

Hello All

Mickey

Operation Adaption – Green Light!

Who says dreams don't come true?

Life Solutions contacted us after reading the last edition of The Family Voice to ask us all about Operation Adaption – the creation of the first printed guide to where to get adapted stuff for your kids. They were so impressed they have funded it. It will be a modest photocopy guide but we will have a fair amount of copies of it. It will be completed before the end of the year. (It will include family tips on home made adaptations and ideas). It's about equipment for every aspect of life but not just for physical disabilities it includes things made for kids with intellectual disabilities as well. So WE NEED YOUR HELP PRONTO!!!!!! Send all your contacts and ideas you want to share with other families to mick.kay@bigpond.com and make the guide everything you wish you had been given when you were first starting to search for things!!!!!!!!!!!!!! A committee member was searching for scissors and found these web sites...you might like to have a look.

www.therapybookshop.com

www.therapytoyshop.com

www.autismbookshop.shop

www.sensoryshop.com

www.speechtherapysshop.com

Mates goes ahead.

We are starting the Mates pilot program on Monday April 30th. If you have not already become a Hospital volunteer its not too late. Even if you can only visit once a month, please consider joining. As a volunteer you will receive a support pack and a unique opportunity to undertake an Orientation program at The John Hunter Hospital. As part of

your volunteering you will receive free health benefits and formal hospital identification. At the end of the program volunteers will be provided with a letter of reference.

In addition the hospital pays for your Police Check, which clears you to work with children in a patient care area; this is normally at a cost to the public of \$ 50.00.

Parking is paid for so there is no cost to you only your time.

A visit to a family should take no more than an hour in most cases.

This program is highly regarded in the community and it could be a great chance for you to gain some experience that will look great on your CV.

For more information email

Jeanene.Douglas@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au



Stuart Centre Technology Seminar

The Stuart Centre is hosting a Technology Seminar on the 30th April 2007. The morning session will highlight the importance of individual assessment in the process choosing technology. There will also be a session that will focus on the latest eye gaze method of accessing the computer. In the afternoon workshops will be offered on communication technology, ways that technology can be used for fun and leisure and technology options for the classroom. The seminar will be directed at families, teachers and therapist. There will be opportunities to try out the equipment during the day.

Workshops 1 Communication

Workshops 2 Fun, Leisure and the Environment

Workshops 2 School – I can participate

Numbers will be limited to 50, so get in early if you are interested in the day. You must fill out and return a registration form either by fax to 4946 9852, or email to mgallagher@tscnsw.org.au, phone Michelle on 49469199 or email for form. Michelle Gallagher – Stuart Centre.

Weeroona Association

Introducing Rachel Priest-Administrator

Rachel's background is in teaching, having graduated with a Bachelor of Education (Honours) from Australian Catholic University (Sydney). Upon leaving her home town of Griffith, she spent eight years teaching in the primary school systems of Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane, where she held a number of executive positions including Sports Coordinator and Primary Coordinator, before moving to Auckland, New Zealand for one year where she was Enrolment Administrator at Takapuna Grammar School. She is currently the Administrator for Weeroona Association, a not for profit organisation that assists children and young people with physical disabilities. Rachel enjoys travelling and cooking and has explored a number of places abroad. She is a member of The Australian Vegetarian Society, Newways International and Campaign for the Truth in Medicine and is currently completing a Freelance course in Photography.

Began working at Weeroona September 2005 when I returned back to Newcastle from New Zealand and wanted to continue working within the field of administration and management, in particular in the not for profit sector.

I was attracted to the Weeroona position, having experienced working with children with disabilities in my previous teaching career.

Weeroona assists over 400 families, from Newcastle, Central Coast, Hunter Valley, Upper Hunter and Great Lakes areas.

Biggest challenges – reaching out to the families who may not have heard about us and the assistance/support we may be able to provide them and their child. Continuing to support and assist our current families.

Fundraising (we receive no government grants or government assistance) – Bequests, investments, Donations/sponsorships from local businesses and service clubs, charitable fund applications, regular raffles, periodic fundraising events, Annual Christmas picnic.

To contact Weeroona:

PO Box 313, Merewether 2291

Ph/Fax: (02) 49622042, Mobile: 0417284754

Email: weeroona@kooee.com.au

Website: www.weeroona.net.au

How Weeroona can help:

- Mobility aids
- Incontinence aids
- Educational aids
- Therapies
- Assistance with farers for long term medical treatment
- First class, specialised holiday accommodation
- Academic and sporting scholarships

- Information about sources for assistance such as: therapy, respite services, counselling, advocacy and family support groups

Helping Young People with Physical Disabilities

Let's Go to School Camp

So who gets to go? EVERYONE GETS TO GO! The 2004 Standards for Education, a piece of Commonwealth legislation was enacted on the 18th August 2005. One of the 5 focus areas the Standards cover is PARTICIPATION and the focus states, "some students may require accommodations and learning adjustments" to participate. The National Drivers for these Standards included "Addressing specific support issues for students with special needs."



