



# The Elder Street Herald

## Welcome to Elder Street - lots of new friends and new experiences!

We have a very settled bunch of new friends and new parents in 2009—we'll done everyone we hope you are having a lovely experience at Elder Street.

### Welcome to....

**Possums:** Ayla, Spencer, Levi, Emily, Elodie, Ruben, Lara, Madison and Sam

**Joey's:** Damon, Angelina, Eli, Bridie, Jonte and Nate

**Wallabies:** Bella, Rhys, Samuel, Charli, Mackenzie, Phoebe, Laine, Harry, Nicolas and Jack

All new families will receive a Settling in Questionnaire on week 8 of enrolment. This is an opportunity to give us feedback on how you and your child are feeling about your early days at the centre.

Remember to call if you

have any concerns and have a read about tips on morning drop off and other ideas to help the children settle and feel at ease on the following pages.



Jonte enjoying a foot painting experience..



Damon making a delicious creation out of his lunch and bread....



Madie busy discovering the nursery...



Nicolas busy creating..



Lara having a chat with her reflection....

### Inside this issue:

Welcome to Elder Street	1
Settling in at Elder Street	1-2
Fee Policy Information	2
Buy & Sell Q & A	2-3
Illness Info	4
Help with Child care Costs Info	4
Bulb Drive GFKGFL Equipment Levy	5
Birthdays & Latest Editions	6

### Special points of interest:

- To help stop the spread of germs please remember that siblings who come into the centre at drop off and pick up times also need to wash their hands before they can play with the toys in the morning or afternoons...
- Please remember to help protect our friends with allergies by not bringing food from home into the centre :)

## Settling in at Elder Street—transitions to a new environment for children and parents

Here are a few tips for any families who may be now or in the future facing a little bit of a relapse with the settling in process. This tends to happen sometimes when the toys and excitement of a new place to play wear off and the morning tears or comments like "I

don't want to go to school" start surfacing. For children under 3 years, it may be a little while before the tears totally disappear, but there are some ideas for getting into a routine if you are having problems and just don't know what to do. Here is a sample routine

that may help your morning transition when preparing to say goodbye for the day

- on the way to the centre talk about the fun things that may happen that day
- Use the carer's names in your con-

## Continued from page 1...Settling in at Elder Street...

versations in a positive way ie, "we can tell Karen about the funny book we read last night"

- when you come into to the centre greet the staff and encourage your child to do the same.
- Either carry or lead your child to their locker and involve them in the morning jobs of putting bed bags in baskets, bottles in fridge and then lead them to a carer
- If cares are busy (which is often the case during morning drop off) stay with your child and point out some interesting things in the room or playground. When available a carer will approach you for your morning welcome.
- **This is the crucial part!** If you plan to stay for a while, please let us know and we will come back to you when you indicate you are ready. When this

time arrives we suggest that you have a phrase to use each day ie "okay bye darling, mum/dad will see you this afternoon, have a wonderful day, I love you" and **leave without hesitation.**

- **Your child will more than likely cry—this is very normal.** It is not advisable at this stage to take your child back or decide to stay longer as this will only prolong the agony for both you and your child and make it more difficult for your child to settle once you do leave. After you have left the carers will begin to involve them in the days activities and they will settle.

This is all normal separation anxiety behaviour, especially for children between the ages of 9 months and 3 years, with its peak occurring between 12 and 20 months. Of course all children are different and some

never look back from day one.

At the other end of the spectrum some children will continue to be sad until they begin school. These award winning performances are more likely to be just for your benefit and the tears miraculously disappear when you walk out the front door.

As we tell all families on enrolment and throughout your time at the centre, please feel free to ring and check on how your little one is going.



No tears here!!! Too much fun doing the Hokey Pokey!!!

## Child Care Fees

In line with our Centre Fee Policy we remind families to ensure fees are paid on time and that accounts not fall any more than 2 weeks in arrears if at all. Currently we have quite a few accounts that have between 1 and 4 weeks worth of fees outstanding. When these amounts are all added up it actually equals more than one week's worth of staff wages owing (over \$7000). We need all families to make regular payments so that we can continue to run viably. We respect that families have financial commitments other than child care costs, and we have always been very accommodating and understanding about these situations. What we do not want to happen is to not be able to continue being flexible and have to enforce late fines on accounts so that we can also meet our financial commitments. Please also understand that no one operating a centre or working in child care is doing it for the money. It

is our love of children, commitment to providing a quality service to families and making a honest weekly wage that is our objective.

