

Apples and Honey AGM Director Report

Annual Directors Report 2020

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 28th March 2020

Director Jo Dworkin

Key Areas	Comments
Financials	
1. Occupancy	<p>Numbers have fluctuated throughout the year. With the group of children leaving in 2019 to go to school and moving on we saw the numbers drop below 45%. We survived through the beginning of COVID with approximately 45% utilisation. Presently the numbers are sitting at 64% and are waiting for some younger children to start and are still waiting on some families to return due to COVID's arrival.</p>
2. Security	<p>We have been very fortunate to have acquired the approval of a security grant which we have put to good use.</p> <p>The presence of George has been a very welcome asset. He has developed a great rapport with families and children. His knowledge of our families is of great assistance to us. He is also appropriate in the way he manages and introduces new families and guests.</p> <p>The quality of security in the building has also increased immensely due to the grant. There has been the installation of additional external cameras quality monitors have been installed assisting external visibility.</p>
Centre Operations	
1. Education program and practice	<p>Exceeding the National Quality Standard</p> <p>With the arrival of Covid it provided many challenges for the staff but this was approached with constant enthusiasm and professionalism. The staff maintained momentum and continued with our quality programme.</p> <p>The staff continue to provide a programme of high standard. This is a long day care centre programme where all the children's needs are focussed upon. Their needs are not only based on cognitive development but in all other areas including social, emotional, physical and language development as well. We prepare the children for school.</p> <p>The staff are constantly reflecting on their teaching and are evaluating and reporting and sharing on the children's learning with the families.</p> <p>We pride ourselves on our school readiness programme as well as the Munch and Move Programme and engagement in science and maths experiments on a regular basis.</p> <p>We continue with our music programme. Due to Covid restrictions Mark Ginsburg being a member of the board and member of the NSTE community and a constant</p>

	<p>presence in the centre for maintenance purposes we therefore agreed that he is able to provide lessons to the children with restrictions. He maintains a three metre distance from the children at all times. We respect his professional musical talents and utilise his knowledge to the benefit of the children.</p> <p>With the increase of numbers we have had to employ extra staff. With the assistance of Li Yan and Serena He we are looking into developing an informal Mandarin program for all the children who are interested. This will potentially take the form of story, song and simple conversation.</p> <p>We are waiting in anticipation for COVID restrictions to be lifted so that we can welcome back Ready Steady Go, Happy Feet and Tamra our music teacher. Due to the fact that they attend other centres the risk to Apples and Honey is too great at this stage.</p>
<p>2. Children's Health and Safety</p>	<p>Meeting the National Quality Standard</p> <p>The implementation of the new airlock system has been very well received. The safety of the children is our highest priority. Not only has it assisted with monitoring arrivals and departures more closely, now with Covid it has allowed for a more safe and healthy approach to Covid prevention by restricting adult entry. In fact the children separate and settle more easily with the quick transition.</p> <p>The airlock system was created to avoid access by families to the main play area and create a buffer between the entrance and play area. The addition of a mirror has also been well received by staff. It has certainly assisted with visibility.</p> <p>Our Covid practises continue at a very high level. Constant two hourly thorough cleaning occurs with disinfectant and or Glen 20. Children arrive and wash their hands immediately. They have been taught to sing happy birthday twice as they soap their hands before rinsing. They have their temperature taken twice a day. We ask families to keep children at home if they are sick and to take them to the doctor if they are sick and return with a clearance or a Covid test result. In the main most families have adhered and supported this.</p> <p>The health of the children, staff and families are a priority to keeping every safe and healthy and also keeping the centre open and COVID free.</p> <p>Our evacuation and lockdown procedures are well in place. Evacuation diagrams are up to date. After much discussion and analysis it was approved to make most of the blinds motorised. This has made the lockdown processes so much quicker and safer for the children. The security company have also installed a far superior lockdown voice over making it far more obvious if the situation should ever arise. The system is guided by a woman's voice in a calm way asking us to please come in and close the doors. The children now know if they hear this they come sit quietly in my office.</p> <p>The evacuation bags are up to date. They are restocked and are compliant with regulation. From an OH&S perspective they have been replaced by lighter bags for easier mobility for the staff.</p>

