

# COASTWIDE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023





COASTWIDE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES IS PROUD TO RESIDE ON DARKINJUNG COUNTRY AND TO PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE ALL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES

STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA AS

TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF COUNTRY AND

RECOGNISE THEIR CONTINUED CONNECTION TO LAND,

WATERS, CULTURE AND LEARNING.





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### **Chairperson's Report**

As my first year as the Chairperson of Coastwide Child and Family Services Inc (CCFS) comes to an end I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Board, senior Management and all of our wonderful staff members for their terrific contribution to what has been a challenging year as we leave the pandemic behind but face the ever present challenges of inflation, changing work environment and increasing interest rates.

These challenges have placed a great deal of stress on our organisation with the number of our registered educators continuing to fall while the demand for childcare is still on the increase. How we attract new educators and keep our present numbers will be a challenge and the Board of Management are continually looking at ways that we can ensure that the services continue to be maintained well into the future.

During the year our CEO, Kellie McNamara decided to take extended leave after many years of outstanding service and the Board engaged Michelle Bradbury to fill the position of CEO for a twelve-month period. Due to a change in circumstances Michelle's time with us ceased in August 2023 and we wish Michelle well in the future.

We were fortunate that Kellie agreed to cut short her extended leave and to come back to assist the Board in managing the organisation while looking at ways to move the organisation forward.

The experiences learned during COVID have certainly led to greater innovation with the use of virtual meetings and play sessions online that have proven to be a great way to keep our families involved and connected.

We welcomed Wil MacDougall to our Board at the last Annual General Meeting and with the rest of the Board we have met every six weeks during the year with the majority of our meetings converting back to face-to-face meetings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our 2022-2023 Board of Management members, Rob Shone, Karen Schofield Kerry Harper, Geoff Brazel, Lisa Heward and Wil MacDougall. Their contribution is greatly appreciated.

A special acknowledgement of the amazing families in our Supported Playgroups, MyTime and PlayConnect Playgroups programs is certainly warranted and the reports that we as a Board receive on these programs are always so positive.

They continue to demonstrate resilience and the ability to adapt to the many challenges thrown in front of the parents with children in these groups, and we are proud to be part of their parenting journey.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our amazing team of Family Day Care Educators and CCFS staff, without whom none of our successes would be possible. Your dedication and shared vision to provide inspiring, thoughtful and meaningful family support programs and early childhood education and care services is the backbone of our organisation.

Your Board is working hard at looking at future options for the organisation as we try to meet the changing face of early education and the needs of the parents of the Central Coast and beyond.

While this year has had many challenges and has placed pressure on our profitability the organisation remains in a very sound financial position.

The Board of Management vision is still focused on providing a strong foundation for children in their schooling and in their personal lives, preparing them to meet the many challenges that lay ahead in life. We are proud to play some part in supporting children to become compassionate, curious and confident young people.

Wishing you all the very best for the rest of 2023 and a great 2024 ahead.

Tim Davidson

Chairperson

### **Chief Executive Officer Report**

Coastwide Child and Family Services mission is to enhance the local community's access to quality community-based child and family support services through, effective management, community involvement and a commitment to community services.

Coastwide, though smaller in size compared to many organisations, is fueled by the above strong mission that serves as our guiding force in everything we do. Our team's shared philosophies not only align but also define the essence of CCFS.

Our entire team, comprising educators, children, families, and board members, shows incredible positivity and possesses the resilience to persist despite any challenges we encounter. Leading and collaborating with these remarkable individuals fills me with immense pride.

Our sector continues to reshape as required by best practice and new research. Our team continue to navigate these changes so we can provide a positive, consistent and trusted approach with all families, educators and children.

Our CCFS community is extremely important to us, and at times we make decisions that affect our community in different ways, sometimes don't get it right, but we do our best to again navigate another pathway to achieve the required success and desired outcome.

