

Chief Executive Officer's Report for the 2016 AGM

Introduction

2016 was the year all our preparation, meetings and training would come to realisation as NDIS would roll out on the Central Coast from July 2016.

Yarran ready itself for this massive change- the biggest social change since Medicare. We had done everything we could to be ready. So we waited and watched.

As with all great change – the changes changed.

Opportunities we thought would be denied to us, came our way.

Pathways we thought we would follow were no longer needed.

Staff stayed, staff joined us and staff left.

The reports included in Yarran's AGM for 2016 presents the renovated Yarran, now ready for NDIS.

Early Childhood Early Intervention.

After a few false starts, NDIS finally recognised that early childhood intervention under NDIS needed to be delivered differently to the rest of NDIS. From this awareness they created a plan where one agency would complete first plans for families as well as support new referrals aged 0 to 6 yrs. This decision created anxiety for us due to its impact on the availability of funded plans.

But in October 2016 NDIS approached a number of ADHC funded early childhood intervention agencies to deliver this model for them till June 2018. After this, it would go up for competitive tender.

Yarran was offered this opportunity which we accepted. Yarran from its existing staff created a First Planner team and a transition support program for new referrals.

NDIA's Transition Model

Yarran will be supporting the NDIA to transition and support children aged 0-6 yrs.

NDIA in an agreement with ADHC offered the retention of 45% of our current ADHC funding to complete this role

It involved a new role for Yarran and altered one of our existing roles.

NDIA provided the training and the documentation needed to complete NDIS first plans.

Yarran was not the only agency that has been offered this role on the Central Coast

Staff were chosen to work in the transitional provider program due to their skills and

experience. Regular meetings were held with NDIS to support this role

This opportunity created four main streams of Yarran's service delivery

1. Developing families First Plan, complete any reviews needed and additional plans and sending these to NDIA for approval and funding allocation.
2. NDIA packages. Families purchasing Yarran supports with their NDIS funding.

3. New referrals – gateway to the NDIS. This involves screening children for eligibility for NDIS, moving children to First plans and supporting children who did not meet the eligibility. This would be short term support 3-6 months only.
4. Continue to support existing children with ADHC funds while they waited for their NDIS funding packages. ADHC was gradually reducing the funding for this stream as NDIS packages increased.

All four streams need to be maintained as Yarran moved towards June 2018.

Again Yarran was presented with challenges and again Yarran took on these challenges with the goal of supporting young children with disabilities and their families. In 2016 the CEO was asked to present at a workshop for childcare workers.

The CEO decided it was a great opportunity to inform childcare workers on current insights from both literature and from our families when children with disabilities access their care.

The CEO surveyed our parents to collect their thoughts and their experiences in childcare for their child and for themselves and to see how it matched to current literature and the outcomes and goals of NDIS.

The presentation was titled – “In the Know -What do they want us to know?”

“They” being current literature and families.

What does current research and literature want us to know about how our children learn in mainstream settings.

Here extracts from Tim Moore’s articles were presented. His work is currently informing policy and practice in early childhood intervention including the NDIS

What do our families want their childcare workers to know – what is important to them.

Here the results of the surveys completed by Yarran’s families were presented.

The information shared were direct quotes or extracts from Tim Moore’s work.

Specifically, from the articles:

Moore, T.G. (2012). Rethinking early childhood intervention services: Implications for policy and practice.

Moore, T.G (2001) More the same than different: What we can learn from including children with disabilities in mainstream early childhood programs

There was no attempt to rephrase, change or dilute Tim Moore’s words.

What does evidence want us to know?

We need to acknowledge:

The importance of early learning environments and role of relationships.

Children with developmental disabilities have the same needs as all children.

Children with developmental disabilities learn in the same way as all children.

All children need many opportunities to practice functional skills in everyday environments.



That positive stimulating relationships have the same impact on their development as they do on other children.

Children learn through relationships; Relationships change brains.

In a recent analysis of the importance for development of relationships and attachments, Moore (2009) explored the evidence that these are just as important for children with disabilities as they are for all other children.

The nature and quality of their key relationships are critical for children's development, and the key features of these relationships – particularly attunement / engagement and responsiveness – are especially important for early childhood development and the establishment of secure attachment.

