Changes for 2011...what we know now:

- Services will access funding through the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (KFS). Our current funding system is provided through The Department of Education Community Kindergarten Assistance Scheme (DECKAS). This will be replaced by KFS.
- The standard subsidy in 2011 will be \$2100 for each eligible-age child participating in an approved kindergarten program, payable directly to the service. To be eligible, children must be 4 years of age by 30 June in their pre-prep year.
- In 2011, we will receive funding at the 2010 DECKAS level.
- Services are to prioritise enrolments for target aged children (3.5 to 4.5 years).
- A family support subsidy will be available to services to support children from a low income family with a Health Card.
- Under the new scheme each child participating in a kindergarten program is entitled to participate in **one** government funded program of kindergarten each week. Services will offer an educational program based on an approved early childhood curriculum for at least **13 hours and 45 minutes** per week for **40 weeks** per year.
- To be eligible for kindergarten funding, services will need to be associated with a Central Governing Body (CGB). C & K will be one.
- Delayed Kindergarten Entry Application and Delayed Exit forms will be available for 2011.

Future impacts

- Group hours of attendance will be changed in 2012 to accommodate the minimum 15 hours per week for all children as stipulated by the government.
- Under the new scheme each child participating in a kindergarten program is entitled to participate in **one** government funded program of kindergarten each week. If children attend 2 services (e.g. MPC and a childcare centre), payment will only be made to one service.
- Funding for children with additional needs is yet to be confirmed.



At our Parent Information Evening on Tuesday 10th August, Murray Watt, Member for Everton, announced that funding at the 2010 level will continue until 2014.

ALSO, due to some relaxation in hours of attendance, in 2011 we will be able to offer one group where children attend 11 hours per week.

What can parents do...

- Stay informed.
- If concerned, write to local members, The Education Minister and The Office for Early Childhood and Care.
- Take part in surveys in which we will collect data about grouping arrangements and parent preferences. We will use this information to continue to inform politicians and The Office for Early Childhood and Care.

Suggested web-sites:

www.mpc.net.au

www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/kindergarten/factsheets.html

www.cank.org.au

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

