

“DO YOU AVERAGE YOUR OSHC UTILISATION OVER THE WEEK?”

Over the last few months there has been much discussion and debate over the issue of Child Care Benefit (CCB) place limits and whether a service can average their utilisation over a weekly period. Despite all parties agreeing that it makes perfectly good sense and is logical to average over the week, it is a breach of legislation. “WHAT!” I hear you say. I’m afraid that’s right; Section 197(b) of *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* states that services cannot exceed their approved CCB limit at any time. This means if you are approved for 20 CCB places, you cannot have any more than 20 children in your care at any time.

It is acknowledged that averaging over the week has been common practice amongst OSHC services in this State for quite some time. It is understood the practice was adopted a few years ago when demand for places was at an all time high. Although for some services it may seem that nothing has changed with demand ever present, it is worth noting that South Australia has increased its OSHC numbers by almost 5,000 places since December 2003 and presently has an allocation of over 29,000 places.

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Beyond 2005

The latest on the agency changes

Correction: Last month, we published the Q&A article regarding what SA agencies will be affected by the new funding system. Unfortunately, due to a printing error, one of the agencies, the Gowrie Training Centre, was inadvertently omitted from the list. We would like to apologise for this and re-print the correct information as follows:

Q. What agencies will it affect in SA?

- A.**
- Network SA
 - ARMSU
 - Inclusion SA
 - Diversity Directions
 - Early Links (Mount Gambier)
 - Gowrie Training Centre

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Back to your dilemma; "How am I going to cope? What am I to do?" The current situation didn't happen overnight and it won't be fixed overnight. It is understood that services will need time to adjust and change the practice of weekly averaging. There is no expectation that you immediately slash your enrolments or deny current users continued access to your service. What is suggested is that you implement strategies to bring your utilisation back to your approved operating levels. For example this could involve a process of natural attrition whereby when a child leaves your service you do not take on another child until you are back within your approved limit. In addition, you may also like to submit an expression of interest to the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) for additional places. Simply send a handwritten fax addressed to Teresa Kennedy at FaCS on 8400 2197 detailing the number of places and whether you require more before, after or vacation care places. Although it will not be possible to immediately give you extra places, your application for more places will be considered when the Planning Advisory Committee meets in May to determine areas of greatest need.

Perhaps you are reading this and thinking to yourself "thank goodness I don't have to worry about not having enough places". Maybe your service has unused places? If so, you would be doing your fellow OSHCers a great favour by relinquishing any unused places. These places can then be reallocated to services in need. To relinquish places just send a handwritten fax to Teresa Kennedy on 8400 2197 detailing the number of places and component type you wish to return. If you are unsure if you could or should relinquish places, please pick up the phone and have a chat with Teresa. Her phone number is 8400 2154.

Teresa Kennedy, Senior Project Officer, FaCS

Thanks for your feedback


Thank-you to everyone who offered us feedback via the feedback and suggestions sheet included in the February Update.

It was great to hear about what you think and what you would like to see offered in the future. We will certainly be looking at including some of your suggestions in future Update newsletters.

Don't forget, we welcome feedback, suggestions and articles at anytime and we would love to hear from country, rural or remote services as well.

Phone: 8445 8128 or toll free 1800 673 714, Fax: 8268 8065

E-mail: michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au



*People in the sector series***Belinda Whateley**

Woodleigh—Loxton District Children's Centre

How long have you worked in Child Care?

Started my child care career here at Woodleigh 7 1/2 years ago.

What made you choose this career?

I wanted to work with children in their early years. Child care was the natural choice for me because I wanted to catch them at an age where I feel I can make a positive difference to their future development.

What do you like about the job?

I enjoy everything about the job. I love the children's individual personalities and I find it very exciting to help and watch them develop and learn. I enjoy working with a great staff team and supportive parents.

What do you dislike about the job and what do you find the most challenging?

Obviously I dislike budget constraints, but who doesn't! I also feel like most child care workers, that our work does not get the recognition it deserves. It is a challenge to constantly work at lifting the professional profile of child care. We are educators not babysitters. Our parents here at Woodleigh are very supportive, we have educated them!

