

UNICARE NEWS

Welcome to our April 2023
newsletter!

IN THIS ISSUE

SPOTLIGHT ON ROOMS

The new ART HOUSE!

Is play learning?

The short answer is YES! Our short read article in this newsletter will tell you more!

April Parent Survey

What languages do you speak at home with your child? Lodge your answer into the box in reception!

Safety and why we do what we do!

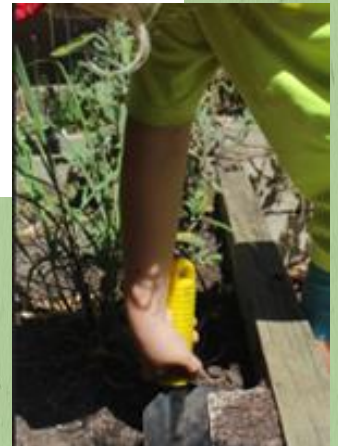
Beginning a new series on some of our safety procedures and how you can contribute.

Literacy: Learning to read

A brilliant overview of how Educators support learning to read.

Play is everything!

Being involved in your child's play is one of the most amazing things a parent can do. It is the stuff of family memories and dinner table laughter and stories for generations! Read more about how Educators use play intentionally as part of the children's learning, carefully scaffolding the learning and skills development without damaging that all important spontaneity.



From the Parents Board

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

Last month, the Board finalised the Budget and set KPIs for the current and 23/24 fiscal year. We have two key focus areas. The first is ensuring we retain staff and attract new members to the Unicare team. This will allow us to achieve our second goal of increasing utilisation.

To assist with this second objective, we have been reviewing our digital/ online space and will be investing in the website, as well as online marketing platforms. This journey, under the direction of Lauren Pemberton (a digital guru in her own right), will hopefully prove fruitful, and we look forward to sharing the work we have done with you in the coming months.

The new ART HOUSE!

Have you seen the child size construction going on in the Maali/Kulbardi play ground?

It is the outdoor ART HOUSE! Opening soon, it will provide much needed space for children to create in while they are outside in the gardens. Linking to the Attenborough environmental science program and the Kindy curriculum, it also provides a have for those children who want quieter moments to think, explore and create. Stay tuned for the opening celebrations!

What is learning through play?

When children play, they explore naturally, ignite their imagination, and use their decision-making skills. **Educators use play purposefully in their guiding of children's learning.**

How does play support your child's development and learning at Unicare?

Physical development	When children use large and small muscles such as climbing, running, ball games, digging, jumping, and dancing, it enhances a sense of wellbeing, and physical growth.
Social and emotional development	When children use dramatic and imaginative play (including dressing up and role play) they can develop positive social and emotional skills and values. This provides opportunities for children to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practise working with other children, negotiating thoughts and ideas, making choices and decisions, develop self-confidence by experiencing success and challenges • develop empathy and fairness as they learn to play with other children.
Cognitive development	Skills such as thinking, remembering, learning, and paying attention are all being developed when your child is engaging in play. Children develop these through play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problem solving • imagination and creativity • concepts (shapes, colours, measurement, counting and letter recognition) • concentration, persistence and resilience.
Literacy and numeracy development	When children play it helps develop literacy and numeracy skills as they need to think, interact, use their natural curiosity and exploration skills. Play helps children develop skills and understandings including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an increased understanding of words and their use • listening and speaking skills • writing skills through scribbling, painting and drawing • learning how stories work (plot, characters, structure, and purpose).

Safety

Our safety actions are governed by the regulations and standards for early learning centres, known collectively as the National Quality Framework. Every safety action rests on a background of research and regulations and upholds the line in the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 which tells us that *the best interests of the child are paramount* [Sch. S3(a)]. One recent example: A person (a relative of a child) was seen taking a picture of a child from the fence. Staff intervened immediately, explaining our privacy and safety rules. The child's family was contacted immediately and their relative was reassured that we respect families, however there is a strict no photo rule without permission.

There will be more on safety in every newsletter. **The main reference we use is:**

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>

Look for 'Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety'

(Although safety features right across the National Quality Standards)

Do you want to help us plan our next stages of development?