Family Day Care stands out as a distinctive service type, offering numerous opportunities that set it apart from other services. Our competitors are taking note of our accomplishments and outcomes, seeking to adopt and implement similar strategies themselves.

Within our Family Support Programs, our aim is to create an inclusive environment that embraces families with warmth, support, and nurturing. This setting is designed to empower families, granting them the agency to make decisions that enhance their overall well-being. Furthermore, it serves as a platform for individuals to connect with one another, encouraging the exchange of information and the sharing of experiences.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Board of Management throughout 2022-2023 Tim Davidson, Geoff Brazel Kerry Harper, Karen Schofield, Lisa Philipsen, Rob Shone and Will MacDougall. We deeply value and appreciate the ongoing and unwavering support, guidance, and governance, which consistently enhances our operations.

The success of CCFS as an organization is inseparable from the dedicated team that constitutes it. The enduring commitment and passion demonstrated by many team members underscore their profound dedication to the sector we operate in. Being a part of this team fills me with immense pride.

### Kellie McNamara

### **Chief Executive Officer**





### OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION IS AN AUSTRALIA THAT EMBRACES UNITY BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES AND OTHER AUSTRALIANS. AN AUSTRALIA WHICH CELEBRATES A NATIONAL CULTURE OF EQUITY AND EQUALITY, AN UNDERSTANDING OF SHARED HISTORY AND PURPOSE, AND A SENSE OF BELONGING FOR ALL.

FOR OUR ORGANISATION, THIS REPRESENTS EQUITABLE ACCESS TO VIBRANT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, EQUALITY IN OUTCOMES FOR ALL OUR CHILDREN AND AN INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY THAT IS NOT JUST CULTURALLY SAFE, BUT CULTURALLY RICH AND PROUD.



### **Family Day Care Team Leader Report**

The Education and Care team at Coastwide FDC has had a effective year of welcoming new team members and reviewing our practices to ensure our ongoing improvement.

We have had new legislation introduced which we have worked very hard at embedding within our service. There have been legislative changes around the qualifications of educators, outings and transportation, emergency management, and our practices in relation to safe sleep and rest for all children.

We saw the introduction of the Child Safe Standards, which we unpacked, first as a management group to ensure we were well-versed in the new legislation introduced in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, then dispersed the knowledge amongst our educators and families. Our goal is to ensure that all home-based education and care services are safe havens for all children, where they are seen, heard, believed, and supported to have a voice. All our services now display a Commitment to Child Safety Statement, and our policies include additional references to child safety to support our educators in implementing the new and very important legislation.



Recruitment has been an important focus as the shortage of childcare vacancies has been national news. The team has attended job expos, community days, conferences, and utilised social media to boost educator numbers and provide more home-based education and care options for families.



Our Newsletters and Monthly Focusses continued to ensure clear communication channels remained open between the office and our educators and families.

Coastwide FDC has provided in-house monthly Professional Development opportunities for our educators, basing our topics on feedback from our educators, or important sector information. We have also engaged in; New Educator Training, Child Safe Standards Training, Safe Sleep Training, FDC Team Planning Days and ongoing promotion of sector professional development opportunities.

We are proud to have supported our educators in providing 494,926 hours of quality home-based education and care and currently provide care to over 700 families. We are hopeful of increasing these numbers by continuing to support our educators in providing quality home-based education and care.

