



THE NSEYC BUZZ

The Official Newsletter of the Northern Schools Early Years Cluster

Love a life of learning and living!



Hello from our CEO

Welcome to the first term of 2023!

It's an exciting time for everyone at the NSEYC. We now offering 15 hours per week of FREE kindergarten for 3 and 4 year olds - which has required a huge amount of recruitment and facility upgrades to make happen! We finished building works to several more of our facilities over the holidays, so our Management team have been busy bees, setting up our new and upgraded learning environments and getting ready for our children, families and staff to return to kinder.

We have also finalised the NSEYC's Strategic Plan for 2023-2025, including updating our values to Trust, Relationships, Respect and Curiosity.

An exciting year awaits!



Sigi Hyett,
Chief Executive
Officer

This Term's issue brings you:

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Meet our enrolments team!



From left to right: Corina, Amira & Kirti, our enrolments team

Almost every family with a child at a NSEYC service would have communicated with one of our enrolments team members, whether by email, phone or in person. We thought it would be nice for you to put a face to their names!

Corina Ross (left) looks after enrolments for our Merri-bek services, including the Glenroy Hub Children's Centre.

Kirti Crute (on the right) looks after our Hume services, as well as Molesworth Street and Rothschild Road Kindergartens.

Amira Mourad (middle) is our Administration Officer and often helps with enrolments, including assisting Arabic-speaking families.

We are lucky to have a team of such dedicated people who are always willing to go the extra mile to help families through the enrolment process - which can be time-consuming and tricky at times!

Thanks Corina, Amira & Kirti for all you do to support our families and children!

Important dates and events for Term 3



- From 30th Jan - Kinder orientation begins
- 13th Feb - Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generation
- 21st Feb - International Mother Language Day
- 1st Mar - Kindergarten applications open for 2024 (Hume City Council)
- 8th Mar - Holi
- 8th Mar - International Women's Day
- 11th-21st Mar - Cultural Diversity Week
- 16th Mar - National Close the Gap Day
- 20th-26th Mar - Harmony Week
- 22nd Mar-20th Apr - Ramadan
- 25th Mar - Earth Hour
- 3rd Apr - Kindergarten applications open for 2024 (Merri-Bek Council)

School term dates for 2023 and 2023

Term 1, 2023	30 January - 6 April
Term 2, 2023	24 April - 23 June
Term 3, 2023	10 July - 15 September
Term 4, 2023	2 October - 20 December



For more information about our services, for help with enrolling, or any other queries please contact us on 9306 1662 or email office@nseyc.org.au and we'll be happy to help!



The first year of the Glenroy Hub Children's Centre

The Glenroy Hub Children's Centre officially opened on 28th February 2022. Our first anniversary presents a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our journey, including our successes and challenges so far.

We asked Centre Manager Brinda to share some of her reflections.

What has been your main focus at the Children's Centre during this year?

During this first year we have focused on developing our learning programs and building the foundations of our service delivery model, including:

- *Providing an inclusive and inspiring learning environment where everyone feels welcome*
- *Building relationships within the community, particularly with families and our partners at the Hub*
- *Providing a safe and healthy environment*
- *Developing a capable and cohesive team.*

What have been the biggest successes and challenges in the first year of the Glenroy Hub Children's Centre?

Our biggest success has been creating a sense of welcome for families and supporting the vulnerable children in our community. We have received so much wonderful feedback from families about their experience at the Centre so far. For example, a mother who has a child with special needs and limited physical capabilities said at the beginning of the year that she never imagined her child would be able to attend a children's centre. Now, 10 months later, the child is walking and moving independently while receiving close support from an educator. That is why we are here doing what we do!

What has been the biggest challenge?

Finding enough staff to meet the demand for places at the Centre has been a challenge. This is largely because there is an overall shortage in qualified early childhood education and care professionals, but also because at the NSEYC we only recruit staff that demonstrate a genuine passion and commitment to children's learning and development, and an alignment with our values of Trust, Respect, Relationships and Curiosity.