What motivates you?

The children. I learn as much from them as they learn from me.

I am also very motivated by change, I find it exciting. I love implementing different programs, environments and routines. The children really respond. All of these changes are based on how children learn and what they enjoy. We call it "creating memories". If the children are having fun and enjoying the experience, they will remember it.

What do you feel children need from Child Care ?

Love, happiness, education and fun, fun, fun.

Do you have any tips which could be useful for other child care workers?

Remember to write about what the children are doing, not just what you want them to do. Update your knowledge and skills regularly. Get in 'there' with them and have fun. Relax and let children be children.

Who has been your greatest influence in Child Care?

Jo Mitchell (*current director of Woodleigh*) has been extremely supportive. Jo is always open to us (staff) implementing our ideas and consistently encourages and assists us with our own professional development.

What is your happiest memory in Child Care?

I have many happy memories. One is when I first heard that I had won the state child care award. I thought the staff were joking when they told me. Another happy memory was after winning the national child care award a huge party was held with the band 'Secta 7' playing. Some children were at the party and named the lead singer 'Rockstar'. A metal party was held at Woodleigh and 'Rockstar' performed. It was great to see all the staff, parents and children were involved, we even made the Gene Simmons (Kiss band member) website.

Visions for the future?

Last year was a very big year for me, so I am looking forward to relaxing into my work with the children and going with their flow.



Belinda with Emily Munchenberg

If you or someone you know would like to be part of our 'People in the Sector' series, please contact Michelle on Phone: 8445 8128, Fax: 8268 8065 or e-mail: michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au

A hands on approach to educate children on healthy eating

At St Martins de Porres School OSHC, the children have been involved in cultivating and caring for a small vegetable garden. The director, Chris Hunt, explained that the idea was to encourage healthy eating, educate the children on how vegetables grow and to facilitate child interactions and involvement.

The project has been extremely successful. The children have grown corn, cucumbers, capsicum, strawberries, carrots and tomatoes, both from seedlings and seeds. The corn has grown taller than some of the children which has certainly been a talking point.



The children help to prepare the vegetables for their own afternoon tea and the staff have been thrilled to see that the children are excited about tasting the fruits of their labour. Some of the children are trying foods for the first time.

Staff are using the project as part of their educational program with the children to help them discuss all aspects of growing vegetables and healthy eating.

The children have been amazed by how vegetables grow and are taking a keen interest in the needs of a vegetable garden, including organising a watering roster, weeding and caring for the vegetables. It has been a great opportunity for the children to see first hand where vegetables come from rather than just thinking that vegetables come from the supermarket.

All the children, staff and families have become involved to varying extents and the parents have been very supportive offering to donate seeds and seedlings and to help care for the garden.

The children and staff have had loads of fun with this project and are enthusiastic for it to continue. They are now looking at growing some unusual vegetables and adding more of a multicultural perspective with vegetables from other regions, including Asian greens.

Thanks Chris for sharing this positive experience with us.

If you would like to offer some feedback about what's been happening at your service, please contact Michelle on phone 8445 8128, fax 8268 8065 or e-mail michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au

Calling OSHC Directors and staff - has your service been validated?

We are seeking interest from OSHC directors/ staff from services that have been validated and who may be willing to participate in Q&A forums.

If interested, could you please answer in writing to Teresa Harnett or Kay Thomas at Network SA. There will be some payment for your services.

Staffing Selection Paper 8: "Appointing"

Included as an insert this month is the 8th Child Care Staffing Resource Paper: Appointing. This paper gives information on the steps that should be followed when appointing a new staff member.

If you have missed previous papers we would be happy to send you back copies. Call Sue Pens or Michelle on 8445 8128 or e-mail sue.pens@networksa.org.au or michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au

OSHCQA BULLETIN APRIL 2005

This is the first bulletin since the new round of support has been officially "signed off". Firstly, Bev Pope and Anne Gawen would like to convey their thanks and enjoyment at being involved with OSHCQA in 2004. Bev and Anne this year will be involved in the NetworkSA Extra support. This year, 2005, Teresa Harnett will coordinate the OSHCQA support and Kay Thomas will assist her. From time to time, and particularly for the support for country services, Anne Gawen will also have input.