Important points regarding payment of fees:

- \* Continued failure to pay fees within a set timeframe can jeopardise enrolment at the centre
- \* Fees paid by cash or cheque need to be paid by 10.00am Friday morning,
- \* Fees paid by direct deposit need to be set up to come out by Wednesday night at the latest. This then allows the fees to reach us before the end of the week. Due to the 2 day delay it takes from most banks other than the Greater Building Society, we often do not receive fees until the following week.
- \* Fees are billed each Monday morning for the week ahead. Which ever way

you choose to pay your fees, be it weekly, fortnightly or monthly, we ask that you are not in a position where you are paying for the week, fortnight or month just past.

We appreciate your assistance with this matter and would like to remind all families that they are always welcome to speak to myself or Kim at any stage to discuss your account situation.

Also many thanks to the families that pay their fees regularly and also at times in advance—it is very much appreciated.

### New Families

Please see further information on page 4 to better understand Child Care Benefit, Child Care Tax Rebate, Child Care Management System better and what you need to do to pay less fees or receive entitlements owed to you

# HOW DOES BUY & SELL WORK?

Originally the Buy & Sell was put in place to provide a possible (fee assistance) vehicle which enabled families to take extended holidays. If a family knew in advance that they were going to be absent from the centre because of holidays they could fill out a buy & sell form and "request" to have their days sold. If someone then wished to buy extra days due to say, extra work commitments they filled out a form "requesting" to buy days. This unique service was never intended to be used for any other purpose other than holidays but has somehow evolved to include incidental absences as occasional care which has created quite a bit of miscommunication and confusion for staff and at times families. To enable this service to continue, the centre to run smoothly and the staff to continue to provide quality care for children we feel it necessary to return to the original procedures. The following information sets out the process for buying and selling days.

## Days bought and sold are worked out on a first in first served basis for future planning for Holidays and Work commitments ONLY

**Q. If my account is in arrears can I buy or sell any days?**

A. No. Accounts must be up to date with a zero balance.

**Q. If I sell a day/s, do I have to pay for those days sold?**

A. No. The person who buys the days will pay for the days. You are only charged a \$3.30 admin fee for each day sold.

**Q. If I buy a day/s what do I pay?**

A. You pay for the day/s bought plus \$3.30 admin fee for each day bought.

**Q. How do I know if my days have been sold?**

A. You will have a credit on your receipt if your account is not in arrears.

**Q. How do I know if I have bought a day successfully?**

Either Kim or Mel will contact you and let you know prior to the day. \* Note we will only phone regarding buying days not for selling days. Refer to previous question.

**Q. Can I just change my mind and bring my child in on the day I had requested to sell?**

A. No. Changes to the original request would have to be completed first. This is done by filling in a second form to cancel or amend the original request. \*Please note as we do not like mucking people about, amendments may not be possible in cases where your days have already been sold.

**Q. What happens if I am on holidays for a month and do not sell any of my child's days?**

A. You pay for all days as usual as if your child was still attending.

**Q. Where are the Buy & Sell forms kept and where do I put the form once I fill it out?**

A. Forms are available in the front foyer on top of the sign in desk. Families wishing to buy or sell days need to complete these forms and ensure they are correct. All forms must include CHILDS NAME, each individual day requested and be signed and dated. When complete please place in the fee box.

**Q. Can you buy and sell over the phone?**

A. No. To avoid any misunderstandings and to ensure fairness to all, days may not be bought, sold or changed by phone. You are welcome to enquire over the phone about days available but it will not be processed until we receive the buy/sell form.

**Q. Can I organise buy and sell days myself or swap days with my friends within the centre**

A. No. The Buy & Sell procedure as herein explained must be strictly adhered to.

**Q. Can I buy days once I leave the Centre?**

A. No. A child must be currently enrolled within the centre to use this service.

We hope this makes the process clear for everyone. Just another quick point to remember, if you wish to phone to enquire about days for sale or to buy, it is best done between Tuesday, Thursday or Friday (days Mel works in the office) as the book is kept upstairs, which then makes it necessary for us to have to leave the room to check on Mondays or Wednesdays.