The first year of the Glenroy Hub Children's Centre... continued

(Continued from previous page)

The lack of staff has meant we have had to restrict enrolment numbers somewhat during the first year, so that we never compromise the level of care and education that children receive. Thankfully we have been able to recruit some wonderful new staff for 2023!

How has being located within the Glenroy Community Hub benefited the children, families and educators at the Centre so far?

It's great to feel part of a wider community. The integrated spaces within the Hub mean that families have easy access to services and programs such as the library, Maternal and Child Health and community health services, adult education, a community garden and lots more. It really inspires families to get involved. For example:

- *Every month, children at the Centre participate in Rhyme Time at the Library.*
- *Our children also have regular visits to the Community Garden to learn about growing food.*
- *After hearing what children have learnt during the day and any new interests they have developed, families will often go straight to the library to borrow books on the subject so that the learning can continue at home.*
- *One parent often goes to the library to engage in the community puzzle to unwind before picking up their child.*
- *We were recently able to be part of the food bank program hosted at the Hub to support vulnerable families.*

This is just the beginning as we are still becoming established, but there is so much potential! We are excited to continue working with our Hub partners to look for even more opportunities like these.

One of our parents, Lisa, recently shared with us what her experience at the Hub has meant for her family:

For us, around when Julius was one, childcare suddenly became a pipe dream when he was diagnosed with a very rare genetic disorder. Many times, people asked us what



we were going to do about his future, if he could attend a normal childcare or had to go somewhere 'more him'. The answer was we didn't know.

I remember talking to Sigi [CEO of the NSEYC] on the phone after we had been offered a place at Glenroy Hub Children's Centre, reeling from the diagnosis and what Julius could and couldn't do. Expecting the call to end with more of a 'thanks but no thanks' send off, I was surprised at the warm and empathetic person at the other end who soothed my fears and told me that it was going to be alright, that it was going to work, that this is what they do.

We expected to last a month at the Centre – if that. Ten months later, a new year is beginning and our second son is going to join Julius. The educators at the Centre welcomed Julius into the fold, made his goals their goals, captured precious moments, encouraged, pushed, loved, and included. We couldn't be happier with our first year at NSEYC Glenroy Hub Children's Centre.

Thanks to Brinda and Lisa for sharing your reflections!



Cheaper child care for families!



Some great news for families at our Glenroy Hub Children's Centre! The Australian Government has locked in more affordable early education for more than a million families after laws to deliver the reforms passed the Parliament at the end of 2022.

The passing of the legislation means that from July this year around 96 per cent of families with a child in early childhood education and care will benefit.

From July the child care subsidy for families earning \$80,000 or less will increase to 90 percent. A family on a combined income of \$120,000 with one child in care will be \$1780 better off in the first year under the reforms.

The Minister for Early Childhood, Anne Daly said: *"The first five years of a child's life are vital to brain development, that's why we're making early childhood education more affordable and boosting the number of subsidised hours available to First Nations families. "These changes will provide household budget relief for families struggling with the rising cost of living, while also improving the economic security of women. "More affordable early childhood education and care means more children can access the health and education benefits of foundation years learning."*

We couldn't agree more!

Special visitors to Will Will Rook Preschool for the start of kinder!

Children at our Will Will Rook Preschool had an extra special welcome to kindergarten this week! Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews and Ingrid Stitt (Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep) stopped by to give children their Kinder Kits and announce the roll-out plans for Pre-Prep over the next several years.

We are excited to be offering 15 hours per week of FREE kinder for both 3 and 4-year-old children this year across all of our services, with the help of the Victorian Government.

We were also very pleased to be able to show off the recently upgraded kindergarten rooms and outdoor play spaces at Will Will Rook!





Building blocks upgrades

Over the last 3 years, we have worked with the Victorian School Building Authority, our architects and builders, to progressively upgrade and/or expand every single one of our existing kindergarten facilities! We are now (finally!) very close to the end of the works program.