Sam Daniels

**Team Leader / Nominated Supervisor** 

### **Family Day Care Testimonials**

I also thoroughly enjoyed working with the Coastwide team and find it a really refreshing team to work with. I always feel like any matters are always addressed both appropriately and in a timely manner. There is a great workplace culture of support and understanding and we can all have a good laugh at times which is important to me in a workplace. You are wonderful to work with and I feel I can come to you with anything, and I won't be judged or looked down upon for not knowing – I am always met with your wealth of knowledge and unwavering support. Good leadership is so important and at times hard to come by, and I feel you are such a supportive leadership team that work hard to provide such an important high-quality service – **Mary Ann** 

I would like to start by thanking each and every one of you at Coastwide. You guys have made such a warm and welcoming environment for not only me, my family but my families in my service. Everyone has been so supportive of me and helping me to grow as an educator. I know it has been only a short time, but circumstances have changed. My family and I have sold our house and will be moving. If I will continue to do family daycare. I'd hope that Coastwide would like to take me back should I wish to open back up. Again, thank you all so very much, take care and hope to be in touch again – **Danielle** 

Thank you for all the help and getting me set back up! I really appreciate it! Amazing team! It's going to be a fantastic year! – **Elle** 

Hello, I just want to thank you for being so lovely and guiding me as I start my new adventure. Your support has been amazing and I'm so very thankful. thank you again! - **Hayley** 



### **Educational Leaders Report**

It was another busy and productive year for Coastwide Family Day Care Educational Leaders.

Many new practices and procedures were established in the previous year which enabled us to focus on further developing our educators' skills and knowledge in relation to the National Quality Framework and the National Quality Standards.

This year we continued our focus on The Child Safe Standards. These standards were developed by the NSW Government after the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the thousands of cases where organisations in Australia failed to protect children in their care from abuse. They provide a framework for making organisations safer for children and provide guidance to create cultures, adopt strategies, and act to put the interest of children first and keep them safe from harm.



Educators were to be aware of, understand, and implement the Standards by February 2023. To facilitate this, we as a team provided the educators with a Guide to the Child Safe Standards and we discussed two Standards during monthly focusses between August and December 2022. This will be an ongoing focus for educators, and we have amended our Child Protection Policy to ensure Child Protection Refreshers are completed annually, as this is best practice.



Along with the continued promotion of the Safe Series – Protective Behaviours Professional Development provided by the Office of the Children's Guardian we also continued to provide monthly professional development webinars. These are held the first Tuesday evening of every month. These were very well attended by the educator cohort and included the following topics:

- Culturally responsive practice: supporting Aboriginal children and families.

  Pre-recorded by the Department of Education and presented by Sharon Buck –

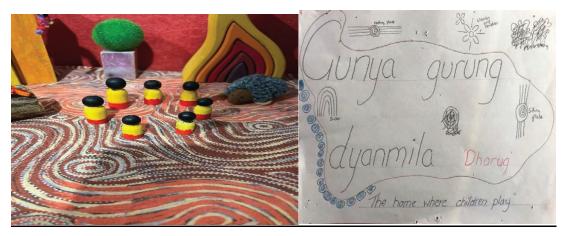
  Assistant Principal, Kooloora Preschool, Toukley Primary School.
- Programming and Documentation using Harmony Web
- Principles and Practices of the EYLF
- Completing the Observation Cycle
- Policy Refresher
- Procedures and Forms 2023 Refresher
- Inclusion and the Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 presented by KU Services
- Revision of the Risk Benefit Analysis / Risk Management Plan Process
- Before and After School Care / Vacation Care Forms and Procedures

During monthly visits, Coordinators continued to ask educators to share their practices in relation to the National Quality Standards and our Key Improvement Areas which are:

- Element 1.3.2 Critical Reflection Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
- Exploring the Principles and Practices of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to enhance outcomes for children.
- Element 2.2.3 Promoting Child Protective Practices Including children and families. Incorporating the applicable Articles from the United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Element 3.2.3 Environmentally Responsible The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

  Embedding sustainable practices driven by the children.
- Element 4.2.2 Professional standards professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
- Our KIA Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives authentically and deliberately.





It is evident that more and more educators are embracing the Standards and their obligation to work towards meeting our Key Improvement areas is obvious with many examples of these areas being observed in their services. A highlighted area is embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island perspectives.



