



NEWSLETTER: February 2015

Centre News

A big welcome to all new families, especially those negotiating childcare and kindergarten for the first time, and to all those families returning in 2015.

I trust everyone had a safe and restful summer break and enjoyed the chance to escape the usual routines and enjoy family time. We hope you enjoy your time with us and trust your children will have a fantastic time getting to know new friends and exploring the interesting and challenging educational programs on offer. We pride ourselves on providing warm, caring, inviting and engaging environments not only for the children, but to their families as well. Meeting parents, just for a quick chat in the foyer or in any of the programs, is a great way to get to know you all. I apologise in advance if I forget your name, we have over 140 children enrolled at the moment, so that is quite a few names to remember!

The early days are often tough for both parents and children. Getting used to new routines, experiencing separation struggles and even remembering what to pack in the bag can be an additional challenge. Don't forget that other parents are going through it too and that catching up for a quick chat with them can sometimes make it easier.

All our educators are experienced in settling in new children and parents too, so don't hesitate to ask for their advice. We aim to make the transition for all as smooth as possible. As the weeks progress you can clearly see the educators and children establishing secure and trusting relationships as they slowly separate from their parents and explore their new environments.

I have enjoyed spending time in the educational programs getting to know the children and parents. Thank you for your positive comments about our educators and the environments they have created for your children. If you and your child are having difficulties settling, don't hesitate to speak directly with your child's educators or if you have any concerns, comments or suggestions regarding the centre, Anna and I are always ready to listen and act

on these where appropriate and possible. Alternatively, speak to any of the executive members of the committee of management. They can be contacted in the first instance by leaving a note in their communication pocket on the wall near the office door.

The Centre and Kindergarten information evenings were well attended and it was great to see so many new and familiar faces at the centre. I will be emailing a survey link to all families to obtain feedback on the orientation process and the centre information evenings so that we can improve these for 2016.

Apologies to any parents who found themselves running a gauntlet of Bureaucrats and Politicians in the foyer a few weeks ago. We were very pleased to have The Hon Jenny Mikakos, Minister for Families and Children and Minister for Youth Affairs, visit our Centre. The visit coincided with the commencement of the 2015 Kindergarten year, which is a very exciting time for children and their parents. The Minister enjoyed sitting with the children at the making table, pasting and gluing and then enjoyed a photo shoot with our three sets of twins Henry and Joseph, Imogen and Jasper and Zara and Alex. The Minister also announced a Kindergarten refurbishment fund of \$50 million that will start flowing in the next 2015/16 Financial Year (\$5m) and then \$10m, \$15m and \$20m in subsequent years. We are excited at the prospect of applying for this funding, which could go towards our outdoor master plan redevelopment and indoor alterations in some of the educational programs.

As a community-based centre, parent involvement and participation is vital. Thank you to the parents who have nominated to be our committee of management this year and a huge thank you to the parents who signed up to be involved in our various subcommittees.

This year is already proving to be a busy year with the welcome night, completing some of the planned playground works, first aid training for parents and

other exciting social events on the agenda, so keep your diaries clear.

We hope the year will be inspirational for all the children, families and educators. Keep sharing your journeys with us so that we can continue to provide enriching environments that will enhance each child's uniqueness and help develop a positive self-image.

Lara Bamundo, Director

Invoices

Please check your invoices to ensure your payments have been entered. Recently we have been receiving unidentified payments into our bank account. If you change accounts or financial institution please notify us as soon as possible.

Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten families are reminded to pay their term fees on receipt of their invoice. Parents who have health care cards are asked to bring them into the office so we can sight them and take a copy for our records.

Centre Website

The Centre's website is another way of keeping abreast of comings and goings. Please login to www.anniedennis.org.au and have a look. This year we will be updating our website so that families can more easily give feedback, review policy, or check the progress of our playground works, to name a few things. We aim to update information regularly and make it more interesting for families. We encourage you to subscribe to the website (please enter your email address on the homepage). Subscribers will be emailed notices for all upcoming events, newsletter alerts and much more.

Security of the Building

The security of children is extremely important. DO NOT disclose the centre door code to anyone who is not authorised to pick up your child on your behalf. DO NOT let individuals into the centre when you open the door to enter or exit the building. Unless you know the parent, please close the door behind you. Any visitors will then be required to ring the doorbell to be attended by centre management.

Children's health and hygiene

We haven't hit the winter months yet, but we are noticing children attending the centre unwell. It is not uncommon for coughs and colds to lurk around every corner in a children's centre regardless of the season. Please be on guard for any symptoms or illness your child displays.

