Dear Parents,

Welcome back to another exciting year at Yeerongpilly. We are delighted to welcome back families from last year and excited to meet all our new families beginning with us this year.

After much revision, the Yeerongpilly Parent Handbook is back and is available on our website. Click the link below for an electronic version or ask at the office for a hardcopy.


A warm welcome to new staff starting with us in 2015, Elisa (Auslan Language Model), Julie (HICTI Speech Pathologist), Erin (DETE Speech Pathologist) and welcome back to Maree (Teacher of the Deaf)!

Young Australian of the Year
Drisana Levitzke-Gray is a Deaf advocate from WA and was named Young Australian of the Year for 2015. Drisana is the fifth generation in her family to be born deaf. Drisana is dedicated to helping other deaf people and advocating for human rights. She encourages others to accept diversity and promotes a positive image of deafness and the rich language, culture, history and traditions of the Deaf community.

Staff Professional Development
On the Pupil Free days at the start of the year we were very fortunate to have Kym Adamson from the Childhood Hearing Clinic (CHC) and Stephanie Linn and Valerie Green from the Queensland Hearing Loss Family Support Service come to update our staff on their respective services. It was a great opportunity for us to network and discuss ideas for coordinating our services to enhance the support available to parents.

Sheridan and Caroline attended a professional development workshop during the first week of term with Professor Donald Goldberg from the Cleveland Hearing Implant Clinic in the USA. The presentation included therapy ideas, audiology foundations, working with children with additional disabilities and an update on a research study, looking at the listening and spoken language outcomes of children with cochlear implants.

During this term staff will be attending Auslan classes on a Thursday afternoon. The classes are funded by the DETE Auslan project and taught by Deaf tutors from Deaf Services Queensland. Teacher aides and Therapists are attending Auslan Short Course Introduction and our Teachers and Educational Interpreter are completing Auslan Short Course IV.
Communication 'Opportunities'
Yeerongpilly ECDP provides a unique setting that offers communication opportunities for children and families. The term 'opportunities' rather than 'options', better reflects our awareness that children and families may move between communication modes at different times and in different places. At Yeerongpilly all modes of communication (Auditory-Oral, Bilingual-Bicultural, Spoken Language in Combination with Auslan and All-Inclusive Communication System) are available to our families. Families are encouraged to develop a communication approach that best meets their child's needs. If you have any questions about these auditory and visual modes of communication please speak to your child's teacher.

Parent Professional Charter
The Parent Professional Charter was a recent initiative of the Queensland Forum for Young Children. Posters presenting the Charter are displayed in various places around our centre. They list a number of issues highlighted by parents of children with hearing loss as being important in their relationships with professionals. Our staff are committed to working alongside parents to enhance outcomes for their child. This Charter provides us with a wonderful reminder of what we are aiming to achieve and how we can go about this.

Newsletter
Our newsletter is available for families electronically (email & the website), hardcopy (display board in office) and we are now also trialling an Auslan version available on our website.

Auslan Classes for Parents
Tracey and Amanda present weekly Learn-to-Sign classes every Thursday afternoon at 1.30 for half an hour. Auslan is the Australian Sign Language used within the Deaf community and also sometimes used by families for their hearing babies. Signing encourages a child's ability to communicate, understand and use language and supports speech acquisition.

Australian Hearing
Karen from Australian Hearing (Mt Gravatt) visits our centre approximately once per month to make ear moulds, supply batteries and discuss audiological issues with staff and parents. Her first visit for 2015 is Friday morning 13th February from 9am to 11am.

Resilience Focus Groups
Last year some of our families attended Resilience workshops presented by HICTI therapists, based on the Resilience Doughnut program. We were also very fortunate to have a PhD student from Griffith University, Kate Greenhalgh, embark on a project to evaluate our experience with the resilience project and then develop a resilience program for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families that caters for the needs of children in the birth to 5 years age group. In order to develop her program Kate will be conducting focus groups with staff and parents to receive feedback to better tailor the program to meet family's needs.

The parent focus groups will be on Thursday 26 February from 9:15 to 10:15am (for families who did not attend last year’s workshop) and 1 to 2pm (for families who did attend last year’s workshop). All parents will receive a letter from Karen Greenhalgh with further details and a RSVP form. There is a letterbox in the office for your RSVPs. The focus groups are confidential and voluntary.

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E: yeecdpyerongass.eq.edu.au  W: www.yeerongpillyecdp.eq.edu.au
Parent Information Sessions
Our first information session for the year will be HICTI therapy services - an overview. All families are welcome to attend on Friday 20\textsuperscript{th} March from 9:15 to 10:15am in the Playgroup room. Morning tea is provided.

Playgroup
In 2015 we are offering Playgroup on Tuesday and Friday mornings, between 9.30 and 11.30am. One week will be Toddler Playgroup (up to 3 years) on both days, the alternate week is Baby Playgroup. If you are not sure which playgroup to attend please discuss with your child’s teacher. Play Group is coordinated by Natara (Teacher of the Deaf) with the assistance of Marsha (Educational Interpreter) or Lindy (Teacher Aide) and Amanda or Tracey (both Auslan Language Models). Therapists (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech Pathology) also regularly attend.

Playgroups provide parents with an opportunity to get to know each other, share experiences, encourage social skills for the children and also provide specific information about hearing loss, general childhood information and Auslan. Parent mentors and Deaf mentors from Deaf Children Australia will be attending a Playgroup during February.

Playgroup Dates for Term One
Playgroup flyers are available from the office or your child’s teacher. Our playgroup dates are also available online at our website. See link below.

https://yeerongpillyecdp.eq.edu.au/Calendarandnews/News/Pages/Playgroup.aspx

Group News
Once again we have started the school year with 4 groups of energetic children aged over 3\frac{1}{2} years and it is wonderful to hear happy children at play. Their teachers are Maree, Pauline, Angie and Lynda, who are ably assisted by Jannine, Jenni, Bridget, Lindy, Amanda, Elisa and Marsha. All groups are supported by therapists: Sybil (Physiotherapist), Sandy and Fiona (Occupational Therapists) and Diane, Jill, Sally and Julie (Speech Pathologists). Our wonderful therapy staff here at Yeerongpilly are provided by HICTI.

Please remember to send a named hat for your child each day, as well as spare sets of clothing (water, sand and paint can be messy!) While water is available to drink, your child may drink more if they have their own (named) water bottle.

We aim to encourage healthy eating habits at Yeerongpilly, but we are aware that some children may have very specific diets. Please be aware that nuts (including Nutella) are discouraged at school.

Term Dates
The school year is divided into 4 ten week terms. The last day for Term One is Thursday 2\textsuperscript{nd} April. Term 2 commences the week beginning the 20\textsuperscript{th} April.

We look forward to an exciting term ahead.

\textit{All the staff at Yeerongpilly ECDP}
POD is a parent network for parents with children who are deaf or have any degree or type of hearing loss

Join us for a get together in the park

When: Sunday March 1st 2015, 11am – 2pm

Where: Pine Rivers Park on Gympie Road in Strathpine

All that you need to bring is some snacks to share and your drinks. A sausage sizzle will be provided for all.

Playground is fenced. Includes a flying fox, climbing nets, slides, mazes and a bike/walking path. Surrounded by shady trees there are picnic tables, bbqs and toilet facilities.

POD groups are unbiased and supporting of whichever method of communication you choose; signing, speech or Cochlear Implant etc.

RSVP to Phillipa at phillipa.fuamatu@deafchildren.org.au or 0405 119 253

Come along meet other parents and their children in a safe and friendly environment.

Looking forward to seeing you there!