By now all services should have the program of support that Network SA (as part of the NAATMAA consortium) has planned for the first half of this year. Planning is well under way for the extension of this support through until June 2006. You will be advised of the support options as they become available.

This year there is greater flexibility for the support offered to be tailored to meet the needs of individual services. The groups at sessions will be smaller and so there will be greater opportunity to ask questions as the session's progress. The other key aspect of this current round of support is the input from the sector.

Your feedback to inform us of your OSHCQA support and training requirements as this four month training unfolds would be appreciated. Please contact Teresa or Kay and consideration will be given to tailoring a session to meet the need that you identify as quickly as possible.

Quick reminders:

- Embrace the concept of OSHCQA – it will be easier than the alternative and you'll appreciate the results.
- Ensure that all staff (and other stakeholders) talk about OSHCQA – work as a team.
- Don't be afraid to make changes but don't change for the sake of changing – if it is working well, acknowledge this and move on.
- Ensure that your documentation is clear and in order.
- Do not panic and ask for help if you need to.

We hope too to be able to undertake some mentoring for individual services where there are extenuating circumstances. There will be a fee of \$55 for this service.

Another area of support that is planned and which will be scheduled as required is support for services who have not been successfully accredited in the first instance. This support will take the form of mentoring and there will be no fee for this support.

Teresa & Kay are looking forward to working with you this year and will welcome your feedback.

The strong message that we hear is that service operators and staff do need to be organised and systematic about the preparation for validation. Services must have an ongoing plan for improving the quality of care. When we are offering care for children we should be offering dynamic and exciting programs that we are continuously seeking to improve.

Teresa Harnett

DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOL-AGE CARE

Control the Climate,
Not the Children



Dale Borman Fink

Book Review

Book: Discipline in School-Age Care: Control the Climate, Not the Children

Author: Dale Borman Fink

Reviewed by: Kay Thomas

This little book (43 pages) has some great ideas and suggestions about how to manage children in OSHC settings.

It challenges the reader to question why behaviour may differ from the desirable - there may be other aspects of the setting or practices that should be changed. It is a great read.

This book can be purchased from Community Child Care in Victoria for \$17.95 + postage & handling. Go to their website: www.cccinc.org.au/bookshop.htm

Superannuation for Child Care and OSHC staff

Many people are unaware that superannuation payments fall into two distinct areas for Child Care and OSHC Services. One is under the **Superannuation Guarantee legislation** and the other is through the **superannuation funds referred to in Clause 5.4 of the Child Care (South Australia) Award** [or Clause 5.7 of the Clerks' (South Australia) Award].

Under the **Superannuation Guarantee legislation**, employers are currently required to pay a contribution of 9% of ordinary time earnings for each employee who earns more than \$450.00 per month, except for employees under age 18 working less than 30 hours per week and employees over age 70.

Under the **Child Care (South Australia) Award**, employers are required to pay 3% of ordinary time earnings for each ongoing and casual employee who works over 24 hours per month and is not eligible under the Superannuation Guarantee legislation, except for junior employees who receive 70% of the contribution paid to adults. Contributions for employees under the 3% requirement commence from the first day of the calendar month, after completing 3 months of continuous service with the employer.

The State Superannuation Trust – SST and the Australian Retirement Fund – ARF are the two superannuation funds nominated in the Child Care (South Australia) Award. Please refer to this Award for complete details of the 3% superannuation fund contributions.

Check to make sure that your employees are receiving their superannuation contribution entitlements.

3 month Probationary Period for Child Care and OSHC

Under the Child Care (South Australia) Award an employer may employ a person, who has not previously been employed, on a probationary period **not exceeding 3 months**. This period enables both parties to consider how the employment suits each. It is difficult to accurately assess employee suitability and fit within a service if the probationary period simply goes past without contact or acknowledgement.

