



Newsletter

Welcome

It has been a really wonderful year so far. We welcome all families to the service that have just recently joined us and hope you enjoy your journey here at Rainbow Valley. There are some really great things happening this year, so I thought I had better start letting you know of some of the things going on at the Centre.

Our new website – www.rainbowvalley.com.au

We have finally after 4 years of procrastination and 6 months of work got our Rainbow Valley website up and running. Although there will be still things being added throughout the year it's now at a really great stage. Together with our Facebook and Story park community pages and email communication we feel we have finally got a rounded way to keep everyone updated using digital platforms. The general site will show you our up and coming events and general information. We have also got our Rainbow Valley Parent Portal where you will find information on our menus and recipes, staffing, policies, contact details and rosters.

Parent Portal Password is: *pprvfor2017*

We are adding our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) shortly so you can see the service's strategic plan. There is a suggestion box for any comments or ideas that will be directly emailed to admin.

Please take a moment and have a look. Also don't forget to like us on Facebook.

Communication and Parent Survey

Along with the new website we are presently reviewing the communication of our programs and information within the Centre. We have created a short survey you could do to help us gain an insight into your needs, and the way you presently receive information, alternatively you can just have a chat with your child's educator. A link to our survey on communication: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H5SCR68>

RADF Grant and Project

We are so excited and fortunate to receive a grant with the Regional Arts Development Fund. Before Christmas I spent many hours preparing the application and was so excited when we received the grant. Our project is entitled "Creative Children Creating Change". The project aims to connect children to ideas surrounding a sustainable future through exploration of this concept through the Arts. The Grant allows us to employ an Artist, Tracey Smith, who has focuses on repurposing materials to explore children's understandings of recycling and repurposing of materials, culminating in a group project. Tracey Smith will be working with us through the whole year a couple of times a week to lead our project. We are so excited about where this project will take us. Of particular excitement is being able to link this project with the overarching theme for this year within all our rooms that is of exposing citizenship for our children and how we are part of the community. There will be ongoing documentation about our project in the foyer shortly. I will also begin blogging about our discoveries and progress – there will be links to this on our website.

Music Wall

Another exciting event will be happening through a partnership with the Creative Recycling Centre (CRC). We will be commissioning the CRC to make a recycled music wall for our Kindergarten playground. This is so exciting as it has stemmed out of observing children in our playground and in discussions with Tracey our artist as the children were making sound with the loose recycled objects. We will be working with the CRC who will: Engage an artist to project manage this project, work on the design and then install it. We will be investigating making our own sound sculptures alongside to install as well. We will let you know how you can help with collecting materials and help in the actual making of the wall. At this stage we do know that we are looking for collections of tins, pipes and other metal objects. There is a special collection barrel out the front of the service.

eARTH Festival

Children's Festival – 23rd June

It is time to plan our children festival again. The last two events have been so exciting with wonderful attendance as well as a lot of fun had by all. Our aim as always is to highlight community and celebrate the myriad of cultures in Australia through Food. As we have done each year we will be asking families to contribute ideas for dishes that we can cook at the service or (you can prepare at home for our festival). We are asking that you talk to your child's teacher about possible ideas you may have to contribute. There has been an invitation sent out this week, there will be an RSVP sheet at the front of each room to help us with catering numbers. We will be putting up a roster to share the load of both preparing and serving food on the night; there will be more on this to come. It should be a beautiful night and we will be excited to see everyone there.

Oats drive

Many of you know the fantastic work that SAFE HAVEN does in supporting rehabilitation and preservation of animals in our community. We have invited them to come and visit to share their wombats with us on our Tree day celebration scheduled for the 26th of July. The wombats love oats and this donation contributes greatly to the upkeep of this volunteer organisation. Please place your oats donation in the blue-labeled barrel out the front.