## ILLNESS & EXCLUSION POLICY

For those new to the centre or anyone who just needs a refresher, here are some tips and policy reminders:

- Hand washing is the key to breaking the cycle of infection – remember to wash hands on arrival and before going home.
- Runny noses are okay, although if paired with a very tired, unsettled and upset little person, we request a day or two off.
- Children with high temperatures (over 38°C) should stay home. Please do not give Paracetamol in the morning and send to the centre. Whatever is causing the temperature will only be masked

by the medication and in the meantime possibly infect other children.

- If a child is on antibiotic medication they need to stay home until **24hrs after the first dose.**
- Vomiting and diarrhea needs **24 hours since the last episode before returning to the centre.** Eg, if the last vomit was 3.00 in the afternoon on a Monday, the child cannot attend the centre until after 3pm on the Tuesday. Children can often appear well again by the next morning, but under the advice of our Staying Healthy in Childcare guidelines (NHMRC) we must insist on the

adherence to this advice and follow the exclusion periods listed.

We hope that parents understand the importance of looking after the whole community of our centre and that if we have to send children home it is always for the wellbeing and protection of all our little ones.

Our Centre Handbook (received on enrolment) has an Illness Exclusion Table if parents wish to update on our practices, or please feel free to call and speak to me about any concerns regarding illness and/or infection control.

## Help with the Cost of Child Care — FAO, CCB, CCMS, CCTR!?!

Some of you will be old hands with all these acronyms and others may be still scratching their head. As our centre is "approved" care that is also accredited, we are able to pass on many rebates to help with the cost of fees.

**CCB—Child Care Benefit**—if you earn between \$0—\$125K for 1 child in care, \$135K for 2 children in care and \$145K with 3 children in care, you are entitled to reduced weekly fees. To receive this, parents need to contact the Family Assistance Office (FAO) and obtain a customer reference number (CRN) for them self and another one for each child. We then use another system that only approved children's services can use to process this benefit. This is called:

**CCMS—Child Care Management System**—once we have all CRN's and dates of birth of the parent linked to the child, we are able to send off enrolment data via this system to the FAO. They then send us via the internet information about your family's entitlements. This is processed via our accounting system. This information

including your ccb percentage, eligible hours of care (either 24hrs or 50hrs) and our flat rate is used to calculate your weekly reduced fee. If your family is entitled to CCB our system puts an "E" for estimate on your account. Each week our software will estimate what your reduced fee will be based on whatever reduction was received the week before. For families that earn over the figures given or families who wish to claim their ccb as a lump sum rather than reduced fees, they are known as "F" full fees or "L" for lump sum. The final benefit available to all families is:

**CCTR—Child Care Tax Rebate**—this covers 50% of out of pocket child care expenses with a rebate of up to \$7500 (indexed) child per year. This is paid quarterly or annually. If you want to receive this quarterly you must claim ccb as reduced fees (even if you receive a zero reduction). This means you must give us your CRN's and dates of births as mentioned earlier, even if you have been advised that you will not receive reduced fees. If you do not do

this when you go to claim the CCTR either annually or quarterly the FAO will have no records of child care usage.

If you are told by the Family Assistance Office when you go to claim your CCTR that they are waiting on usage from your child care centre you must tell them that **ELDER ST TRANSITIONED TO CCMS IN APRIL 08 AND THEY REPORT WEEKLY.** This means that the FAO receives all the data they need every week from us, so your CCTR information is readily available to them. CCTR payments are deposited directly into your bank account by the FAO.

We urge parents to bear with the long phone cues when calling the FAO and make sure that you have registered correctly for any rebates you may be entitled to.