In other words all your children have the legal right to participate fully and be included into all aspects of school life including excursions and school camps. It is the legal responsibility of the school and the Department of Education and Training to make it happen. For more information of the legal issues please take a look at the Human Rights site.

www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/education

We all know that working as a team with your school is usually the best to achieve a positive outcome but you may need to point out your child's legal rights to start the ball rolling. Once it has been established that your child is fully participating in the planned school camp you can start preparing.

OFF TO CAMP – A PARENTS GUIDE

- Plan ahead, allow plenty of time to deal with all the issues that need to be logistically coordinated for your child to have an inclusive camp experience, this may be a couple of weeks for some or it may take several months of planning for others, start talking to your school early to avoid last minute panic attacks.
- Train staff, schedule training sessions with the staff they will be on the camp with your child. It is a big leap from care and support in school hours to care and support over a 2 or 3 day period. For staff to feel comfortable with your child on camp they need to feel confident in all aspects of caring for your child.

Training may include:

Mobility aids – how to change a wheelchair tyre in case of a flat or how to fold a Hart Walker for storage on the bus.

Splinting – how to put them on, how to take them off, what to do if the student complains about the fit – giving some simple troubleshooting advice really helps.

Medication – What the meds are for, when they are to be given, how they are to be given eg. Via a syringe or tube or hidden in a sweet – whatever you do at home. Pack all your child's medication in one sealable container like Tupperware, and include typed instructions in a clear plastic sleeve so it stays legible.

Behaviour Plan – What you do at home needs to be followed through at camp so if your child has some behavioural issues in general or related to a specific task or activity it is important the staff are prepared and take the same action you would at home with minimum fuss or embarrassment to the student.

There are plenty of other areas you may need to consider for training staff before camp, take the time to think each activity through, ask for a schedule of the planned activities the class will be doing on camp as a guide and set aside time to train staff.

- ❑ Label everything – and if your child likes to remove sticky labels buy a laundry marker from the supermarket and write on everything. There is nothing quiet like the embarrassment of your child's undies being held high at assembly for claiming because they weren't labelled.
- ❑ Pack in order – an excellent strategy for maintaining organization in your child's bag is to pack it in order starting with what will be needed on the last day of camp on the bottom of the bag ending with what will be needed first up on the top.
- ❑ Daily bundles – for those of you that have kids that lack self organization skills (i.e. they are male or under the age of 35 – just kidding) another thing to try is bundle clothing for each day i.e. underwear, clothes, shoes, socks and hair ties for girls for Tuesday in a plastic bag or tied together with a piece of elastic with a big label that says "TUESDAY". Do one bundle for every day and night they are away.
- ❑ Also a list of what to wear each day can be slyly taped to the inside lid of your child's bag as a guide – for a lot of kids that is all that is needed.
- ❑ When packing toiletries think of easy to handle items. Go Lo often has sample size shampoo etc. A lot of skin care companies have faced wipes eg Neutrogena that are sometimes easier to manage when away rather than face washers. Also a reminder list of what needs to be done for personal hygiene can be taped into lid of toiletry bag, again use a plastic sleeve cut down to size so it is still readable even if splashed.
- ❑ **Don't** over pack – it often creates confusion if there are too many choices.
- ❑ **Do** pack the cool stuff – even though it will come home filthy pack items that adds to your child's social standing with their peers, it goes against every parents grain to send the new Billabong boardies to camp but it is important how other kids view your child when they are all out of uniform, we know it shouldn't matter but the reality is it does. Worry about the washing later, let napsan be your friend!

- ❑ **Be early** – on camp day allow some time for nerves to settle and several trips to the loo before the bus takes off.
- ❑ **Absolutely** – Stop at the bottle shop on the way home as you will need a chardy to settle your nerves tonight, just remember all of the kids go to camp and your child is part of "all of the kids" these experiences are valuable for all children and some of the adults at camp might learn a thing or two about what life is really like for your child, what they are capable of and who they could be as young people and adults.

Fundraising ideas & donations needed...

Have you ever been involved in a really successful fundraiser, do you have any connections to anyone who could raise funds on our behalf at an event or similar.

At FSF we occasionally get grants for specific projects, this money has to go for use on that project only. We charge the \$ 10 membership which covers the cost of the newsletter mailing out for the year but we have ongoing costs of keeping the mobile phone on and stationary etc. Fundraising helps us generate money that we can use for our basic running expenses like the phone card but is an area we would really like ideas and support in. We have had a couple of donations that have really helped, as we can use money like that for running costs so if you know of anyone who would like to make a tax deductible donation please send them our way!

