

BRIGHT STARS FAMILY DAY CARE OFFICER'S REPORT APRIL 2012

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

The National Regulations were approved in September 2011. All states except WA have implemented these Regulations as part of the new National Quality Framework in January 2012. The Regulations in WA however are still being developed and will correspond with the National Regulations. It is envisaged that these Regulations will be implemented in WA around July 2012.

Bright Stars staff members have been attending regular workshops in Perth with Family Day Care WA members to develop generic Service Policies that will be required by all Approved Services. Further workshops are planned to train staff on Risk Assessment and Selection and Monitoring of Educators.

Educators and Staff have also been attending regular training to ensure that they are building on their skills and knowledge to assist with the implementation of the new National Quality Framework in the service.

The Play leader has been redeployed as the Educational Leader as part of the National Regulations. This new role will ensure that educators are providing an educational program that meets the National Quality Standards.

The National Quality Standard is a new national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. It gives services and families a better understanding of what a quality service is.

The National Quality Standard is the standard against which services such as Bright Stars:

- Self-assess their performance in delivering quality education and care
- Plan future improvements to their education and care service.

The outcome of the process is the development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which services must submit to their Regulatory Authority prior to accreditation.

Currently Bright Stars is undergoing the development of its QIP. The draft QIP is currently in circulation for comments and input from stakeholders. The document will be presented to the Consultative Committee in May for endorsement.

As part of this process the services Philosophy Statement must also be reviewed. This is being done concurrently with the review of the QIP.

THE REGIONAL CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR COUNTRY CHILD CARE SERVICES

\$9.3million additional State Government Royalties for Regions funding has been allocated over the next four years to support regional child care services. This is in recognition of the particular challenges faced by regional child care services as a result of factors such as distance, isolation, reliance on volunteers or lack of funds.

The Regional Community Child Care Development Fund includes four components:

1. An operational grants program
2. Support for the inclusion of children with additional needs
3. A strategic grants program
4. Support for children's services regional planning.

The first funding round closed on the 5th April. Bright Stars has lodged an application for \$10,000 to go towards the purchase of a vehicle to be used by the Educational Leader to support and monitor the educators. It is anticipated that the service will be notified of the outcome of this application by the middle of May.

This funding will prove to be invaluable to assist the service to implement improvements to the services and allow for future growth.

IN VENUE CARE PROJECT IN GERALTON

Currently Bright Stars is seeking support from the Department for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to look at a pilot In Venue Care project in Geraldton with the focus on providing education and care to indigenous children and families.

Family Day Care peak association, Family Day Care Australia (FDCA), is in support of the project and is working with the Manager, Karen McDowell, to trial this pilot. The WA Child Care branch of DEEWR is in support of the project. The issue is the requirement to change current DEEWR policy to allow an In Venue

Care service to operate in a regional town. The current policy allows for only this type of service to only operate in rural and remote towns.

If successful the In Venue Care services are proposed to operate from the Beachlands and Allendale child care facilities which are currently vacant. The aim of this project is to train indigenous educators by offering traineeships to provide quality, culturally appropriate programs to the children in Geraldton.

PLAYGROUND RENNOVATION

As part of the services QIP plans are underway to renovate the playground at the Paringa Street premises to incorporate a more natural play space for children. Kidsafe Playground Advisory Service has conducted a site visit and provided a report on ideas that could be incorporated to make it a safe but inviting play space that meets the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Community Groups have offered to volunteer their services to assist with the upgrade. It is envisaged that the project will be done in stages with work to commence in May as part of National Volunteers Week.

Karen McDowell
Manager