

# STaR Christmas Newsletter 2010



## WELCOME TO STaR'S CHRISTMAS 2010 NEWSLETTER

### STaR Association

For children with disabilities and special learning needs.

A research based service offering inclusive child care placement to children with disabilities and additional needs.

Our mission is:

**“To empower children with disabilities and/or special learning needs, and those who support them, through research based information.”**

Our vision is:

**“To be a highly professional organisation providing research-based education and support to children with disabilities and/or special needs, and those who support them.”**

Despite the pressure and exhaustion, Christmas really is such a wonderful time of year. I am always grateful to my children whose excitement and belief in the magic of Santa keeps me going till we reach the holidays. It seems to come round so fast, yet, if we reflect on what we have done over the year it is always so much and we have good reason to feel exhausted!

I am following with interest the focus on Disability funding at both State and Federal government levels. I wear both my parent and STaR hats to these events and seminars. In particular The Supported Living Fund for NSW is a Family Advocacy campaign to secure funding from the NSW Government to enable men and women with disability to have a home of their own while families still have capacity to support the transition and be part of the solution.

Also The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a no-fault insurance scheme for everyone who has, or acquires a significant disability. The introduction of a NDIS would be a landmark social and economic reform, transforming the lives of Australians with disabilities and their families.

With a client centred approach as opposed to Service Provider approach I am hopeful that over the next 3-5 years significant changes will be made to the funding structures for services and support, allowing people with disabilities and their carers to make choices about how they want to live and what services they want to use. I encourage you to join Family Advocacy NSW or at least look at their website. They are a very proactive organisation representing the needs, rights and desires of people with disabilities and their families at a government level. They regularly send out updates and information on progress. It would seem we are finally becoming a strong voice that government can no longer ignore and I am quietly optimistic.

Its been another productive and positive year for STaR. The team of staff are exceptional and they work hard to ensure our STaR families get the best support possible. We are continually inspired by the amazing children we work with, who teach us more than we could ever teach them.

I wish you all a restful and happy festive season and look forward to starting another year with you all very soon.

Warm regards  
*Margaret*  
Margaret Meaker  
STaR General Manager



## STaR Association

### Supporters:

The Australian  
Stockbrokers  
Foundation

Gilbert + Tobin  
Lawyers

Robert Bates & Co  
Chartered  
Accountants

WebAngel P/L

MonSTaR Cup

Daniels Automotive

### Partners:

Macquarie  
University Special  
Education Centre

Access Macquarie  
Ltd

### Funding:

Dept. of Families,  
Community Services  
& Indigenous Affairs

## STaR FAMILY SUPPORT (*from Elise*)

I would like to wish all our STaR families a happy festive season and 2011.

To all the STaR graduating children and families **congratulations**. We are of course sad to see you go but hope that you settle into your new schools quickly and without too much drama!!!

Remember that STaR is only a phone call away.

### You may be interested in...

#### My Time

**My Time** is a playgroup for parents, grandparents and carers of young children 5 years of age and under with a disability, chronic medical condition, language or behaviour difficulties.

Holroyd City Council with Playgroup NSW runs a local My Time at Merrylands. This group brings together people who can understand the achievements and help with the challenges of this caring role. Through talking and sharing experiences, people can build relationships with others in similar situations.

During this time, the children get to play, supported by our play helper, with a number of age appropriate activities that are set up each week.

This My Time group meets weekly on Fridays from 9.30am to 11.30am (during school terms).

Family Day Care building  
74 Military Road

Merrylands

To register or for further information contact Jane Hayden on 9840 9996 or [jane.hayden@holroyd.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jane.hayden@holroyd.nsw.gov.au)

#### Fun Date for Siblings of Children with Disabilities

**What?** Siblings can see a movie, connect with other siblings, better understand their siblings' special needs, share their feelings with others who understand, develop coping skills to face challenging situations, explore and enhance siblings' communication / relationships / support networks. Bring morning tea and lunch, drink bottle.

**When?** Wednesday 19 January, 9am to 3pm. 9am arrive at Chatswood foyer Level 6, 9.15am-10.45am session 1, morning tea, 11am-12.30pm session 2, lunch, 1pm-3pm activity.

**RSVP?** Phone Joy Thompson on 9468 7000 or email

[Joy.Thompson@dadhc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Joy.Thompson@dadhc.nsw.gov.au) if you have any questions or concerns.

Source: "Warringah Disability Newsletter" 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010

#### Basic Makaton: Key Signing

**What?** Lisa Dodd of Makaton Australia (NSW) will conduct an accreditation course of key concepts and practice producing 80 signs. The course includes the use of interactive games that test skill and encourage future practice. Certificates from Makaton Australia are provided on completion of this training course. Anyone who supports people who have difficulties with receptive and/or expressive communication is welcome.

**When?** 9.30am-2.30pm on Tuesday 18 January 2011.

**Where?** B2, 11 Hudson Avenue, Castle Hill NSW 2154.

**Cost?** Free for parents/unpaid carers of someone with intellectual disability from the Cumberland Prospect area, \$40 pp for paid industry staff and parents/family outside the Cumberland Prospect area. The fee covers the cost of catering provided on the day.