The committee all use their own phones, Internet, homes for meeting and petrol and much, much more so it would be greatly appreciated if anyone can assist in this area.

SIBLINGS.

According to the Siblings Australia website (www.siblingsaustralia.org.au) sibling carers within our target group experience one or more of the following challenges as a sibling to someone with special needs:

- Lack of information about the disability and/or illness that affects their family
- Lack of attention
- Difficult relationships with their siblings with special needs
- Pressure to be "the perfect" sibling.
- Anger and resentment directed towards parents and/or their sibling with special needs
- Unresolved grief and loss issues
- The added responsibility of being a caregiver
- Compromised independence

- Concerns about the future care of ill and disabled siblings
- Other feelings such as embarrassment, guilt, isolation

As part of Life Activities mission supporting people with a disability in the Hunter Region, and in recognition of the fact that very few community resources are focused on providing the brothers and sisters of younger people with disabilities an opportunity to connect, Life Activities Support4Sibs project is offering sibling carers the opportunity to explore their experiences and feelings, access information and have some fun in a safe and supported environment. **Support4Sibs begins in March 2007.**

Calls to insurance companies to check cover scenarios:

NRMA ph 132132 www.nrma.com.au

GIO 131010 www.gio.com.au

AAMI 132244 www.aami.com.au

Have a think about the cost of equipment that your child might use and think of how it gets around in your car, to school etc or even just hanging around at home.

If an event happened would you be covered? We took the time to call some large insurance companies to through a few scenarios to them and this is the result.

The main thrust of it is these items may not be covered on your general contents policy and you may have to do this to make sure you can claim the full value of the item. You also may be interested to ask about accidental damage as this is not always covered.

We normally think of our home contents cover these items but you may find you have \$ 5000 - \$ 50,000 worth of equipment that if you lost in a fire or other event you could not afford to replace. Call your insurer and ask them about the type cover you have on these items and be sure to read the product disclosure statements they have on the web or they can post to you.

The information below is taken from phone conversations with customer service staff at insurance companies and is not intended as direct advice to you, please call and ask yourself to be sure you have the right cover.

Scenario 1.

Cover equip taken outside home – lap top, speech devices etc that are stolen:

NRMA– yes if specified on the home contents policy and NRMA have agree to cover it, you will have to pay extra per item to have each item covered a value would have had to be advised and a correct description. It has to be under portable values cover. * Claim is on home contents PVS policy.

GIO – yes if specified covered on home contents policy does not need to be on portable values cover. For an additional fee you can pay for each item to be covered for accidental damage (eg drink spilt on communication device). Cover is in home and out of home within Australia and NZ and includes up to 30 consecutive days day overseas. Fusion or maintenance not considered accidental damage and not covered

AAMI – no, items can be specified for cover on home contents but will only be covered on the property or if stolen in a break in accommodation you are staying in temporarily. You will pay more to specify these items on your policy. Laptops and communication devices can't be listed as portable valuables.

Scenario 2.

Cover wheelchair or equip in car and damaged in accident:

NRMA- yes if specified on the home contents policy and NRMA have agree to cover it, you will have to pay extra per item to have each item covered a value would have had to be advised and a correct description. It has to be under portable values cover. * Claim is on home contents PVS policy.

GIO – yes if specified covered on home contents policy does not need to be on portable values cover. For an additional fee you can pay for each item to be covered for accidental damage (eg drink spilt on communication device). Cover is in home and out of home within Australia and NZ and includes up to 30 consecutive days day overseas. Fusion or maintenance not considered accidental damage and not covered. If child is in wheelchair at time of accident in car then there is \$150 cover only for dam to wheelchair.

** GIO advises that if you have advised them of hoists etc, any permanent modification or accessory to car as part of disability and they agree to cover it then if it is damaged in an accident it will be

covered for the value you have advised, you will need to pay more for this on you policy

AAMI – no, items can be specified for cover on home contents but will only be covered on the property of if stolen in a break in accommodation you are staying in temporarily. You will pay more to specify these items on your policy.

Lap tops and communication devices can't be listed as portable valuables

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Scenario 3.

Cover wheelchair or equip in car when stolen:

NRMA- yes if specified on the home contents policy and NRMA have agree to cover it, you will have to pay extra per item to have each item covered a value would have had to be advised and a correct description. It has to be under portable values cover. * Claim is on home contents PVS policy.

GIO – yes if specified covered on home contents policy does not need to be on portable values cover. For an additional fee you can pay for each item to be covered for accidental damage (eg drink spilt on communication device). Cover is in home and out of home within Australia and NZ and includes up to 30 consecutive days day overseas. Fusion or maintenance not considered accidental damage and not covered

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CHIROPRACTIC SERVICE

At the recently held INTERNATIONAL Women's DAY 2007, Michelle Rigney was a nominee for the Award for the Port Stephens area for her contribution in the field of AUTISM in relation to CHIROPRACTIC therapy. Her methods may be of help to other autistic children and she can be contacted on the phone number below for consultation.