During a compliance check From the Department of Education in March, whilst it was a successful check, feedback to our service, recommended ongoing support for educators regarding the implementation and documentation of thoughtful, deliberate, and meaningful programs. We have acted on this feedback and each month we ensure we discuss their programming with them which is documented on their visit report.

We wish to thank the management and the board for their ongoing support and look forward to another year successful year of implementing best practice and outcomes for children across the services at Coastwide Family Day Care.

Lisa Toole and Sam Malone

### **Educational Leaders**



### Supported Playgroup Program

Our mission, vision and values continue to guide our practice as we strive to support, empower and inspire families.

### Mission Statement

We are dedicated to the highest quality of support to families, delivered with warmth, respect and care. We strive to inspire families, to empower them to make decisions that will enrich their well-being. We strive to provide an environment where families can feel safe and connected. A place where they can be heard, share ideas and belong.

### Our Vision

- To support families to enrich and enhance their well-being
- To empower families to feel connected to their community
- To inspire families to be the best version of themselves.

### Our Values

- Non-judgmental and respectful connections
- Safety and support
- Positive relationships
- Education and inspiration to empower
- Community and family well being

We are proud to be funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and the NSW Department of Education with our primary focus to support families. Our families all come from a variety of situations, some fall under the vulnerable umbrella, some fall under the disadvantaged and/or in need of additional support. However, regardless of which umbrella, they have the goal to build confidence and capacity in being the best parent they can be for their family and children.

All our families join the CCFS family as soon as they connect. Our families all come with a different story and life experience. Some raise their family alone, some in multigenerational families, some families have had their first child, and some have had their fourth! Some have had a life full of culture and others not, however, in saying that, it showcases that we are different but together we create a stronger, resilient and confident community.

Our Supported Playgroups are facilitated by a team of Early Childhood professionals and are delivered with a sense of warmth in a respectful, caring and nurturing way that leaves

families feeling empowered to make decisions that enhance their wellbeing. Staff provide an environment where families feel safe, connected, share ideas, and be heard.

Our program includes age-appropriate developmental activities and takes into consideration children's interests and strengthens, as well as working on developing skills. Each group is planned and programmed as an individual. We encourage further skill development, with a focus on creative & sensory play, fine motor & manipulation, early literacy & numeracy, activities to extend social and emotional skills, school readiness and active participation in music & movement.



### **Guest Speakers and Excursions**

As an extension to learning for both parents and children we have had several guest speakers attend our groups and facilitate training. These have included:

- Transition to School Talks with The Education Department
- Erina Library, for storytime and singing with Leanne
- The Benevolent Society Young Parents program with Amanda Carle
- Triple P Positive Parenting Program facilitated by our Facilitator Sharon
- Central Coast Health Nutritionist to discuss healthy eating with a focus on fussy eaters

- Cleanaway where Michelle talked about recycling in the home
- Local Librarians for more storytimes, singing and craft
- Agricultural farm visits at our local Schhols Kincumber, Umina, Narara Valley and Henry Kendal High school
- Experience of our local parks Terrigal Rotary, Ettalong Waterfront Reserve,
   Bulgandry Art site Kariong, Eco Gardens Kariong, Japanese Gardens and Elizabeth
   Ross Park, Mt Penang Gardens
- Henny Penny Chick Hatching program, where we witnessed the chicks hatch and grow over 2 weeks.



### **School Holiday Activities**

During each school holidays we have held several activities and experience for all families and their school age children, to come together. These have been extremely popular with great attendance.

