



REGIONAL FORUMS COMPLETE PRESCHOOL GROWTH PROGRAM

During May 2011, the Preschool Growth Program presented 23 'Growing Stronger in Times of Change' forums across NSW. The forums were attended by 394 participants from 277 preschool services. The Preschool Growth Program was pleased to see preschool staff, management and committee members and staff from Community Services in attendance.

The forums were designed to encourage preschools to look positively to the future with an awareness of the impact that State and Commonwealth policy changes will have on service operation. PGP knows that embracing change can simultaneously be exciting and daunting – we hoped to provide information and opportunities for mutual support.

One of the highlights of the forums was the positive response to the partnering model presented. The Preschool Growth Program is aware of five different areas around the state where services have begun meeting to form similar partnering groups in their local areas. We hope that established groups can 'sister' beginning groups to support them through the process. New groups can make contact with an existing group by emailing info@alburypreschool.com.au. A fact sheet about partner groups is also enclosed with this newsletter.

There was lots of discussion at the forums around ways preschools can continue to grow and thrive. Participants discussed ways of connecting effectively with government departments and support agencies, making informed decisions and making the most of funding and marketing opportunities.

Feedback from the forums indicates that preschools are eager for:

- Preschool specific support;
- Funding and finance support;
- Training around the National Quality Framework and ratings system, the EYLF and the new national regulations;
- Regular updates and information to support change; and
- Continued access to marketing materials: the PreschoolsNSW website and TV commercial.

Preschool Growth Program

A project of Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW)
Funded by the NSW Government through Community Services

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AND THAT'S A WRAP

Preschool Growth Program wraps up after distributing \$25.6 million dollars to NSW preschools.

The Preschool Growth Program (PGP) ends on the 30th of June.

Since its establishment in 2009, PGP has worked closely with preschools to identify opportunities for growth in preschool enrolments. We looked in depth at the identified priority LGAs and used social planning data to inform our work. Where existing preschools could expand with minor capital works and other measures were already explored, we worked to support capital projects and in a small number of cases this has led to the development of new preschool services.

In its 2.5 years of operation, PGP has:

- Completed 9 rounds of funding recommendations through a rigorous assessment process;
- made 555 individual funding recommendations;
- approved total funding (up to our most recently approved implementation plan) of \$25.6 million;
- worked with preschools to grow 2,555 new spots with another 2,733 progressing (as at the end of December 2010);
- developed the PreschoolsNSW marketing initiatives, including a state wide television advertising campaign, a website, and marketing materials;
- had 27,000 visits to the website in the ten months since it was established profiling all community based preschools operating in NSW;

- distributed 1,736 marketing kits to services across NSW;
- distributed 723 preschool marketing packs to agencies that work with children and families;
- arranged the broadcasting of the PreschoolsNSW television commercial across NSW in August 2010 and again in May 2011 on the Seven network and regional subsidiaries;
- Arranged the broadcast of the ad as a community service announcement on a range of networks in May and June 2011;
- resourced preschools through nine *Growing Places* newsletters and nine fact sheets on different issues;
- provided capital works information packs;
- hosted 61 regional forums;
- provided over 100 preschools with finance support (to resoundingly positive feedback);
- worked collaboratively with the PGP Reference Group – including hosting 11 meetings;
- provided on-the-ground support via regionally-based project officers; and
- had 12,058 separate contacts with services (email, phone, visit, support) to date.

On behalf of Community Child Care Co-operative, the staff of the Preschool Growth Program would like to thank every preschool we worked with for your enthusiasm and professional engagement with the program.

PGP wrap up

The program completion work of the Preschool Growth Program will occur from July to September 2011. Throughout this time a small number of PGP staff will be working on finalising reporting and program evaluation. It is possible that you may hear from Carol Nagel, Kathy Bohdanowicz, Philippa Yeend or Anthea Charalambous during this period.



Ongoing Preschool Support

Community Child Care Co-operative will of course continue to support preschools as always, after the completion of the PGP Program. Professional development and training courses (including subsidised courses on the National Quality Framework), access to resources and of course access to ongoing information and advocacy will continue. Check out our newly designed website for more information www.cccnsw.org.au or www.cscentral.org.au for professional development and training courses.



Staff from Haberfield Baptist Church preschool. From left to right, they are Early Childhood Teacher Stuart McDonnell, Child Care Worker Wendy Riley, and Early Childhood Teacher Penbe Delzoi

PREVIOUSLY UNFUNDED PRESCHOOL FINDS COMMITTEE SUPPORT

Preschools and their management committees need to work together to 'navigate change and grow into the future', says the director of Haberfield Baptist Church Preschool, Bess Colin-Thome.

Haberfield Baptist Church Preschool is a 39-place community-based preschool in the Sydney suburb of Haberfield. The preschool was funded by the Baptist Church for 16 years before receiving its first round of funding through the Preschool Growth Program last year.