	<p>Chemical data sheets are up to date and are available in event of an emergency in my office. All chemicals are on high shelves or are in locked cupboards making them inaccessible to children again fulfilling compliance requirements.</p> <p>All children's allergy, anaphylaxis and health needs have been made aware of as required by the department. The families are to supply the required medications as directed by their ASCIA Plan with a doctor's prescription.</p> <p>Allergies are communicated to families, emergency plans are put up , individual child emergency bags have been prepared and all required staff are trained according to the requirements of the department</p>
<p>3. Physical Environment</p>	<p>Meeting the National Quality Standard</p> <p>With the renovation and upkeep of the centre we have seen constant improvement. As we see a need the Board continues to be very helpful in addressing our needs as they arise. Often approving our requests to benefit the children.</p> <p>Recently the taps in the children's bathroom were replaced for quick and easier use due to the high traffic flow demands of Covid.</p> <p>The bathroom has been slightly adjusted to accommodate the needs of specific needs of particular children.</p> <p>The lockers have been repainted and refreshed and look brand new.</p> <p>Particularly my office has been through a major improvement with the installation cupboards and shelves.</p> <p>We are presently discussing the possibility of erecting a cover to increase the use of small group work both indoors and outdoors without concern for weather conditions. It certainly would assist to create a more intimate learning environment for small groups of children. These sessions would be both formal mat sessions and informal teaching opportunities as they arise.</p>
<p>4. Restructure, Rosters and Staffing Arrangements</p>	<p>Meeting the National Quality Standard</p> <p>With the changes to the children's numbers staffing adjustments have constantly required updating to encompass ratio requirements.</p> <p>Regulations require one ECT, one diploma trained educator and a certificate three.. Presently in attendance we have two full time ECT, one full time diploma, one full certificate three trainee and two part time certificate three trained educators. We also have our office administrator as a backup on a Friday should the need arise as she is an ECT. This has enabled the centre to survive financially through COVID but also cover all required compliance requirements.</p> <p>The staff are now rostered on a 12 week cycle with an RDO day embedded in the cycle every 20 days. This roster is up on the wall for all to view. If a staff member is</p>

	<p>absent this is also up on the wall. Obviously changes occur as staff may be absent, sick or on annual leave.</p>
<p>5. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities</p>	<p>Meeting the National Quality Standard</p> <p>Covid has presented an interesting time for communication with families. The introduction of a weekly zoom meetings were a great success. The children enjoyed seeing their friends and the staff were keen to see how all the children were keeping. The implementation of online activities for those families who were interested were also made available and were embraced by families.</p> <p>As mentioned we have embraced the presence of Mark Ginsburg to share his musical knowledge with the children.</p> <p>Unfortunately the Rabbis have also had to maintain their distance. With their own increased work loads and the effect of COVID restrictions we are hoping in the near future to have them return to share stories and sing songs with the children. It may become an option to do online zooms sessions with them when the time is appropriate to their schedules.</p> <p>Inclusion Support have been very helpful in supporting specific needs of our children. Emma-lee and I have maintained constant and open communication with them with the help of our Inclusion Support Worker. Deepti has helped us to receive funding within three weeks to support the needs of our students and provide strategies as necessary.</p> <p>Having both Li and Serena it has been of great benefit to our Mandarin speaking families who have required assistance in translating important information between us and assisting to complete enrolment forms where necessary.</p>
<p>6. Leadership and service management</p>	<p>Meeting the National Quality Standard</p> <p>With membership to CCSA - an industrial relations and HR company for community based centres it has certainly become easier to manage legal and accurate contracts for staff providing accurate and informative information.</p> <p>We have made great strides to manage compliance requirements in relation to policies. All the regulated and required policies are now in place. We are now updating any additional policies as we see necessary and are due for updating.</p> <p>In relation to policies we have now joined Centre Support. They not only provide policy updates but also are a phone call away to assist with questions in relation to regulatory requirements, compliance or operational issues.</p> <p>Initial archiving requirements have been carried out. We are now in the process of beginning to archive files pertaining to documents that were present previous to my employment at the centre. With the help of Kim and Marcelle we managed to sort and archive documents from 2019. I envisage the process for 2020 will be far more organised and succinct.</p>