While early childhood intervention (ECI) service providers can play an important role in supporting children with disabilities or developmental delays and their families, they have a limited role to play in the everyday lives of these children.

The bulk of the child's learning occurs *between* home visits or other sessions with professionals, not *during* them.

Therefore, specialised individual therapy and intervention cannot be a major driver of development – what drives development is children's meaningful participation in everyday activities and natural environments

The relationships and experiences that childcare and families provide children with a disability, not those provided by ECI professionals, are what shapes and promotes their development.

We need children with disabilities and developmental delays to participate meaningfully in the key environments in their lives – family environments, childcare / preschool, and community settings,

Participation has usually been presented in terms of *inclusion*.

We have strived for children with disabilities and developmental delays to have access to the same services and opportunities as other children, and have supported such inclusion in various ways.

This advocacy is based on the understanding that full inclusion is a necessary component of learning to participate meaningfully in community life and is essential for the development and participation of children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Inclusion in childcare / preschool is critical for they need to learn the skills for successful and independent participation in childcare settings.

These skills cannot be taught effectively in other contexts and then transferred – skills for specific routines are only learned by participating in those routines.

The learning environments provided by childcare are now properly regarded as being a major setting for early childhood intervention, not just as a desirable addition. The childcare / preschool setting provides children with a disability or developmental delay with opportunities

and experiences to enable them to develop the functional skills to participate meaningfully in the same social and learning activities as the other children.

While there is a powerful rationale for children with a disability or developmental delay having access to the same experiences and services as other children, there are many barriers to them being able to participate meaningfully.

These barriers arise in part from the nature of a disability or developmental delay, and the specific difficulties these children have in learning, mobility, communication or socialisation. These barriers also reflect the problems that childcare staff may have in knowing how to provide such children with the experiences they need to become full participants in the program's activities.

For childcare settings to be able to build children's functional skills to enable participation, a range of adaptations, strategies and resources are needed.

Children with disabilities or developmental delays generally have more complex learning needs, which means developing these skills and engaging and participating in a meaningful way in these settings will depend heavily on the presence of significant relationships and the provision of supportive learning opportunities and experiences.

As children with developmental disabilities develop and learn in the same basic ways as other children, then the outcomes we want for children with developmental disabilities should be the same as those we want for all children: to gain the functional skills or capabilities they need to participate meaningfully in their daily environments.

References

Centre for Community Child Health (2011). **DEECD Early Childhood Intervention Reform Project: Revised Literature Review**. Melbourne, Victoria: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

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Paper presented at *Excellence for Children*, joint conference of the Australian Early Childhood Association and the National Initiative for the Early Years, Sydney, July 2001. Centre for Community Child Health

Moore, T.G. (2012). **Rethinking early childhood intervention services: Implications for policy and practice**. *Pauline McGregor Memorial Address* to the 10th Biennial National Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) Conference and 1st Asia-Pacific Early Childhood Intervention Conference 2012, 9th August, Perth, Western Australia.

http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/profdev/ECIA_National_Conference_2012.pdf

Moore, T.G. (2013). **Teamwork in early childhood intervention services: Recommended practices**. Briefing paper prepared for Early Childhood Intervention Australia (Victorian Chapter). Parkville, Victoria: Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, The Royal Children's Hospital.

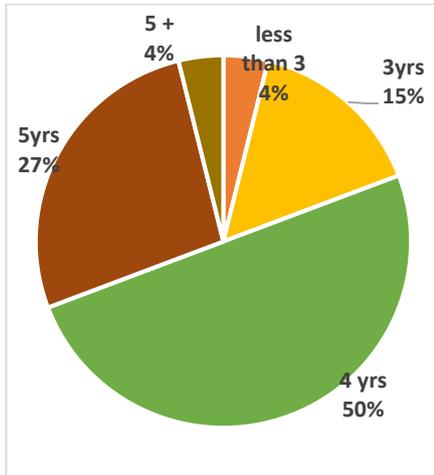
Moore, T.G. (2013). **NDIS Early Childhood Intervention provision**. Proposal prepared as part of Early Childhood Intervention Australia's response to the NDIS Draft rules, March 2013. Parkville, Victoria: Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, The Royal Children's Hospital

What do parents want childcare workers to know?