According to Ms Colin-Thome, the funding has allowed the preschool to lower its fees from \$43 to \$40 per day. By easing financial pressure, it has also freed up the management committee's time to focus on supporting staff development.

Ms Colin-Thome says the preschool's management committee is now playing an important role in supporting preschool staff as they embrace the upcoming changes required under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Senior pastor Matt Beckenham, educators and several parent representatives form the preschool board of directors (management committee), who in conjunction with the director, are responsible for financing the employment of staff and the general running of the preschool.

'The committee has identified that professional development and training is a priority at the moment and essential for the preschool's journey of change.

'The committee has increased the allowance in the budget for professional development which includes supporting staff to formalise their experience and gain their Certificate III.'

According to Ms Colin-Thome, this collaborative partnership is encouraging a climate of open communication and mutual learning.

'The preschool board of directors (Management Committee)

is meeting on a regular basis to plan for change in consultation with the preschool director and staff. Throughout the week there is ongoing contact with the preschool board of directors via emails, phone calls or service visits.

'The early childhood teachers are sharing their own knowledge, skills and experience with the committee to make informed decisions about the future direction of the preschool.'

'The number of staff meetings has also increased to once a month to assist the staff in implementing the changes gradually.'

In doing all of this, the preschool and the committee have remained focused on the bigger picture of ensuring the best possible outcomes for children, and this continues to guide all of their plans for the future.

'We are continually planning together in order to embrace change that will benefit the children, families, staff and the community,' she says.

For navigating change, Ms Colin-Thome offers the following advice for preschool staff and management committees:

'Breaking down change management tasks into small steps and working in partnership with all stakeholders reduces stress levels. It is also important not to become isolated and be proactive in leading change by actively researching and networking with other children's services.

'Accessing professional support and obtaining information through peak early childhood organisations will also assist staff and management in the decision making process for the future.'



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UPDATE DETAILS & ADD PHOTO!

Has your preschool added a photo and updated your details on the PreschoolsNSW website? With the success of the TV commercial and the resulting increased hits on the PreschoolsNSW website, it's a good time for services to check that the information displayed on the website in relation to their service is current.

Earlier this month your preschool would have received an email from preschoolgrowth@cccnsw.org.au asking you to update your details.

You can now also add a photo to your preschool listing on the website. Information on how to upload was included in the email you received. Please keep your username and password somewhere safe. You can then continue to update any changes to your information whenever you need to. As it is a dedicated website for community based preschools in NSW, it is important to have your listing up to date and accurate.



PreschoolsNSW BROCHURES NOW AVAILABLE IN 12 COMMUNITY LANGUAGES

PreschoolsNSW Brochures are now available in PDF format to download from the PreschoolsNSW website. Go to the 'Resources' tab. The PDFs are in an easy to print A4 format and are available in English and twelve community languages.

KEEP CONNECTED!

Many preschools are well connected to their communities and the wider children's services sector. PGP encourage preschools to stay in touch and keep informed of current issues, particularly during times of change like now.

Regular email subscriptions can assist in staying up-to-date with what is happening in the early childhood sector. Becoming members of key organisations is a way that many services gain support. Regular attendance at professional development courses helps to reassure staff that everything you are doing is on the right track.

PGP suggests that preschools:

- Subscribe to Community Child Care's free *Shortside* emails;
- Keep checking the 'NQF and other changes' page on the Community Child Care website;
- Subscribe to Children's Services Central's NQF e-tips and EYLF e-tips;
- Join the nswpreschools campaign Yahoo group by sending an email to: nswpreschoolcampaign-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- Attend any local network meetings you can;
- Keep your records and copies of all service specs, funding agreements and reporting data organised and accessible;
- Keep your committees informed – provide them with fact sheets on NQF, funding etc;
- Celebrate achievements – contact local media to profile your service; and
- Continue marketing strategies.

Access information, including the email newsletters mentioned above, from key organisations' websites:

- Community Child Care Co-operative www.cccnsw.org.au
- Children's Services Central www.cscentral.org.au
- Department of Education and Communities www.det.nsw.edu.au
- Department of Family and Community Services www.community.nsw.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Mobile Children's Services Association (MCSA) www.mcsa.org.au
- Independent Education Union (IEU) www.ieu.org.au
- Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA) www.ccsa.org.au
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Sector Advisory Group (ATSIECSAG) www.atsiesag.org.au



NEW TRAINING CALENDAR OUT NOW!

New Children's Services Central training calendar is out now! A range of inspiring and informative sessions are offered in the July-December training calendar. Look out for a print copy which should have arrived at your

preschool, or view the calendar and book online so you don't miss out on popular options.

<http://www.cscentral.org.au/trainingcalendar.pdf>