**"If you wish claim to CCTR quarterly you must claim ccb as reduced fees even if you are receiving a zero rate"**

## Garden Express Bulb Drive 2009

For the families that have been at Elder Street for a number of years they will have seen how hard we have worked at "greening" our environment, especially in our big back playground. We have planted grass, trees, many more shrubs and plants and even added some pretend gardens to our fences. Our plans for the future are to purchase our own rainwater tank to have in the garden bed, purchase more large indoor pots and plants and start to design and create a dry river bed that



Charli & Phoebe watering our lovely trees...

will wrap around one side of our sand pit that we can fill with river stones, grass plants and sometimes small amounts of water. To do this extra type of work we thought it was good idea to run a fundraiser along the same lines as our project to help with the costs. The Garden Express Fundraiser has some great packs of bulbs at reasonable prices for anyone who is interested. On the back of the brochure there is loads of informa-

tion about what and where you can plant and also provides a growing guide with any orders received. The brochures will be in family pockets and anyone interested in purchasing needs to return orders to the centre with payment (chqs: Garden Express) by **FRIDAY 13TH MARCH**.

The beauty of this fundraiser is that it is great for the environment, great value and generously gives the centre a return of 50% of orders.

Any questions please see staff—thanks for your support.

## GOOD FOR KIDS, GOOD FOR LIFE—Elder Street's Menu

More information for families new to the centre, this time about our Menu. Under our license as a long day care service we are mandated to provide children in care for more than 8 hours per day (determined by our licensed hours not actually by hours attended) with 50% of their daily recommended intake. Along with this we also need to ensure that the food is low in sugar, fat and salt and the meals provided meet the correct servings of each food group. For those who are not aware the following information may help explain our menu choices and also may guide you with what your child is eating at home and if it is deemed the best practices.

- **No more** than 2 serves of fruit

per day

- At least 3-5 serves of veggies per day
- Fat content of less than 5g saturated fat per 100g
- Salt (sodium) content of less than 600mg per 100g
- Sugar content of less than 15g per 100g.

When we first learnt about the Good for Kids program and had our previous menu analysed by the Hunter New England Health Nutritionist, we were providing foods outside of these parameters. Surprisingly more than 2 serves of fruit was one of the most common mistakes made and our biggest challenge was adding more serves of veg-

gies and encouraging the children to eat them. We are proud to say that the children

have responded very well to the menu changes and enjoy veggie platters and all sorts of foods they were not so keen on to start with. You can be assured that all the children are eating well and learning about the importance of healthy, eating, moving and living. Any further information, please talk to Mel or Catherine.

We have lots of new information on Infant Feeding Guidelines that have recently been published by the Good For Kids Team too!

## Equipment levy 2009

Our annual equipment levy is usually added to accounts in February each year. We are a little late this year but it is coming! Some families new to the centre have already paid for this year's levy when they enrolled late last year. For the rest, it will be added on Monday 2 March 2009. The levy is \$25.00 and is charged per day of attendance, eg. 2 days attendance = \$50.00 etc.

As always, the funds are used to purchase equipment and resources for the children. The staff choose what they think will be of benefit to the children's play and learning and then order through educational toy catalogues. As we do each year, we will advise parents what their dollars have bought when the purchasing has been completed.



Sam enjoying one of the excellent quality trikes purchased in 2005 with equipment levy funds

**Elder Street Early Childhood Centre**

136 Elder Street  
Lambton NSW 2299

02 49539300  
02 49539782  
elderstreet@optusnet.com.au

► **Building Partnerships with Families**

We're on the web  
[www.elderstreetehc.com](http://www.elderstreetehc.com)

**Bob Turner Wildlife Show— Tues 10 Feb 2009.... always a great time!!**



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!!**

**January**

- Lara turned 1
- Xanthe turned 2
- Charlie turned 3
- Jessie turned 4
- Madelyn turned 4
- Hugh-Angus turned 4



Xanthe and her lovely cake!!!

**February**

- William turns 2
- Leroy turned 4
- Abigail turns 4

**New Arrivals Congratulations!!**

Welcome to Hartley Miles! A beautiful second boy for Kate and Rob and little brother for Riley (Possums) - well done guys!!



Baby Hartley

Congratulations to the Kearsy family! Little Lilly arrived a few weeks ago with much excitement. Harry (Wallabies) and Joe now have a beautiful little sister. Well done to Sheena and Bill on the arrival of their little girl.

Would you like to receive your Newsletter and other information from us via email? If so, please complete and return

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_