Are you free for a free cup of coffee and a muffin or fruit?

We need parents who would love to have a chat about the Centre and contribute to our **Quality Improvement** processes.

This is something that happens in every education and care centre across the country. It is about having a conversation about the Centre, and sharing the ideas you may have for your Centre and room*.

When: Saturday May 13

Time: 10 – 11.30 am

Place: Centre foyer - we can arrange an online [teams] meeting, but as some of the work we will be doing includes a centre walk, you may find it easier to follow if you are able to attend.

RSVP: Friday May 5, 6pm to enrolment@unicare.net.au

Bonus: We will have a Fairy here to look after a small group of children, but as numbers are limited, bookings are essential.

Learning to read

Excerpt from an article
by Lisa Burman
[Full article in 'The Sector':
Source available from Admin]



Learning to read starts when children are born. Oral language gets the brain ready to read print. You can't fast-track this or children will have problems with comprehension and fluency when they read.

Every time you read a book, a road sign or a recipe to your child, you are teaching them to read. We read to children every day because we know that learning to read has to start with children seeing the reason to read. We think it's important for every child to feel a connection to picture books, as well as other kinds of reading, because reading and listening to picture books helps develop oral language, vocabulary, concepts and knowledge about how books work.

Reading starts with language and pretend play. Without really strong oral language, children struggle with reading and understanding the words and sentences in books. When we read, we have to use symbols in a very sophisticated way: these squiggles represent sounds and words that have meaning. So, reading has to start with lots of pretend play – that's how oral language and the concept of symbols develop.

It's important to understand that reading is more than saying the words. So, we start with thinking and talking about and enjoying the books we read together. Once children have a connection to books and reading, we start teaching the 'word parts' of being a reader.

We teach children to read every day. Learning to read is complex and is more than saying the words. When we think about teaching children to read, we know it's important to read every day to children, to give them time to be readers every day, to have lots of opportunity to talk and build their oral language, as well as to build their knowledge of letters, sounds and words.

If we start too soon with the letters, sounds and words (or rush it too quickly), children are often burnt out by Year One. Or they 'word call' and don't understand what they read. We want children to see themselves as readers and want to read in their lives, so we think a lot about building this attitude to reading first, and then the mechanics come.

We don't ignore reading.

We want children to know the joy of reading. This is the number one priority because if they feel joy they will want to read...so they read more...so their reading skills develop because they practice more.

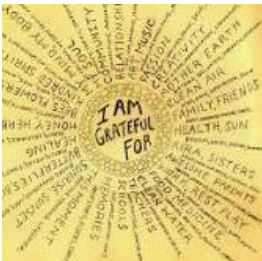
Other upcoming events

A selection from our Unicare Calendar



1 June The Great Book Swap

A book swap event for families in the Centre and fundraiser for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation



12 May Our Mother's Day event

For everyone in a mothering role – a centre wide and room by room celebration. Details will be in posters up in each room



19 May The Flamingo Strings returns (monthly on Fridays)

Classical and other musical journeys in the playground



29 June International Mud Day

A celebration of nature play from the child's perspective – best pack a spare set of clothes!



25 August Daffodil Morning Tea

A morning breaky (coffee and fruit or fresh muffin) for a donation to the Cancer Foundation, that amazing organisation who are supporting a number of our families and a staff member in the Centre!

ENROLLING AT
UNICARE

New Parents

The Unicare Centre has never been afraid to lead in early childhood education and care and 2023 is no exception. The 'new parent orientation days' are a great example.

On a Saturday in April, 5 potential new families spent a morning together not only touring the Centre but exploring it, asking questions that were important to them and their child.

The feedback from the parents was wonderful (including that from those had toured other Centres).

'Thanks for the lovely tour on Saturday.'

'We really enjoyed the tour on Saturday, I have seen several other Centres, and this is by far the one we want to come to.'

This 'community building' also provides many of our parents who may not know anyone else in Perth, a chance to develop contacts with other parents.

There is more to come this year, and we are incredibly proud that what is being developed in our Centre is close response to what parents are telling us will work for them!