- Local Fire Station visit
- Sensory Playgroup
- Cooking / Healthy eating Playgroup

- Bushwalk to Little Beach
- Waterplay Playgroup
- Outdoor / Nature play in partnership with The Benevolent Society
- Woolworths Discovery Playgroup
- Train trips
- Science Playgroup
- Bike ride and bush walks



### **Professional Development, Networking and Community Connections**

With a commitment to professional development and continuous improvement over the last twelve months the team have participated in diverse training opportunities to invest in their knowledge and strengths, including:

- Connect and Learn workshops (Children and Families)
- DEX training
- Families and Children experiencing poverty and disadvantage
- PICNIC Project with Central Coast Health
- Finding support for children with developmental concerns
- Change Together Talking with Families
- Beyond the Manual conference with Professor Mark Dadds
- Child Safe Standards Training
- First Aid Certificate
- CPR Training
- Money Minded Training
- Bright Beginnings and First 2000 Days Summit
- Early Childhood Strategy round table meeting
  - Supporting families with disabilities



We continue to build on our connections within our community, taking opportunities to meet and collaborate with colleagues and our peers within our sector, with Government agencies and peak bodies, including:

- Central Coast Early Years Interagency
- Central Coast Aboriginal Early Years Interagency
- Peninsula Interagency
- ParentsNext Interagency
- Central Coast Early Childhood Educators Meeting
- Young Parent Program at Narara Valley High School
- Lifestart
- The Benevolent Society
- NAIDOC Day @ Mingaletta
- KDO



### Celebrations

Coastwide Child and Family Services Christmas Party held at Erina Community Trust Hall with over 200 families. Families had a great time with a Reptile Show, arts and craft, face painting and outdoor activities.



### **Supported Playgroup Testimonials**

"It was a great pleasure to meet you all at the playgroup and Kiyon and I really enjoyed your company. Your playgroup and holiday activities helped him develop his social and intellectual skills, and he was able to experience a lot of new things and make many new friends" **Nura** 

"You all do a brilliant job and we are endlessly greatful for this service.. its the best playgroup I have every encountered.. not comparable to anything on offer in Sydney. Thank you all so much!" **Simonar** 

"Your team are fantastic. I started with your group in a supported playgroup in Cresthaven with my older son who has as ASD and ADHD. I am now attending each week with my younger son. It is part of our weekly activities and extremely enjoyed by Oliver. I too feel that Tiffany and Jade go above and beyond with delivering great activities for the children. If there was any improvements that could be made it would be to offer the playgroup closer to home (Mardi) however we really enjoy the service and team and are happy to travel." Chris



### **MyTime Playgroup**

Located at two accessible venues at Erina and The Entrance, MyTime is a support group for parents or carers with a child with a disability or chronic medical condition, where parents, guardians and carers are welcome to attend with or without their children.

MyTime facilitators strive to create an environment where group members always feel safe and supported. As an established provider of MyTime, we have a long-term commitment to providing a support group where parents can meet, socialise, and share experiences and ideas with others who understand the rewards and intensity of the caring role.

MyTime is funded by the Federal Government, with the national program coordinated at a state level by Playgroups NSW. Groups are held during school terms only and families are encouraged to continue networking throughout the year.



### **MyTime Facilitators Report**

We have observed positive interactions and engagement amongst our parents sharing ideas together about local therapy services available for example Carers Gateway a respite and support service for parents caring for a child with additional needs. Parents have supported each other through some difficult times recently, and it shows how their connection has grown over the past 12 months where parents feel comfortable to reach out to others. The sharing of a morning tea, coffee and parent craft at MyTime has enabled parents time to relax, talk about what's happening in their lives with people they trust.

MyTime attended a celebration playgroup for Harmony Day from (Northern Settlement Services) and The Benevolent Society earlier this year. The SES was present with their

service truck for children to explore with staff. It was so exciting for the children to participate in different community activities and all families were provided with a free lunch cooked on the BBQ by The Aboriginal community volunteers, who opened the day with a smoking ceremony. The event provided an opportunity for staff to promote MyTime and receive information on other services for parents to access.

The Entrance Community Centre has provided a safe community venue for MyTime and the connection we have built with The Benevolent Society has been fantastic. The Benevolent Society promote MyTime through their Facebook page, newsletter and provide flyers to community members at the community centre. The benevolent Society invited MyTime families and staff to participate in their annual Christmas party at The Entrance Community Centre.



