

Wynnum Family Day Care is Linking Children and

2014 was the launch year for the Wynnum Family Day Care Link Program.



The Link program involves educators and their cohort of children attending a variety of learning and fun experiences, out and about in our local community, with a twist.

The twist being that the activities are not held in the standard playgroup hall of the past, the children are engaged in outdoor and purposeful environments within the Bayside and the Eastern Suburbs of Brisbane.

Every day of the week the children enrolled with Wynnum Family Day Care are able to attend, at no cost to parents; a variety of fun filled learning programs facilitated by qualified professionals to that particular learning experience. The Link Program caters for children from infants through to preschool age and also for school age children in vacation care.

What are these fun free activities? They include yoga, music therapy, multi-sports, dance, art classes, cultural inclusion, gymnastics and lots more! There is no age barrier as to who can attend and participate. Yes you are picturing it correctly; we have toddlers participating in yoga and welding tennis racquets not as weapons but in enthusiasm for a purpose to hit the ball.

Another planned experience is visits to aged residents in the local area. The aged residents in the care facilities enjoy combined music therapy sessions with infants and toddlers. This engagement and coming together of generations in these music therapy sessions has resulted in dementia patients that have not spoken in years, now singing the old time songs and expressing emotion for the first time since the onset of their conditions.

The music therapy led by a qualified expert in the field is focused on unlocking neuropathways in the brain that are triggered by enjoyment, predictability, routine and participation.

These same pathways encourage children to participate appropriately within a group, extend their ability to concentrate and control their responses to requests and stimulate their working memory to sing the songs and join in the actions appropriately week after week. This type of learning is the beginning of school readiness skills that these children will be able to rely upon for a lifetime, as is reflected by the aged care residents that participate in the Link Program.

Program manager Samantha Jackson-Van Hummel emphasised the importance of the Link Program

the Community



for children's development. Samantha stated that the weekly repetition of activities, the relationships that develop with the presenters, the programs that build over time, and the opportunity to be a part of the wider community promotes children's sense of belonging social, and emotional wellbeing.

Physical skills promoted by general participation in multi-sports and gym has provided children with limited strength and desire to participate with confidence and purpose. Children with low self-esteem due to constant inability to master skills are able to bond with the instructor and form a relationship that allows them to take risks without fear of failure. The children enjoy simple participation for the sake of participation and a "have a go attitude".

Children of younger ages are now being seduced by the technologies, tablets and touch screens ever present in our society today. These interests that promote inactivity, passive participation, isolation and non verbal responses to instruction are contributors to the obesity epidemic, lack of social skills, poor emotional regulation and responsiveness to instruction prevalent in society today.

The Link program provides the opposite. Link is an opportunity to attend events that promote active group participation rather than competition, and children are able to engage each other and adults in language and conversation that celebrates success and provides for an environment of achievement. The acquisition of gross motor skills and the training of the brain to send messages to the body appropriately,

along with engagement in celebration of the achievements of others are all prerequisites for the skills required for school readiness.

Many Wynnum Family Day Care Educators have reflected that a particular child in their care would never have been school ready if it had not been for the confidence the child had gained by participating regularly in gym activities that promoted core strength and self-esteem.

The Link Program is unmatched Australia wide and it is a living program growing constantly and meeting the needs of the children and families in our service.

For more information call Wynnum Family Day Care on 07 3393 4311 or check out our website, www.wynnumfdc.org