We ask you to help us keep the children and educators at the centre fit and healthy by keeping your children at home when they are unwell (even a slight runny nose and can develop into an infectious condition, which can spread through your child's room). Keeping your child at home and away from the centre is the best way to prevent infections spreading through your child's room. We do adhere to the centres policy on illness. Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child if any illness or other symptoms are noticed by educators.

Centre policies are available in the foyer and on the centre website anniedennis.org.au

General guidelines include the following:

- Coughs and/or cold/runny nose they need to be at home in order to recover so as not to infect other children in the group and/or the centre. This is the best way to prevent infections spreading through the centre. If your child presents with flu like symptoms parents will be contacted to collect their child.
- Vomiting or diarrhoea overnight, please keep them at home and not return until your child has been free of any symptoms for a minimum of 24hrs or in some cases 48 hrs
- Fever (temperature above the normal 37.4°C) is lethargic, displays out of character behaviour or has an infectious condition, please keep them at home. Paracetamol should not be administered before attending the centre to mask the fever.
- If your child is on prescribed antibiotics, they should not attend the centre for the first 24hrs after the course of antibiotics has commenced to ensure that they have time to take effect.
- Please notify the centre if your child is ill and staying home.

Important dates

- Wild Action: Monday 16 March (times to be advised)
- Working Bee: Saturday 21 March 9-1pm
- First Aid Awareness Course for Parents: Wednesday 15 April 7-9pm
- 2016 Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten registrations CLOSE: Thursday 30 April
- African Drumming: Wednesday 20 May (times to be advised)
- CENTRE CLOSED: Staff training day Friday 10 July

Educators news

Congratulations

Renee has commenced her parental leave, hopefully to have a good rest before the arrival of her first

baby due in March. We wish her and her partner all the best, we look forward to their news very soon.

LDC Professional Development Funding

We have been actively organising individual and group educator audits, to ascertain the type of training our educators would like to complete in the next 12 months. Educators are very keen to pursue their main areas of interest through their work in the Early Childhood profession. As a whole the educators undertook a self-assessment. The self-assessment helped us explore key areas and reflect on our current practice, helping to identify potential learning needs. Some areas we have identified are:

- Critical reflection
- Intentional teaching in Play based curriculum
- Integration of Indoor and Outdoor environments
- Cultural awareness

There is so much to look forward to within our training program. We will continue to update you on our progress.

Parent Representatives

Thank you to the parents who have volunteered to be Parent Rep's for their child's program. Email contact lists have been placed beside each sign in/out book. If you would like to be on the contact list, just add in your details. The Parent Rep will organise social functions for the room, a picnic in the park or any other event so children and families can get to know each other a bit better. These connections are particularly helpful as friendships develop and children want to see each other outside Annie Dennis. Finally the Parent Rep can help organise participation in events organised by the Social and Fundraising Sub-Committee. We are still looking for parents interested to be the Parent Rep in the Grasshoppers, Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten programs.

First Aid Training for parents

We have organised a parent awareness course for First Aid Training through Premium Health. All families have been emailed information about the course. We cannot stress the importance of knowing how to respond to an incident or an emergency situation. If you are interested, email through your name and we can book you in.

2016 Kinder registrations

Registration for 2016 Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten are now open. Registration forms must be completed by all families intending to send their child to kinder or pre kinder in 2016. Forms are available in our foyer or can be downloaded from the

City of Darebin website. Forms must be returned to the City of Darebin, not at Annie Dennis. All eligible children must be on the council database, failure to do so may cause your child to miss out.

Registrations open from **1 February 2015 to 30 April 2015**. Applications received after this date will be treated as 'late applications' and you may miss out.

Parent Resources

We have a wide selection of reading material available in our parent resource area that can be borrowed. Items can be borrowed for up to 2 weeks. Please approach the office if you would like to borrow items.

Be Sun Smart

Remember the five Sun Smart rules for all the family.

1. Slide on some sunglasses
2. Seek shade
3. Slap on a hat
4. Slop on SPF30+ sunscreen
5. Slip on protective clothing

Bucket style hats can be purchased from our office for \$7.50

ADCC tees

Get your ADCC t-shirts from the office any time. The designs were created by the 2014 rainbow room children and come in sizes 1, 2, 4 and 6. For ethical and environmental reasons, we chose water-based ink for the printing process and they come in red, blue, green and purple. Costs are \$20 for one or \$15 each for two or more.