MICHELLE RIGNEY
RAYMOND TERRACE CHIROPRACTIC SERVICE
36 GLENELG STREET
RAYMOND TERRACE
Ph: 49871711

Techno talk by Cindy.

I stumbled across this product during the 'long' summer holidays to try and amuse my kids away from anything that had electricity running into it. As the product states kids have trouble holding cards, so this is a great way for them to play cards independently. Also another use I have found is it is great for holding Adam's sight words or stencils at home or school. You can find out more about this product at www.cardholda.com or they can be purchased at Frontline Hobbies in Newcastle for \$10.95. (Adult styles but still does the same thing).

Card Holda is the first card holder to be designed and presented with children in mind.



Card Holda offers the following unique combination of features:

- Holds up to 20 cards
- Novel curved slot allows for easy insertion, removal and sorting of cards
- Stands freely on a table or can be easily hand held

Available in bright blue, fluoro pink, red and black

Card Playing for Children Made Easy

In recent years electronic innovation has brought many changes to the way children play. While some of this has been beneficial there is concern that excessive time in front of TV and computer screens may be slowing aspects of their development.

'Card Holda' is the brainchild of Melbourne inventor Peter Harley who believes that playing traditional table games like cards and board games can be of great benefit to children. But kids have trouble holding a hand of cards, hence the invention of 'Card Holda.'

Mr. Harley, a former school teacher, believes that traditional games like cards assist children's development in many ways; they:

- Improve concentration and critical thinking skills.
- Teach problem solving.
- Help the child to learn about strategy, planning and tactics.
- Teach the child to recognise the behaviour and objectives of others.
- Help the child to understand the importance of cooperation.
- Facilitate communication between children of different ages and between children and adults.

Mr. Harley, a former school teacher, believes that traditional games like cards assist children's development in many ways; they:

- Help children to learn to interpret written instructions.

- Assist in the development of number concepts; eg. Ordinal number, as in arranging sequences; and absolute number as in scoring.
- Help with arithmetic skills.
- Bring a sense of achievement as the child learns to master new games.
- Enable children to learn to cope with defeat and understand the virtue of humility in victory.

Who said that??

There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

– Albert Einstein (Miracle baby website)

FOR SALE

CHILDS standing frame.
GELART stand a'Ease in EXCELLENT condition. A compact, easy folding standing frame on lockable castors with an adjustable tray, combination of Velcro and buckles make it very easy to use. Tray height goes from 72cm to 100cm in height so it probably suits a 3-7yr old. \$1600 new, sell for \$900. For more information or pictures email carabudge@iinet.net.au Or phone 49 502 808. Wallsend



Special needs MOUNTAIN BUGGY DOUBLE PRAM
MOUNTAIN BUGGY double TERRAIN pram with one side for a larger child with special needs. (deeper seat, longer footplate, firmer seat and backing, taller hood)
My 28kg, tall disabled 6.5 yr old rides comfortably with my 16kg 2 yr old son. The pram has 2 fixed wheels but flip out castor wheels for shopping centre floors. Excellent over rough ground and great when shopping. Fits through standard doors ways by 2cm. This pram is 1.5years old and in excellent condition. Sell for \$900. For more information or pictures email carabudge@iinet.net.au Or phone 49 502 808. Wallsend



KIDZ BITZ

Did you know:

It's impossible to lick your elbow!
No piece of paper can be folded in half more than seven times!
Cats have better memories than dogs!

Happy birthday to:

March:

Barton Tait, Dominic Maley
Ryan Maley, Zachary Anderson
Kate Brockman, Adam Coleman
Shirnia Adams, Kyra Madden

April

Tom Barrett, Eli Rohr, Laura Metcalfe
Rachael Cross, Anhoa Dendaluce
Jaxson Eden, Bryce Lloyd, Luke Smart
Hayden Tait

Your FSF committee

Mickey Cole – Coordinator
Cindy Shaw – Secretary
Sharon Baumanis – Treasurer
Sue Blackeby – Grants Coordinator
Liz Popov – Social Coordinator
Chriselle Clement – Social Coordinator Assistant
Laraine Brown – Minutes Secretary
Kay Smart – Publishing Officer
Julie Snedden – Publishing Assistant
Lyn Bradley – Publishing Assistant
Cathy Pobje – Fundraising Officer
Julie Snedden – Fundraising Assistant
Jeanene Douglas – Hospital Program (MATES) Coordinator

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PO Box 178

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(Families Supporting Families Inc: 8031494467)

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