

Three reasons to celebrate for Child Side Playgroup

March 2012

In 2002 two parents made a choice to set up a learning environment in a small house in which they could teach their and other children, using Reggio Emilia principles. From these humble beginnings Child Side Playgroup and School was formed, and this year the playgroup and school are celebrating their 10th anniversary.

Child Side's milestone year just happens to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Playgroup WA for which celebrations are going to be held at Bunbury Big Swamp Toddler Playground on Wednesday 28th March, which also falls within National Playgroup week (25th March to 1st April). With all these reasons to celebrate the children and families will be heading up to Big Swamp to join in the fun packed day.

Ten years after they embarked on their ambitious plan Karron McDonald and Leonie O'Connell are still as determined as they were when they first started. They strongly believe we need to be conscious of our own actions, ideas and how we express ourselves in front of children.

Karron explains how at Child Side Playgroup they encourage parents to 'play and learn along side their children guiding them where necessary and letting them 'be' where appropriate; and how this is important to allow opportunities to open up children's interests and provide open-ended experiences rather than set, adult determined activities which do not match the child's brain development'.

Leonie strongly believes there is a need to 'build strong relationships with children and adults and that this should start from the moment of birth. This is important as very young children do not respond to formal teaching, but they open up to warm, responsive, observant adults and a learning environment filled with natural, low-key, child friendly experiences and opportunities to interact'.

This approach is continued as each child moves from Child Side's playgroup up into the school. Where educators aim to 'look into a child's mind, jump into their skins and crawl into their experiences' so they can personalise the learning experiences and responses to each child.

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Making mud pies will never go out of fashion



Everyone helps out to prepare morning tea