These upgrades have enabled our services to offer high quality learning environments and increase capacity, which has enabled us to deliver 15 hours of funded kindergarten for our 3 year old children this year and increase enrolments for our 4 year old children. At NSEYC we understand that the first 5 years of a child's life set the foundation for lifelong learning, and being able to deliver 15 hours of funded 3 year old kindergarten will be hugely beneficial for the children in our communities.

The latest services to have internal upgrades are Belle Vue Park, Glenroy Central, Lorne Street and Dallas Kindergartens. This is in addition to outdoor play space upgrades at all of these services, as well as an expansion at Glenroy Central with the addition of a new modular kindergarten last year.

Thankfully most of these works were completed over the December/January holidays, with minimal disruption to our teams and programs. Big thanks to our Management Team for working over the holidays to set up the rooms once the works were finished! Thanks also to Jeavons landscape architects, Gardiner building architects, and builders Adma Group and Fleetwood.





School Readiness Plans for 2023

School Readiness Funding (SRF) provides extra support for Victorian government-funded Kindergarten programs to help children gain the most from their learning. The amount of School Readiness Funding each service receives is based on the level of need of the children enrolled at their service. This is informed by parental occupation and education data. Many of our kindergarten services are located in areas with high levels of vulnerability and disadvantage, which means we attract significant funding across our organisation.

The main focus of our School Readiness Plans for 2023 is the development of social and emotional outcomes for children with the expansion of the NSEYC Wellbeing Team to include two family support workers and one trauma-informed practitioner working across all of our Hume services, as well as some of our Merri-bek services. There is also continued focus on communication and language development and emotional regulation, and we have engaged Allied Health Specialist services such as speech therapists, occupational therapists and psychologists to work with our educators to continue building and developing their knowledge and skills in these areas.

The Wellbeing team is already making an impact for our children. Anthony Potesta Principal of Meadows PS recently shared at the Principal Executive forum that "This year has been the smoothest year of transition for our children from kindergarten to foundation. The children were all very settled from the first day of the term. The kinder wellbeing team has been working with the schools wellbeing team and we have supports in place from day one term one for the children".

Welcome to our new Molesworth Street Kindergarten families!

Molesworth Street Kindergarten is a brand-new service located at the new vertical campus of North Melbourne Primary School, under construction (due for completion mid-2023). The teachers were excited to welcome the kindergarten children and their families to our temporary kindergarten site at the existing primary school. They shared the following reflections on the first weeks:

"The children have settled well into their new learning environment, quickly forming connections with their peers and educators, and the kindergarten families and staff have been made to feel they are a very welcome part of the school. There is already a really strong sense of community and inclusion at the kindergarten! Some of our children who have older siblings that attend North Melbourne Primary are thrilled that they get to exchange 'hellos' from the playground during our indoor and outdoor program."



"We envision many opportunities for us to work in close partnership with the school to enhance our kindergarten program and Kindergarten to grade 6 model over time. Joint programs such as buddy programs and library programs will build an even stronger sense of community and belonging, and will support successful a transition to school for our four-year-olds."

The kindergarten runs 2 programs for 3 and 4 year old children from 8.30-4.00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week and we are now accepting enrolments for Term 2 this year. For information and enrolment inquiries contact us via office@nseyc.org.au, or phone: 03 9306 1662