**RSVP?** Limited spaces so phone Benjamin Fulham or Bianca Burton on 1300 668 123 or email [tabiss@interactiondisability.com](mailto:tabiss@interactiondisability.com) of Interaction Disability Services or mail to

PO Box 7020, Baulkham Hills BC, NSW 2153. Training and Behaviour Intervention Support Service (TABISS).

Source: "Warringah Disability Newsletter" 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010

### **Respite Intake and Allocation Process (RIAP) – call 9841 9354**

RIAP is a centralised intake and allocation point for carers/parents (and referrers) wishing to access ADHC funded flexible respite services.

The annual RIAP is open from **Monday 17 January 2011 to Friday 4 March 2011** for all referrals for flexible respite services from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012. Referrals can be made by calling the RIAP phone line on 9841 9354, 9am-4pm. You may need to leave a message (your name, the name of the person you are referring, your phone number and the best time for your call to be returned). A RIAP representative will then contact you to complete the application.

Every message left and email sent **before** 4 March will be included in this year's allocation process; if you call after 4 March, you may not be included in the next allocation.

Applications will be prioritised during March and April 2011 and allocation meetings will take place from the end of March onwards. The date RIAP receives the referral will not affect the way it is prioritised. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of your referral after the allocation meetings. If you have any concerns or questions, phone RIAP on 9841 9354.

Source: "Warringah Disability Newsletter" 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010

### **Sign Planet**

A website that provides sign language resources on line for children and adult learners, as well as teachers and carers. Take a look...

[www.signplanet.net](http://www.signplanet.net)

### **Ideas and information from a STaR mum**

Simone, one of our lovely STaR mums has sent in some information that she thought may be of interest to other families.

Two great interactive websites for children –

[www.poissonrouge.com](http://www.poissonrouge.com) & [www.boowakwala.com](http://www.boowakwala.com)

A good read –

Engaging Autism by Stanley I. Greenspan, M.D & Serena Wieder, Ph.D

A play idea –

Simone and her boys have recently been having fun with the vacuum cleaner hose (cleaned rims!) talking and making sounds to each other...

**If you need assistance with accessing resources or information, or you simply want to talk, please phone me (Elise) on 02 9888 3717.**

### **CHILDCARE SUPPORT PROGRAM (*from Dawn*)**

Wow! Christmas is upon us, and I wonder where the year has gone...

We are currently supporting 43 children in 12 childcare centres. Our STaR participating childcare centre Special Needs Managers and centre Directors are extremely dedicated and are committed to ensuring they are providing the best possible program for children with additional needs. I'd like to thank our STaR centre staff and let them know how much we appreciate their commitment to inclusion.

I would also like to thank the STaR staff who support your child's centre. The STaR Early Intervention Support teachers Kathy and Megan provide valuable support and training for the childcare staff and I know their support is greatly appreciated. To the STaR release staff Sue, Janiki, Lisa and Amy, who provide release time for the centre Special Needs Managers, I would also like to say thank-you.

To all of our STaR children and families I wish you a very happy Christmas and a safe and restful holiday break. For those families returning or commencing with us next year we look forward to working with you in 2011.

Best wishes

*Dawn*

## GOING TO SCHOOL

In this newsletter I have listed a few additional ideas to make the transition to school a little easier. Please don't hesitate to call if you want any further information in the countdown to starting big school.

- ❖ Write the day your child starts Kindergarten on the calendar and ask them to decorate or colour the date
- ❖ Write your child's name on all their school things. Involve your child in organising them and recognising their name
- ❖ Let your child practice putting on their school shoes and walking in them
- ❖ Let your child cut out pictures and stick them on paper
- ❖ Read stories together
- ❖ Go to the park, take a ball to throw, catch and kick
- ❖ Organise a picnic with friends. Pack a lunch box, encourage your child to open it and eat the food themselves
- ❖ Organise times for your child to play with other children so that they can learn to share and take turns
- ❖ Plan for how you will say 'goodbye' to your child when you first begin leaving them at school. This can be quite an emotional time, but it is important to show your child that you feel happy and confident about leaving them at school. Saying a quick confident goodbye, even when your child is upset, may help them to feel secure and reassured that you trust that they will be okay
- ❖ **The night before the first day**
  - lay out your child's clothes, shoes and socks
  - help your child pack their school bag
  - pack a spare pair of underwear, socks and a change of clothes in a plastic bag. Let your child know these are in their backpack in case they have any toilet accidents at school
- ❖ **The first day**
  - Be positive and happy about the first day with your child
  - Let your child dress themselves as much as possible
  - Tie long hair back
  - Apply sunscreen to your child each morning. They will need to wear their school hat when outside the classroom
  - Don't forget the camera!
- ❖ **Resources for Parents**
  - Time to Start School - A parent's guide to starting kindergarten
  - A getting "Ready for School" checklist
  - A Special Place - a picture book to share
  - Ten tips for parents
  - NCAC Transition to School Factsheet
  - Starting School Safely – Kids and Traffic
  - School Readiness - Parent Information

**Source of all above documents:** <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au>

