



CHILDREN'S SERVICES REGULATIONS

This Review which was announced in October last year and undertaken by DoCS, is intended to introduce important reforms to the way in which children's services are regulated in NSW. A remade Regulation is expected in mid-2010.

Feedback from the first public consultation phase will be made available online in February at www.community.nsw.gov.au and will include summaries of the regional forums and focus groups, the results of the online surveys and some of the written submissions. Together, with all these approaches, they have provided information to service providers as well as parents about the review and with the responses that have been received it will help shape the development of a draft regulation in 2009

OCCA is very fortunate to have a representative on this Steering Committee.

EXPANSION OF PRESCHOOLS PLACES

An announcement was made late last year with reference to a peak children's services organisation and a local Western NSW community organisation which has been selected by DoCS to provide important development and support services for the creation of an extra 5,250 preschool places for up to 10,500 children across NSW.

Community Child Care Coop (CCCC) and CareWest (formerly Orange Community Resource Organisation) will work with services to contribute to the expansion of preschool places in priority locations in NSW.

The two organisations will support services to improve access to preschool programs firstly by reducing or removing barriers to access as well as increasing the efficiency and use of existing preschool places or increasing the number or supply of preschool places. The funding represents the growth phase of the expansion of preschool places which is part of NSW Government's \$85 million Preschool Investment and Reform Plan. The funding follows the recent roll-out of a new funding model for existing preschools.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN'S CHECKS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A new process and form for "Working with Children" checks will be introduced from March 2nd 2009. The changes are a result of the new guidelines for criminal record checks and which are required by the Commission for Children and Young People as well as the other authorities responsible for doing the criminal record checks.

Organisations requesting screening checks on their own employees direct from the Commission for Children and Young People should continue to use the forms on the Commission website www.kids.nsw.gov.au

NAIDOC WEEK will be from 5th-12 July. If you are a DoCS funded service you may be entitled to attend selected courses at no cost. . Visit www.community.nsw.gov.au and go to 'for agencies that work with us'> 'training' and 'pathways to access other training'.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR OCCA NSW

Yes it is that time of the year again. OCCA NSW AGM will be held on 7th April 2009. Please see the attached flyer

CONFERENCE 2009

After our 2008 Conference, many of the delegates requested holding our annual conference interstate with expressions of interest for Melbourne. After much serious thought and considering the results from the survey that was email to all our members in December 2008, a decision has been made to hold our annual conference in Wollongong in either August or September. Some of the reasons which influenced the management Committee decision were:

- ∞ Travel and accessibility for delegates
- ∞ Venue & time of the year. (In Melbourne during September there is AFL football finals and also the Spring Racing Carnival)
- ∞ Delegates attendance

As yet no venue or date has been finalised. Please watch this space for more information

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members

A big warm welcome to you all for 2009. Hope you all enjoyed your break over the holiday season and have come back to your work environment all revitalised and ready for the coming year of events within your service. As we all know, there is never a dull moment in your service

By this time of the year your service is at a stage of adjustment with the older children now off to school and the newer generation just venturing into the early childhood arena. Your centre is forever evolving with new clients, families, staffing, but most importantly the curriculum framework that you will be providing to your clients and families. I know at this time of the year occasional child care services are really concerned with the utilisation of their service. Historically in the first few months of the year attendance in our occasional child care services is low. After mums have dealt with getting their older children back to school and then introducing the younger children into formal childcare, they suddenly realise they have this extra time for themselves and decide to pursue some activity for themselves. Services need to have some strategies in place and be aware of what the impact this will be not only for their service but also their budget.

The Occasional Child Care Association NSW/National continues to be a be an voice and advocate for all occasional child care services in Australia and addresses concerns and issues at meetings and forums which are relevant to our sector. All services need to embrace the new definition for occasional care and ensure their daily service delivery practices are within this definition

Regards

Mary A Cottee