

UNICARE NEWS

Welcome to our February 2023 newsletter!



IN THIS ISSUE

Spotlight on Rooms

An update on our programs from Embrace to Cooking and Languages.

Quality is everything!

About early childhood standards, and how we approach them.

February Parent Survey

Have your say, so we can update the Parent Notebook for 2023.

A Welcome from the Board

By Daniela Hundzova (Danka), Chair
of the Unicare Board

It has been a busy start to the year. The Board and the Management Team have been working hard to set Unicare up for success. We have many great initiatives planned and underway, starting with improved and enhanced communication with families, increasing our digital online space, bolstering favourite programs such as Yoga and reestablishing the cooking program [previously known as Little Chefs] and introducing the Kiddo sports and movement program [previously known as BodyBudz.

Our vision for Unicare is to be above child to educator ratio, i.e., not only meeting our legal responsibilities but exceeding them. The Board's main concern has been staff and staffing. Whilst staff shortages are an industry-wide problem, we have been proactively looking for ways to attract new members to the Unicare team.

The Board has also been reviewing the Constitution and considering whether Board membership and voting rights should be open to non-members. With this in mind, we would love to have some new families join the Unicare Board! If you are interested in helping to shape Unicare's future, please email us at board@unicare.net.au.



Our current Board members include:

- Chair - Daniela Hundzova
- Secretary - **Vacant**
- Treasurer - Caley Shepherd
- General Board Member - Lauren Pemberton
- General Board Member - Madeline Morison
- General Board Member – **Vacant**

I look forward to seeing you around the Centre.

A WORD ABOUT

Each month we take an informal poll of parents (in the foyer) and open our discussion with information that you are asking for. This month – **What makes Unicare unique!**

Unicare is a not for profit, community based early childhood education and care centre, run by the Parent Board. This means that all fees go toward the service. What makes this even more unique, is that we offer a range of special programs – **unlike many centres, these are available to every child across the Centre and are included in the fee.**



SPOTLIGHT ON ROOMS

Embrace Inclusion Program

Our Embrace program is an inclusion hub. Whether it is with support, cultural learning, curriculum participation, or long-term assistance, we work closely with families in every room, every day.

One example: When we have a child who needs additional support, unlike many other centres, we don't have waiting times to begin support programs (some other Centres face long wait times). Simply put – we get things started and support the child and parents within the Centre, and if they need, provide information and support if the family is referred to an external health or development specialist. The program links into the children's curriculums and so is integrated across the Centre.

If you want more information on the program, talk to Michele or Doreen, or ask for a meeting with Rita who runs the program.



Look for the infographic in the Centre

SPOTLIGHT ON ROOMS

Unicare Cooking Program



After a revamp of the Centre's nutrition and menu program in 2022, and as our wonderful **Chef Josh** has settled into his new role, we are now ready to begin our children's cooking program. The program will provide children with unique cooking experiences. Through fun and educational sessions, this program enables children to develop an understanding of healthy nutrition, culture, and family, shared communal responsibilities, proper hygiene, and safety procedures in the kitchen.

Cooking will provide our children with a fun, holistic learning experience where they engage in hands-on activities developing life skills. A single cooking experience integrates different learning outcomes from the Early Years Learning Framework such as numeracy, science and discovery, problem solving, prediction, language development, social skills, fine motor coordination, emerging independence, and sense of agency.

THE POWER OF A NAME

The cooking program is a huge favourite at Unicare – it was once called '**Little Chefs**'; however as one of the children pointed out 'We aren't little'. In 2023, to give the children ownership over the program, we asked some children what they wanted to call their program. The children suggested 'Let's eat', 'Cooking' and from one - 'My dad is the best cook ever', so we will get back to you when they have had their input! In the meantime, if you would like to volunteer to support the program, please see Doreen for further information. If you would like more information on how the program will work, one of our [reference documents](#) provides a great picture.