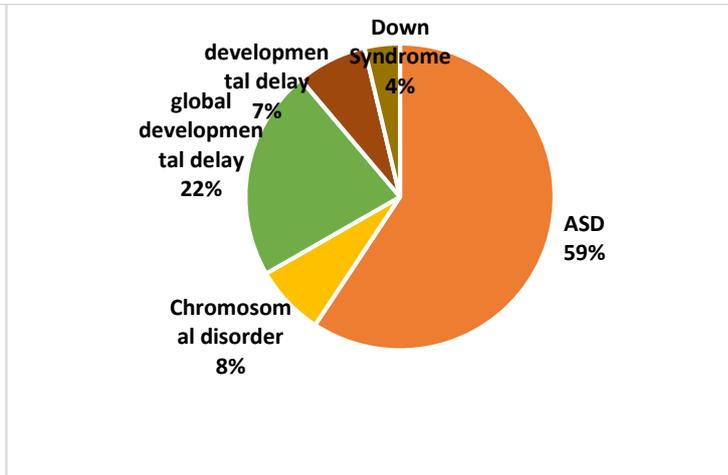
Survey Questions and Results

The first set of questions were demographic based

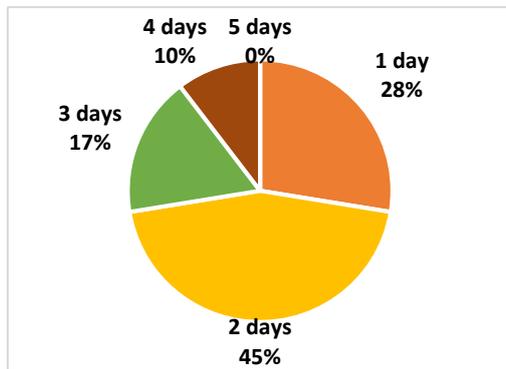
How old is your child?



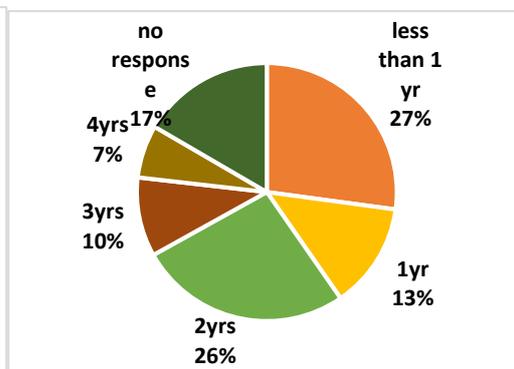
What is your child's disability?



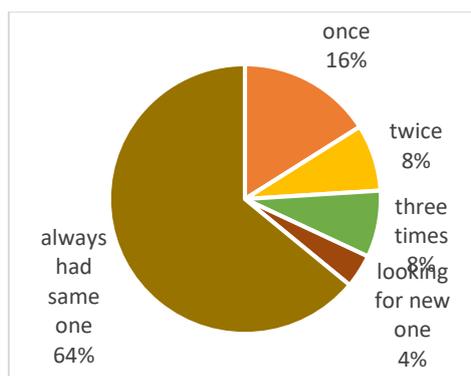
+Number of days per week did your child attend?



How long has your child attended Childcare?