How might we make good use of a probationary period? Keeping in touch really helps, for example: A brief meeting at the end of week 1 to see how the employee is settling in. A brief meeting in week 6 may involve a review of issues arising for either party, a simple planning exercise or a performance discussion with criteria for change or training and development options. A longer meeting in week 11 provides the opportunity for both parties to review performance, expectations and conditions, or other options, that will promote a mutually satisfactory outcome prior to the end of the probationary period. Employment is an investment for both parties. Make the most of probationary periods to create a win/win situation.

Bev Pope

What they come out with...

During story time, the reader explained to a group of children that the lettuce was in the garden. 2 y.o. Finn disagreed and explained: "You don't have lettuce in the garden, 'lettuce' go in the letter box."

Positions Vacant**VACANCY****Director****Port Noarlunga Primary School OSHC**

Level 1 approx 30 hours/week

(Before School, After School, Vacation Care)

To Commence 2/5/05

For information call: Tom Trottman 8382 2455

For specifications call: Jan Mangonosan 8382 2455

Applications Close: 6/4/05

Positions Vacant

Glenelg Schools Out of School Hours Care

- Position: OSHC Worker level 4-6, Glenelg Schools.
- Classification: Child Care Worker.
- Award: Child Care (SA) Workers' Award.
- Terms of Appointment:
- Commencing Term 2 2005.
 - 3 Month trial period with 1-2yr contracts thereafter.
 - 20 hrs per week plus full time Vacation Care (38 hours)
- Qualifications :
- Current 3 Yr. Child Care Certificate or Dip. T./ B.Ed. Junior Primary/ Primary or Early Childhood Degree.
 - Current 'First Aid for Schools and Centres' Certificate.
 - Current Mandatory Reporting Certificate
- Information:
- Job Specification available at Glenelg Schools front office.
 - Contact School Office on 8295 3943.

Applications close: Friday 15th April 2005

Hallett Cove R12 School Out of Hours Care

Hallett Cove School OSHC is currently seeking **casual qualified staff** to be a part of our team.

We are seeking a well-organised, flexible person who is enthusiastic and dedicated to the provision of high quality child care in Before School, After School and Vacation Care programs.

We are particularly looking for someone to work at least three mornings a week in Before School Care and Tuesdays in After School Care.

DECS qualifications and experience with 5-12 year olds is essential.

Contact Hallett Cove School Out of Hours Care for more information on 8381 3761

RAH Child Care Centre

is looking for

Qualified Relief Staff

Please contact Lynne on 8222 5880
or post in your resume to:

RAH CCC,
C/- Residential Wing,
Royal Adelaide Hospital,
North Terrace,
Adelaide 5000.

Approximate closing date for advertisements and articles in the Update is the 20th of each month. We aim to have the Update in services by the 1st of each month. Fax or e-mail your advertisement or articles to Michelle on: Fax: 8268 8065 or E-mail: michelle.brereton@networksa.org.au

ASSOCIATIONS

Childcare South Australia Inc

Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month (4th if the 3rd is a public holiday) at the Education Centre, Milner St, Hindmarsh at 7.30pm.

Postal address: P.O. Box 406 Hindmarsh SA 5007.

Email accsa@internode.on.net.

Phone: 0407 580 645

OSHC Association

Meetings for all OSHC staff, parents and advisory committee members are held at Education Department Centre [EDC] Milner Street Hindmarsh or Network SA at the Parks Community Centre, Trafford Street, Regency Park at 10 -12.00 noon in weeks 3 and 8 on the Tuesday.

For further information contact the Chairperson, Teresa Harnett, on 0411 558 050.

National Association of Community Based Children's Services (SA)

Meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 9.30am at the Gowrie Training Centre.

For further information contact Deb on 8231 0941 or by fax on 8231 0949.

South Australian Association of Community Based Child Care Centres

Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 9.30am. at the Gowrie Resource Centre.

For further information contact Lynne Rutherford on 8222 5880.

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ABN : 55 025 418 476.

Network SA and ARMSU are located at The Parks Community Centre, Trafford Street, Angle Park. Enter from Trafford St (car park 4) and follow the path to the centre of the complex. We are in the 2nd building on your left, opposite the Health Centre.