Working bee

Our first working bee for the year will be on Saturday 21st March from 9am-1pm. We will provide further details of the projects planned for the day closer to the date. A yummy sausage sizzle will be provided too.

Fee explainer

Our approach to fees

Annie Dennis is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to operate a break-even budget, albeit with a small buffer to cater for contingencies. We believe 'high quality early childhood education' is a primary goal of the Centre and should be reflected in our expenditure priorities. We also believe in spreading the costs of our services, including supporting special needs families, across the parent community. To help families manage increases in fees over the long-term, we prefer to make regular (usually

annual) fee rises instead of potentially larger rises at less regular intervals.

Income and expenses at Annie Dennis

In the 2015 Financial Year Annie Dennis' annual income is projected to be around \$2.043 million, coming from three main sources. Fees paid by parents make up 88% of our income.

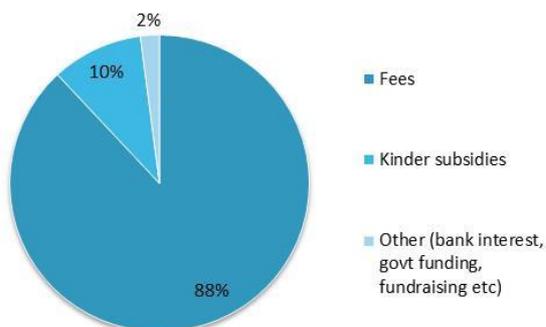


Figure 1 – Annie Dennis annual income FY15

In the 2015 Financial Year Annie Dennis' annual expenditure is projected to be around \$2.043 million. Staff costs are 91% of total expenditure, noting Annie Dennis pays staff above the award and employs more staff than the minimum to provide higher levels of care.

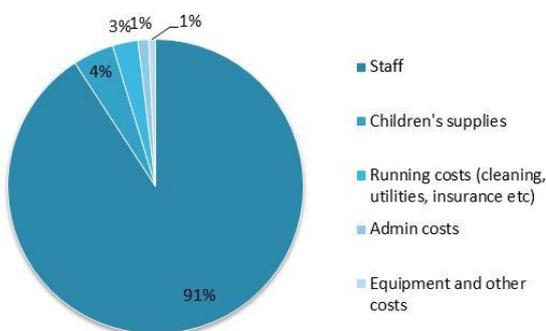


Figure 2 – Annie Dennis annual expenses FY15

Recycle donation area

The children enjoy using all the amazing items that are collected in our recycle area in the foyer. Please keep us in mind when recycling at home.

- **Bring:** Small boxes, toothpaste boxes, paper towel rolls, small make up boxes, perfume boxes, paper, patty pans, leaves, twigs, stones, pots and pans, ribbon, small pieces of fabric, corks, wrapping paper.
- **Do NOT bring:** Egg cartons, food packaging boxes, toilet rolls, large boxes (we only end up recycling big boxes).

Junk Junk Junk!

Any preloved item can be used by the children indoors and outdoors. Please ensure it is safe for use by the children first. Examples include wooden crates, bamboo poles, wooden bowls, rope, baskets, garden pots, and pallets.

Eating tips from our kitchen

Vegetables can be served raw or cooked and can often be disguised in other dishes.

- Offer vegetables cooked in different ways- boiled, baked, steamed, roasted, mashed, and stir-fried.
- Serve salad vegetables on a platter rather than mixed together in a bowl.
- Fill celery sticks with cream cheese.
- Serve raw or partially cooked vegetables with dips
- Mash vegetables together to make patties.
- Include grated or thinly sliced vegetables in sandwiches or pita bread.
- Puree vegetable soups.

Community noticeboard

We have established a community notice board in the foyer near our educator photos. Feel free to post information here for our ADCC community, eg items for sale, babysitters and nannies. We will also post information here on events happening in the wider community.

Chocolate fundraiser

Our chocolate fundraiser has started... Thanks for supporting the centre with this event. You can pick up your box of Easter eggs or Fairtrade Chocolate blocks from our foyer.

Easter Eggs- \$4.00 per bag (\$80.00 per box)
Fairtrade chocolate blocks- \$2.50 per block (\$60.00 per box).

Yarn bombing workshop

Following on from the success of last years yarn bombing workshop, we would like to start up another group. If you can knit or crochet... we need you!!

Come along anyway, we can teach you how to and enjoy some homemade biccies and a cuppa too.

For more information contact Ellen on webberellen@gmail.com