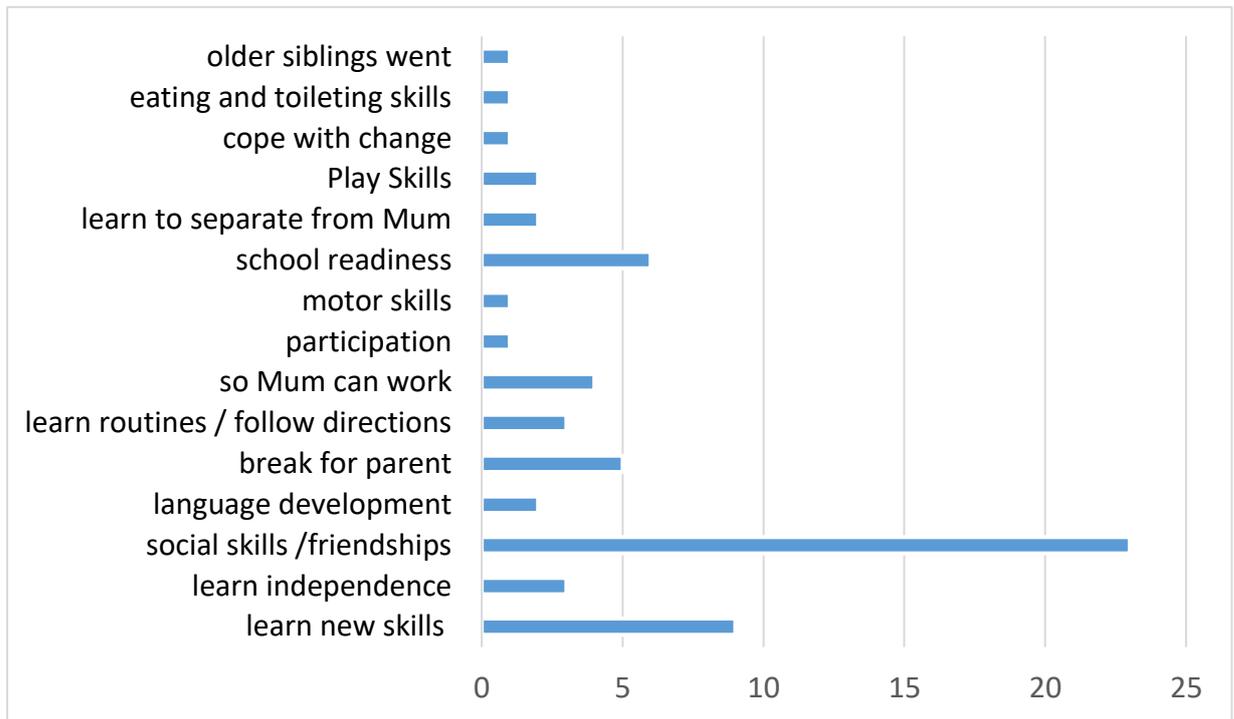


How many times have you changed your child's childcare / preschool or have you always had the same one?