	<p>All Board Members have now been lodged with the department. Any new Board Members will now require an onboarding process and be lodged with the regulatory authority immediately..</p> <p>With the assistance of Emma-Lee we continue to update the QIP as well as demonstrate our strengths. Our next goal is to update our self assessment tool once our strengths are complete.</p>
Leadership and Educational Leader	
1. Management of staff team	<p>Educator morale had been my main focus essentially due to Covid and also due to changes with numbers of children and the viability of the centre. Together the staff have pulled together and have worked cohesively.</p> <p>At all times the staff have maintained a professional manner. They have worked as a team as well as having the confidence to verbalise needs and address any pressing issues.</p> <p>They have been willing to welcome all the requirements and needs that have been put on them due to COVID. Emma-Lee and Kim were more than flexible in accepting extra workloads during the stressful Covid period. Now with the increase in numbers we are reverting back to normal rosters.</p> <p>Thanks to Emma-Lee, Kim, Angela, Neela, Li and Serena for continually supporting the programme.</p>
2. Educational Leader	<p>Emma-lee has maintained a very high standard of leadership. She supervises and provides support to our trainee giving her assistance and supporting her requirements ably assisted by Kim. Emma-Lee keeps abreast of her leadership requirements. As mentioned we have now joined Centre Support which provides great webinars as well as documentation activities to support Emma-Lee to support the staff.</p>
Strategic Direction	
1. Policies and Procedures	<p>As mentioned before policies are a consistent evolving process. With Covid many new procedures were put in place and have become part of our daily lives. These policies are continually updated.</p>
2. Marketing	<p>With the departure of Neva we have continued with Marketing. Marcelle continues to send out monthly centre newsletter through mailchimp with information from the staff. Emma-Lee posts facebook updates on our page regularly. Mark has been working on our website while Lousie has done some research into SEO. Grace has offered to support our advertising to local schools and Willoughby living.</p> <p>Marcelle is researching the possibility of creating an Apples and Honey graphics page to be used informally when the time suits.</p> <p>The next step is to look at Marketing for next year in order to promote Apples and Honey to prospective new families for 2021 The usual Open Day was altered to suit COVID. We wait in anticipation in order to host another Open Day.</p>

Professional Development and Centre Events

Implementation of Jewish Culture and other Cultures	We continue to promote a very multicultural centre. We welcome children from all cultures. Very recently I attended a Shavuot zoom session with NSTE. I was able to introduce myself to the playgroup. Very recently we celebrated Pyjama Day to support children in foster care.
External training	<p>All required staff are up to date with their training. We have enrolled all our current full time and casual staff in child protection and food handling.</p> <p>We are also so in the process of enrolling all our staff in AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER training. This training not only supports children with ASD but also supports all children with specific behaviour and learning strategies.</p> <p>The staff have been currently enrolled in the BeYou Programme. This supports the emotional needs of staff and children. There are 13 modules to work through.</p>
Centre events	While we are not having external events we continue to celebrate internally with for example Pyjama Day. Annual photos all going well will occur in August. We have asked that photos occur outside weather permitting and the photographer keeps distance from the staff and children.
Funding grants	<p>We have had a successful security grant approved which has seen marked improvement of the centre's security. We have recently had our SSLD grant paid to us to fund improvements to the learning programme of \$8000. This is to be used to enhance the learning of the programme.</p> <p>Recently I have been investigating a grant to help improve the external area of the building in order that the children can engage in work in an unrecoverable area.</p>