Cerebral Palsy Alliance continue to be a strong referral source for MyTime and consistently attend Erina MyTime to provide therapy for individual children during playgroup. We have also had Kelly from Play, Learn, Grow OT attend Erina MyTime to provide information to families on Occupational Therapy with their children.

Central Coast Family Support and Lifestart regularly attend MyTime aiding families regarding NDIS and associated questions.

Coastwide provided a wonderful end of year Christmas party for all families. It was a successful turnout with many MyTime families attending.



### **My Time Testimonials**

"Yesterday I took Jye to the shops after playgroup and it's amazing the difference you can tell with the kids who go to childcare, and Jye who attends your playgroups. He has a beautiful nature, enjoys playgroups in small group settings and the educators show one on one care for each child at different times. It's an experience that I feel is far superior to having him at childcare at the moment. These kids yesterday were possessive and spoke nasty to Jye when he was even saying goodbye. It's like they have to fend for themselves and Jye is not used to that. I want to continue taking him to these Coastwide playgroups and slowly introduce childcare/pre K as his speech starts to improve even more. He is given so much attention with the Coastwide girls and he comes home so happy. I also come home as a happy mummy. The assistance, recommendations and new friends I have made just from your playgroups has made me feel completely supported. I

honestly cant thank the Coastwide team enough for everything the ladies have done for Jye and myself - Thank you."

"I feel supported even though I am not able to come to MyTime all the time because of my health. I know I always have Tiff and Mandy to talk to and I feel welcomed and not judged by others at the group. I have made some lovely friends at MyTime and we stay in touch on Facebook."

Tiffany and Mandy were invited to participate in a consultation with Parent Research Centre regarding MyTime. The online consultation was an opportunity for staff to reflect on the facilitator's role, what works for our MyTime groups and suggestions for improvements.

A positive year that we have experience as a team and outcomes for families have positive.

Tiffany Frost and Mandy Gowans

### **MyTime Facilitators**



### **PlayConnect Playgroup**

PlayConnect provides a safe and supportive environment for families with young children who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) like characteristics, development delays in communication and social skills and/or behavioural and sensory issues.

Facilitated by a development worker, PlayConnect is structured to encourage social play and early childhood development experiences, whilst offering families the opportunity to connect with others, share information and experiences.

PlayConnect is funded by the Federal Government, with the national program coordinated at a state level by Playgroups NSW. Groups are held during school terms only and families are encouraged to continue networking throughout the year.



### **PlayConnect Facilitator**

We are so very fortunate to continue to have the wonderful Alison Downey support the group as a volunteer. Having Alison is a major asset to our group as she comes with extensive knowledge and experience not only as a speech therapist but working with children with disabilities. We were able to recognise Alisons contribution through a small gift during national volunteers' week in April.

This year through the family support programs we offered the Triple P program (Positive Parenting) which saw a couple of our parents from PlayConnect participate. Which after the first session they said they were inspired to go home and "play" with their children.

We were able to celebrate the wonderful role our parents play as carers not only parents with a face-to-face celebration for Carers week. We provided a wonderful catered morning tea with coffee being supplied by Heart and Souls barista coffee van disability services. The celebration was funded by a carers week grants.



Visitors to playgroup this year have included;

- Climb learning
- Play, Learn and Grow OT- Kelly de Bock
- Lifestart
- Department of Education transition to school / Early intervention
- Yarran ECEI workers

We have been able to provide referral to families to support services such as;

- Central Coast Family Support
- Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)
- Area Health

- Department of Education
- Carers Gateway
- Nyiang aboriginal health services

With the collaboration between all family support programs PlayConnect families have been invited to and attended many holiday activities and other excursions, including Henny Penny chickens, train ride excursion, park visits, Razzamatazz magic show and farm visits.

### Jade Winser

### **PlayConnect Facilitator**





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