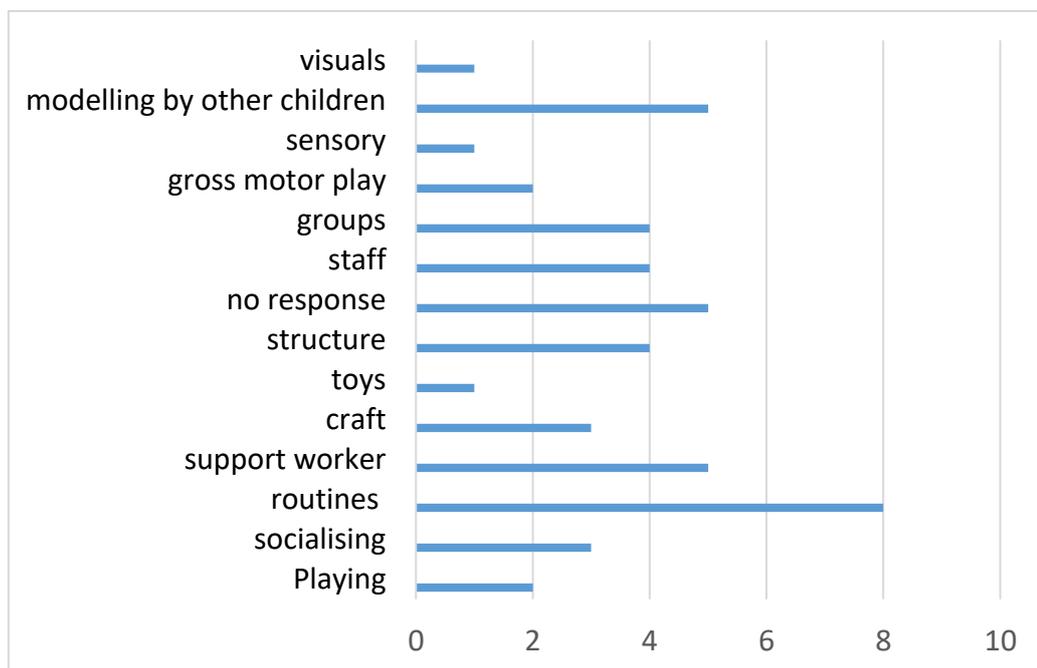




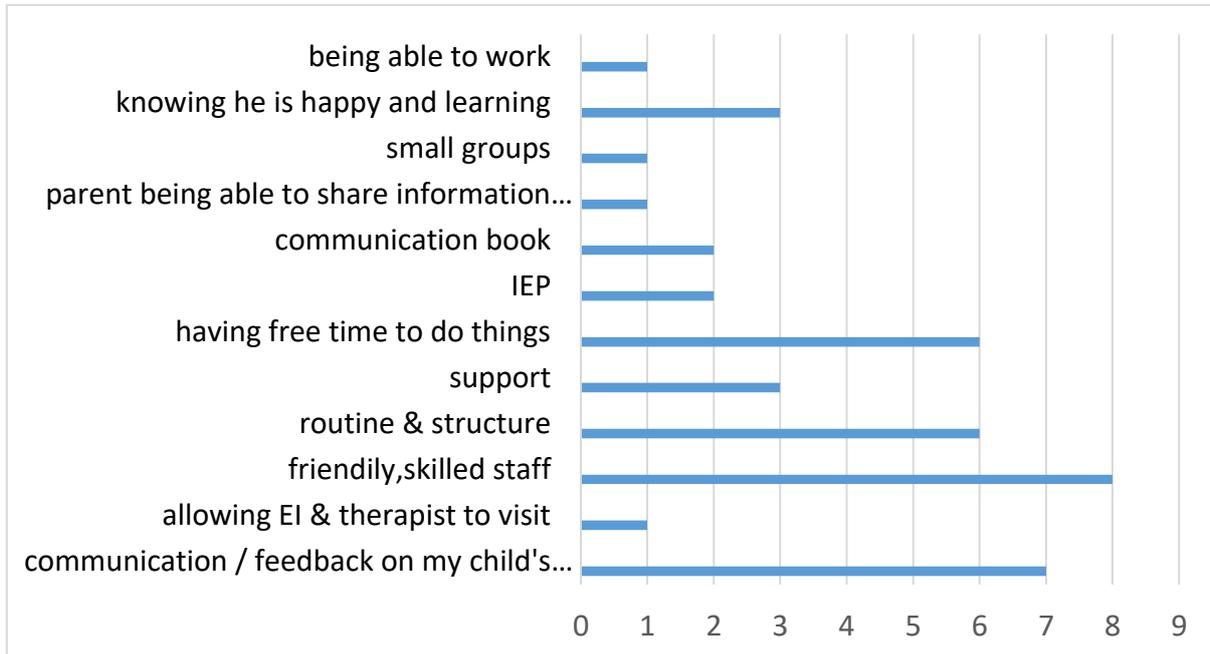
Why do you send your child to childcare/ preschool?