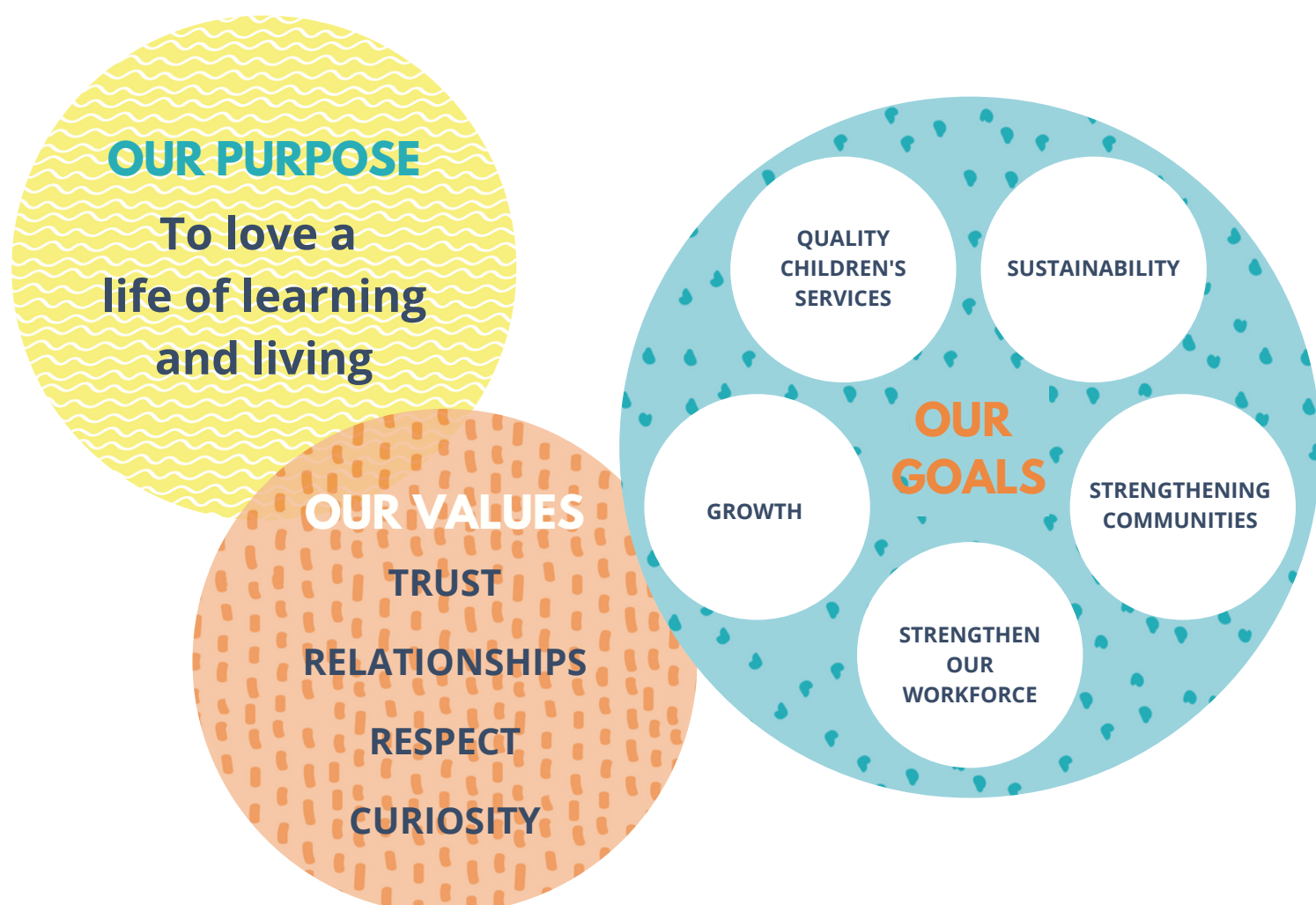
NSEYC Strategic Plan for 2023-25

In late 2022, the NSEYC Board sought input from our children, families, teams, and community to inform the revision of our Strategic Plan for the next 3 years. We also reviewed our objectives and actions from the previous strategic plan. Despite the challenges of 2020 and 2021 and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were pleased that we achieved the vast majority of the objectives and actions from the 2020-22 plan. This included upgrading and expanding our facilities to implement 15 hours of kinder for 3 year old children, continually improving our service quality, growing our organisation with new services and programs, and much more.

Through our consultations we found that our purpose, "to love a life of learning and living", is still very relevant for our children, families and teams.

Based on the feedback received, we have made a small change to our values, changing "Learning" to "Curiosity". This change reflects that being curious about the world is a necessary disposition for learning and being open to new ideas. We want to encourage children's curiosity by inviting them to question, analyse, explore, imagine and wonder... And we want the same for ourselves as adults!

We look forward to working with our families, teams and stakeholders to achieve even more for our children and communities in 2023-25!



Thank you for reading!