Quality improvement plan

All services across Australia are required to keep an ongoing plan for improvement called the QIP. This requires us to look at our service practice across 7 areas. There has recently been a change of legislation in regards to the regulations, with some outcomes being combined and more clarity being added, however the basic premise remains the same. If you are interested a link to the new document can be found here:

http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/Decision_RIS/RevisedNQSandOtherChanges.pdf

Our service has been assessed as Exceeding in all 7 areas. They are as follows:

Area 1: Education and Programs

Area 2: Health and safety

Area 3: Environments

Area 4: Staffing

Area 5: Relationships

Area 6: Partnerships

Area 7: Leadership

We are presently working on getting our QIP on our website so that families have ongoing access to our strategic plan and can make suggestions or comments. Within the QIP we establish a long-term view on goals to improve our knowledge, environments and programs whilst ensuring that we are sustaining individual systems and maintenance of the service. Individual teams will also have shorter-term goals that they are working towards. From time to time we will have discussions, meetings or surveys that help us work on our next big strategic areas to work on throughout the year. This year we are focusing on rewriting our strengths as well as the larger visions outlined in the plan. Your input is greatly appreciated. We have included a PDF document of our current QIP for your perusal and a hard copy is available at the front office and outside the rooms.

Kids Matter Leadership Team

We are inviting any interested families to be involved in the leadership team to coordinate the services plan. Kids Matter is a mental health and wellbeing initiative for children. Kids Matter Early Childhood works with early childhood education and care services to support the mental health and wellbeing of young children, their families and early childhood educators using a promotion, prevention and early intervention framework. Our leadership team would meet 4 times a year to discuss the service progression and think about our projected programs. It involves supporting Educators to understand the impacts of mental health and building a happy, connected community. Please Email the office if you wish to be involved.



Changes to the Family Subsidy (CCB and CCR)

The government has passed legislation that will change the way your fee subsidies are delivered from July 2018. Although in most parts the changes are really great, families need to be mindful that there are huge changes to the work and activity tests. Families will need to be working or volunteering at least 4 hours per week to be eligible for any subsidy unless the family income is within the cutoff bracket. On an excellent note however they will be finally lifting the cap, which will enable families to have reduced fees for the entirety of the year. A fee estimator has been produced by the Department to help you work out your entitlements for next year. Please bear in mind that these are estimators only.

Estimator link: <https://www.education.gov.au/sites/education/files/sch/est/index.html>

Vision question and thinking across whole service programs

As many of you know our service is connected to doing long-term projects that engage the whole service in deeper thinking about what we do. This year we have worked on a deeper long-term question to engage all educators thinking about how we work with children across all our programs. This is the reflective statement and question we have come up with. We thought you maybe interested in reading about what we are thinking about as well.

Thinking Statement

Our image of the child shapes every interaction, curriculum decision and our relationships with children. It is our ongoing work as educators to continually evaluate, critique and review our own constructs of children. Throughout this year we will be attempting an overarching project, which will aim to shape teacher thinking about children. We will invite children into discussions surrounding our thinking and will aim to pull out further projects to explore about our constructs of children, citizenship, rights and relationships within our teaching. We will be able to consider other projects that are in exploration alongside these larger concepts to overlay a critical thinking level to ensure that we reflect deeply on our own practices.

The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guide states, "Learning occurs as part of the social and cultural interactions between children, teachers, parents families, community members and others."

We view children at Rainbow Valley as capable people, full of potential, competence and rights to citizenship in our community, where learning occurs as part of a relationship intertwined between peers, educators and families. We respect and understand children's right to citizenship, which creates necessary and ongoing discussions surrounding responsibilities, power, relationship and agency.

"Our image is of the child as a possessor and constructor of rights, who demands to be respected and valued for his/her identity, uniqueness and difference. To think of a child as a possessor or rights means not only recognising the rights that society gives to children, but also creating a context of 'listening' in the fullest sense." (Rinaldi, Re-Imagining childhood). We need to listen and acknowledge the voices of our children. We need organising ways for their voices to have power.

This statement poses many continuing questions to consider, including:

Needs versus rights, what are they?

What does it mean to be part of our community?

What is our community?

How do we build relationships with our service and with our community?

How are we part of it?

How do we make connections?

Is being a citizen about having power?

Who has power?

Do we step back and allow children a voice to be heard?

How can we be kind respectful and connected to our earth?

Can children be advocates for changes of behaviour for our community?

How do we support children's agency to problem solve?

How do we truly listen to children?

How do we follow their lead?

What are the problems they can solve?

Is Kindness a responsibility?

What are these rights and what are these responsibilities within our service?

Rights - What is a right?