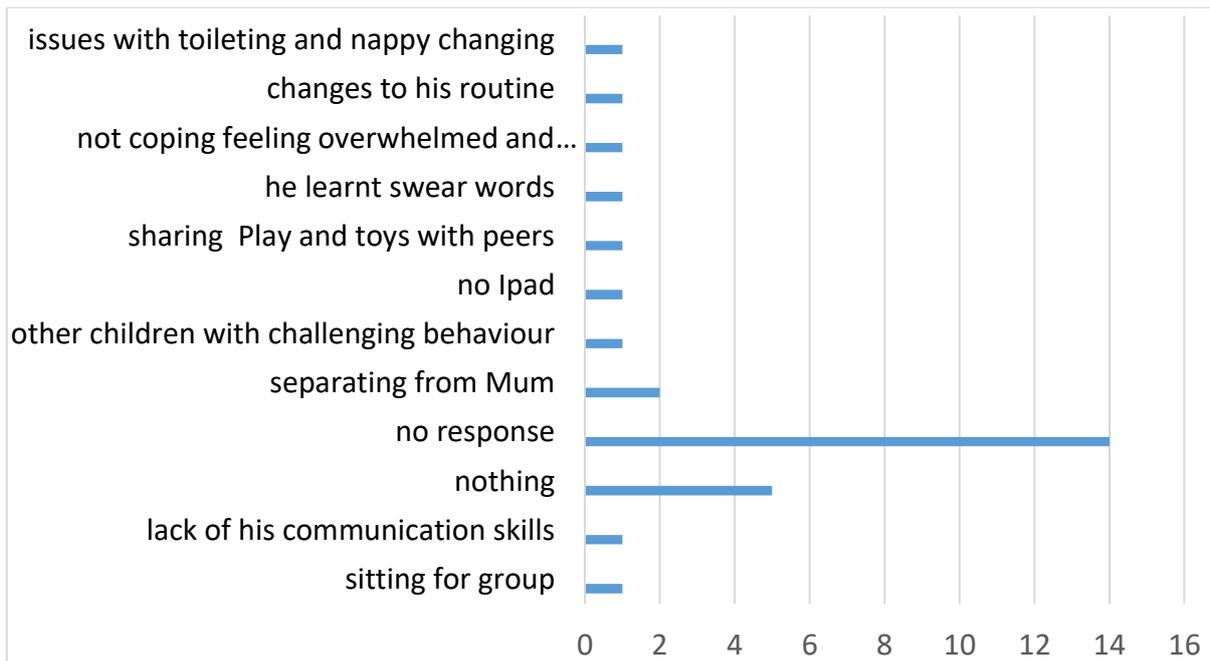
What worked really well for your child?



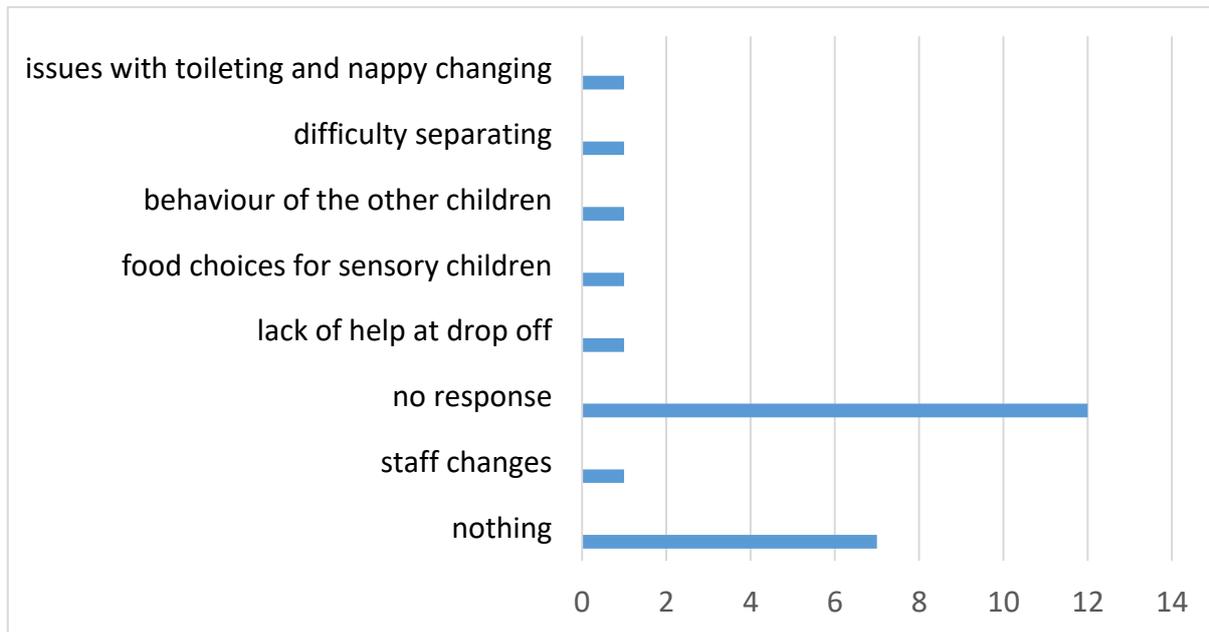
What worked really well for you as the parent?



What didn't work for your child?



What didn't work for you as a parent?



The next question was the "worry "question about their child at childcare.

