



Dr Brenda Abbey

## EYLF ENCOUNTERS

All early childhood educators are inspired by state-of-the-art childcare facilities such as the Mater Childcare Centre. That is because we understand the link between quality physical environments and high quality programs for children.

However, learning environments that are furnished with only the children in mind can create barriers to collaborative partnerships with parents. Parents struggle to find a sense of belonging in an exclusive child-educator space.

View your service’s physical environment through the eyes of a parent. How well does it evoke a sense of belonging? Would it make parents feel as if they, and their opinions and ideas, count? If not, a few simple changes can make all the difference.

Consider placing an adult-sized chair in the entrance and one or two more throughout the centre, including outdoors (when safe to do so). Add a few other homelike items (e.g. cane baskets, items of interest or talking points).

Revisit the signs throughout the service. Is their content, appearance and placement welcoming? Are they too bossy? If so, soften them so that they convey messages respectfully.

Services need quality physical environments and collaborative partnerships with parents to provide the very best for children.

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Unique Quiet Dividers create outstanding reading corners

Resources were required for 14 activity rooms, three sleep rooms and four outdoor play areas. Dan collaborated with the childcare centre staff, recommending particular toys, combinations of play equipment and resources. STE worked from the architect plans and packed over thousands of items into age groups and activity areas. This degree of organisation meant that at the time of delivery, the checking off process was streamlined.

“It was nice to know the person who was supplying the products was going to be there when they were delivered. It was huge job. We had truckloads and truckloads of things which just kept arriving. And when they were unloaded, Dan made sure everything was ticked off.”

“The STE installers unpacked it all and took the rubbish away. I was surprised they did as much as they did, it made our lives so much easier.” Hari continues, “My team and I were there to make sure things went in the right areas. Meanwhile STE had already

**“I found STE were brilliant, I don’t think anyone else would have given us the type of care and attention to detail.”**

*- Hari Kouvidis, Director Mater Childcare Centre*

organised all that and everything was put together properly. It was very well planned – it was brilliant.”



Home Corner - Where wooden tones and life-like reality meet



Furniture & Storage - Superior quality

Now that the Centre has been up and running for over a year, the staff and children are very settled. Some of the children’s favourite toys include the peddle bikes, home furnishings corner and outdoor climbing equipment that can be reconfigured into all sorts of challenges.