

Children's Services Annual Report

It has been a very busy year coordinating the OOSH service. Staff have been a great help in the development of programs and the overall smooth running of After School Care and Vacation Care. We have been developing our combined skills with a variety of courses. These include first aid, creative planning, positive behavioural management, OH&S training and food safety and nutrition. This information is invaluable and is shared between staff members. Ongoing training is necessary to develop and maintain a professional environment when dealing with children and parents alike.

We run After School Care and Vacation Care programs at Crown Street Public School (OOSH services). The focus of these services is on recreation for the children, rather than on education. We aim to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all families.

We provide Child Care Benefit funding but are currently not accredited. Our validation will occur during summer holidays 2008 and our self study report is due to be handed in this month. Many changes have been made due to advice given after our last failed validation. These include an overhaul of our policies and procedures, parent handbook and evaluation development amongst other things.

The services are open for all families, however children attending After School Care are from Crown Street Public School. On the other hand, Vacation Care is used by children from a number of different schools.

Before School Care

We attempted this year to get Before School Care going but did not receive enough interest. We need at least 10 or more children to attend to make it viable. We will look at trying it out again in 2008.

After School Care

After School Care has been attended at capacity all days but Friday throughout the year. Currently we can take 25 children and I have applied for an extra 5 places to try to accommodate our waiting list. I have a large waiting list for next year but have been unable to get the required space from the school to make room for more placements. Perhaps we will be able to use the new occasional care space in 2009.

ASC children have been engaging in a variety of activities including craft (weaving, painting, sewing, construction), multicultural cooking, outdoor

games and sport and drama. They produced some beautiful artwork for the festival including the SHNC banner. We hope to sell some of their work to raise money for equipment.

I am concerned about parents owing money and will inform all parents that from 2008 payments must be made fortnightly or they risk losing their children's space at ASC. This has been included in the new parent handbook.

Of concern to me also is the drain of financial resources my hours have been putting on our service. I have been working longer hours to bring our CCB claims up to date and to prepare us for the upcoming accreditation. I expect next year to be able to greatly lessen my hours once all this planning and paperwork is out of the way and the service is organized with the greatest efficiency.

Vacation Care

Vacation Care was a bit slow earlier in the year with the average attendance being 18. Mid year it picked up to about 24 and I am expecting it to be at capacity (30) over the next summer break, 7th Jan – 29th Jan.

When I plan the program for Vacation Care, I always try to balance it, and make it interesting, so the children won't get bored. We went on different excursions every day, eg. Ten pin bowling, ice skating, sport, games, yum cha, movies, etc. I would like to join up with other local vac care groups to keep costs down and so the children have a broader range of socialization.

We seem to go through equipment regularly. I would like to know if there are any companies or services in the area that would donate sport or craft equipment to us; I will look into that next year.

New staff members

This year we have seen a number of new members join our team and they have done an outstanding job. Along with Lee we also have Latifa, Annabelle, David and many excellent vacation care workers. I am looking forward to working with this team next year.

This year has been a great learning experience in my first year as co-ordinator and I am eager to go on learning and implementing an outstanding OOSH program for our service.

Leoni Atterton
OOSH Co-ordinator