This asks parents what keeps them awake at night

Their responses were

"Transitioning to big school"

"Is he sitting down with others at morning tea?"

Is he sitting down and listening to story time?

Is he interacting or playing with other children?"

"Is he included?"

"His behaviour"

"That he can't communicate his needs?"

"That he will hurt someone and be an outcast"

"Not having any friends"

"That he is helped to participate and learn"

"Isn't supported enough"

"That staff don't see any problems with him"

"My child not conforming or being too much work for the staff"

"Toilet training"

The next question parents were asked was if they could tell childcare workers one thing what would it be:

"Could they help him with his behaviour and socialising so he can be ready for school"

"That he can be difficult at times but give him time and he will be your best student"

"not to be afraid to push him to do more tasks. he is capable of so much but he just needs to feel calm and supported to be able to do a new task."

"School readiness needs to start early."

"To use sign language more."

"To explain what is happening, what is about to happen".

"I feel it is important for all staff to be trained and understand the needs of special needs kids. For this understanding to be passed on to other kids – for the reason to allow all kids to understand that everyone is different"

"Not to under estimate the effectiveness of sensory work – it has a positive effect on not only the individual child who has special needs but also in the whole group"

"That parents know their own children"

"He tries really hard to make good choices..."

"Thank you for all your support "

Thank you for working on the strategies provided by the therapists"

"to keep up the good work. You are amazing at approaching each child individually and catering to their strengths and weaknesses"

Our family's responses indicate that they too have the same goals / outcomes for their children as the evidence suggests. It also supports NDIS' objectives.

We know that:

Parent's want their child to Engage

Parent's want their child to Participate

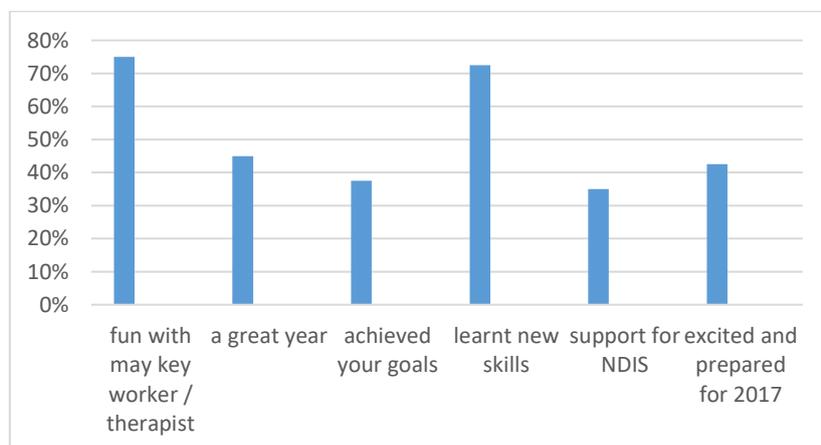
Parent's want their child to be Independent

Parent's do value what childcare does for their child and their family.

Conclusion

I always like to conclude my AGM report with the family's feedback about Yarran.

At the end of 2016 I asked parents to choose from a set of statements that described their year they had with us.



Family's Feedback

"I am very thankful for all the support given to me through Yarran, it has made a huge impact on our lives and all the dealings I have had have been wonderful. Great job. Thanks heaps."

"Very positive and practical support is based on extensive knowledge and I am able to apply it at home. The resources brought from the toy library have been great."

"Very helpful ideas and strategies to help in the day to day life, general emotional support when things get tough"

Help us see things through his eyes making us create at ease, helping us create the structure he needs. Support at school when needed and giving us feedback on how he is doing

2017 will bring many changes to our family as we have one child with high needs starting kindergarten and another child doing their HSC. We are very much looking forward to it but are also very uncertain but knowing we will be sharing it with Yarran and knowing that they will be there to support us is a great relief.

I feel very supported and excited by the milestones achieved this year and look forward to a positive 2017 thank you to all your amazing staff

One of Yarran's biggest challenges under NDIS will be to preserve the qualities that families and Yarran value from our staff and our service.

If Yarran remembers one thing over the next twelve months it should be this

"Never stop doing little things for others

Sometimes those little things occupy the biggest part of their hearts.

Glenn Marie Wright

Chief Executive Officer