Welcome to the eighth edition of the CELC St Michael’s newsletter. This newsletter will inform you of upcoming events for Term 4, exciting learning opportunities, and developments within the daily operation of the CELC.

**NSW Transition to School Statement**

The transition to school statement is a tool developed by the Department of Education & Communities to make it easier for early childhood services to share information about children with classroom teachers. It intends to summaries children's strengths, identify their interests and ways of learning, and suggest ways to support the child make the transition to school.

The educators at CELC will complete the transition section A & B, based on observation and interactions they have had with the children. As the educators need to stand by statements they are writing they will not be forced into writing statements that do not reflect what they have seen of the child while enrolled at the preschool.

You as parents are encouraged to complete section D & E and sign section F. This is your opportunity to write your beliefs about your child's ways of learning, strengths and skills.

Please complete your section and return to CELC as soon as possible.

We will be sending these statements to your child's school in the coming weeks.

**What Does Play Based Learning Teach My Child?**

Young children’s play allows them to explore, identify, negotiate, take risks and create meaning. The intellectual and cognitive benefits of playing have been well documented. Children who engage in quality play experiences are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development, and are able to regulate their behaviour, leading to enhanced school adjustment and academic learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).
These ideas and concepts have been formulated into the Our Child Our Learner philosophy created by educators at CELC incorporating both traditional and contemporary theories link to your child’s everyday experiences in the preschool.

So often we here “...but all they do is play?” Play is the way that children learn, that is why you will hear educators say things like “children learn through play.” I need to emphasise that educators are also “teaching through play” involving letters, numbers, colours, cause and effect relationships and social interaction to name a few. Play is fun and enjoyable for children. What did you like to do as a child?

Without boring you too much with brain research I will just say that there is a lot of research to support play based learning and teaching. Increased pressure to learn in a traditional sense and perform on standardised tests at a young age has been linked to increased stress and withdrawal from learning. Children are more likely to absorb information in a stress free learning situation.

Learning through play is fun and engaging.

**Fundraising Efforts For 2014**

Our preschool is a non-profit organisation, funded by restricted government grants, fees collected and fundraising initiatives. The preschools fundraising activities are a vital source of revenue and we rely on our families to support us in these ventures.

Although we are co-located with the primary school and part of the Catholic Education Office Diocese of Parramatta we are not allowed to use government grants or funds from the school to support the preschool. All government grants for the school are to be used by the school.

Our fundraising efforts for 2014 have raised $1595.27. That is equivalent to $17.15 per enrolled family. All of these raised funds have been absorbed into purchasing a few new materials and resources for the preschool.

The majority of our fundraising money was raised during the Easter Raffle, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day Stall.

A BIG thank you to all of the families who participated in these initiatives.

In 2015 we are looking to implement a fundraising levy to elevate families anxiety about contributing to fundraising efforts.

**Orwell St Traffic**

The CELC has been working closely with St Michael’s Primary School, Nagle College, Father Confeaggi, facilities officers of the Catholic Education Office, and Blacktown Council to review the traffic situation on Orwell Street.

There will be an independent traffic audit conducted of Orwell St given the tendency of families to park in no standing zones in preparation for the 3pm school pick up. Please be aware families who continue to park in no standing and no parking zones will be fined by parking rangers and lose demerit points.

Blacktown City Council has created a fact sheet outlining penalties that apply in school zones.

http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/People_and_Community/Community_and_Road_Safety/Road_Safety_-_Safer_Travel/Fact_Sheet

**Change of Parish Name**

St Michael’s Parish has a new name Mary, Queen of the Family Parish. Mary Queen of the Family Parish includes the churches of St Michael’s and St Patricks, two primary and two secondary schools, and one catholic early learning centre and social services.

Bishop Anthony Fisher has written a letter to the Blacktown Catholic community expressing the need to grow together in faith and hope as one community. This letter is available on the St Michael's website http://www.stmichaelsparish.com

The Catholic Early Learning Centre St Michael's Parish
Blacktown South will therefore have an upcoming name change. We will need to go through new licensing procedures and assessment from the Department of Education and Communities before implementing the change. I anticipate that our new name will be Catholic Early Learning Centre St Michael’s Blacktown South. Until this process is completed we will continue to operate under the current service name.

**Enrolment Confirmation 2015**

Enrolment confirmation will be distributed to retuning families next week. Available positions have been offered to families on our waiting list.

There are some vacancies for the beginning of 2015. If you are looking to change your preferences for 2015, please do so as soon as possible.

There will be an orientation process of 2015 enrolments on the 19th and 27th November, 2015 (morning sessions). These dates coincide with St Michael's Catholic School orientation days. Other preschool orientation sessions will be offered as necessary during that fortnight on a first come first served basis.

**Graduation**

We have 67 children transition between CELC and Kindergarten in 2015.

This is going to be a big graduation ceremony.

Originally I was trying to hold two graduation ceremonies due to the large numbers of children. Surnames being the determining factor in which graduation session you would be invited to. As I soon found out this was going to be a very lopsided graduation ceremony with a majority of children falling into the A-K grouping. Some families expressed concern that their children would not be graduating with a friend.

So - Graduation will be held at St Michael’s Church on Tuesday 16th December, 2014 at 5pm. Reminder there are 67 children graduating, receiving preschool certificates and a blessing from Father Confeggi - Be patient. Do not go paparazzi crazy or inflict a massive crowd crush on the children as people rush to the front to take photos.

Invitations will be sent closer to the date.

**CELC Christmas Party**

After the success of our 2013 Christmas Party we have decided to revisit the water park at Narragingy Reserve - Wren Picnic Area. Knox Rd Doonside.

Our Christmas Party will begin at 4pm until 6pm on Thursday 18th December.

The water will be turned off at 6pm and the reserve closing at 6:30pm. The Christmas party will be cancelled if it is raining. (unlikely but possible).

This year we would like to start by singing some Christmas Carols and giving the children a small gift from the preschool before they disappear into the water park.

Families are encouraged to bring a picnic with them. You can invite your family and friends if you wish.