SPOTLIGHT ON ROOMS

Communication and Languages Programs

THIS MONTH: AUSLAN - SIGN LANGUAGE

Through a play-based focus, children engage in small sessions with new words and phrases being introduced and consolidated over the year. This program provides the perfect foundation to introduce and engage our children in various languages. We are deeply engaged with learning Auslan Sign Language each week during term time. **The Signing Hands** program is up each week across the rooms and on the parent noticeboard in the garden courtyard.

NEXT MONTH:

Staff using their home languages as they engage with the children!



Want to know more about early childhood standards? by Peyton Davis

Our primary reference is from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and is the [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).

If you have any questions about this, please see Doreen who loves to talk about standards and regulations!

For health, hygiene, and illnesses we follow this [guide](#).

Dates for parent - room meetings with parents will be displayed:

in the foyer, on Xplor, and on our [Facebook page](#).

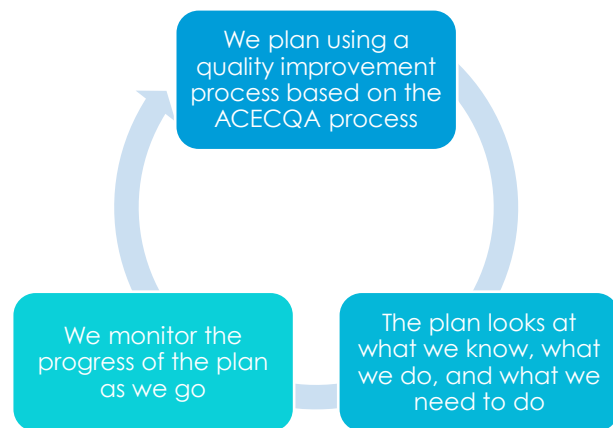
On the next page you will find our latest mini survey.

We need your help to update our Parent Notebook (our guide for new parents) for 2023.

Please take a few minutes to make your contribution.

Quality is everything to us

Unicare is a not for profit, community based early childhood education and care centre approved to operate by the WA Government. We are subject to regular spot checks by the Education and Care Regulatory Unit and periodically our standards and programs are assessed through an assessment and rating [A&R] process.



We would love you to be involved – and we use parent ideas and parent feedback all through the process. See Doreen for more information.

YOUR CHILD'S PROGRAM – HOW WE DO IT!

Observing and planning for your child

At the beginning of the year, our focus is on getting to know the children and their growing needs.

1. We start the year with a series of observations on the children. These form what we call direct observations, or they may be a learning story or narrative about what we see when your child is at play.
2. We then begin or continue with your child's 'child development milestones assessment'. When these are underway, we will invite you to meet with the Senior Educator and we will go through it with you.

We use all of this information to develop your child's plan.

February Parent Survey

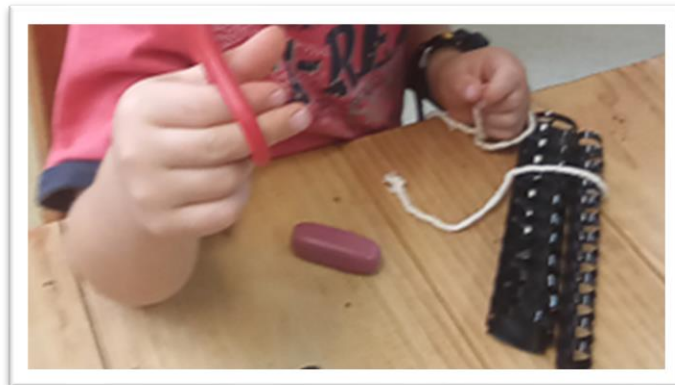
Your responses to our February Survey will assist us to update our Parent Notebook – a valuable resource for new parents. Can you please answer the following questions?

A: What are the 3 most important pieces of information that you think a parent new to the Centre needs:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B: We have tried some new shared parent orientation events over the last 4 months. If you attended one of those, could you give us some feedback that will help us plan the next event.

Please email your answers to enrolment@unicare.net.au by 15 March to enable us to collate your answers and plan for the next enrolments at our beautiful Centre.



Picture: A recent session where the children were inventing and building