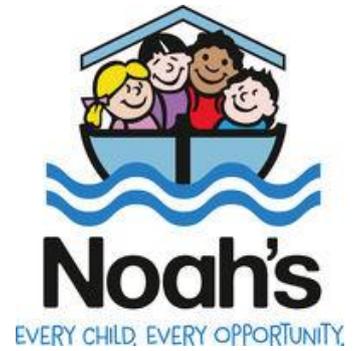


NOAH'S NEWSLETTER



COVID-19 UPDATE

Noah's has now recommenced some home therapy visits under strict guidelines to protect everyone. With most services now returning to pre-COVID schedules and structures, we continue to remain vigilant with the virus still circulating in some Australian communities.

Most of our extra programs have also returned to face-to-face sessions, including Little Steps, Aboriginal Playgroups and My Time.

Pictured here is Jasper who is happy to be returning to Little Steps Ulladulla with his Mum. They used the Noah's recipe to make their own playdough at home when face-to-face sessions were cancelled. As you can see, it was a huge hit!

HISTORICAL MILESTONE IN 2021

The year was 1981 - we were wearing fluoro colours and dancing to the tunes of Bruce Springsteen, Barbra Streisand and Neil Diamond. Diana and Charles got married and the first personal computer was made. But the most exciting thing to happen in 1981 was definitely Noah's opening our doors in Nowra for the very first time!

Noah's started as a toy library for children with special needs and grew into a more comprehensive service for children and families thanks to government grants and local support. Over the years we have become the organisation we are today with the amazing Noah's community allowing us to support around 1000 children and families each year.

With our 40th Anniversary approaching in 2021, we are looking to collect some information about our history and celebrate our achievements. If you have any information about our beginnings, we would love to hear from you! Please reach out by emailing jmunley@noahsark.nsw.edu.au.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Welcome to the Term Three edition of the Noah's Newsletter.

2020 has been such an unsettled year for us all. Talking to Noah's families and staff it's clear that the physical, emotional and financial impact of the bushfires and COVID-19 on our community has been immense.

Times of stress on a large scale can often trigger a stronger reaction to stress in other areas of life. Things that might not have otherwise worried us too much, like traffic or the children making a mess, can now be things that really upset us. Being aware of this sensitivity to all kinds of stress is important. Remember there is no handbook for living through a pandemic so be kind to yourself and find ways to fill your emotional cup.

At Noah's we will continue to assess risks to our community and adjust the way we do things to protect our Noah's families and staff during the pandemic while still helping children to reach their NDIS goals, provide early childhood education and other services.

Since our last newsletter at the start of Term Two we marked Aboriginal Reconciliation Week. As always this was an opportunity to learn about and celebrate shared history, culture and achievements and to make plans to work together to continue to build respectful partnerships, bring about change, close gaps and create the best possible future for Aboriginal children.

The Sounds, Words, Aboriginal Language and Yarning Program (SWAY) is one of our wonderful programs here at Noah's which is connecting children and families to the rich Aboriginal culture of our region and strengthening the awareness and use of the local indigenous language.

Drew Longbottom, who recently visited Noah's to talk to staff about Aboriginal culture with Uncle Sonny Simms, plays a role in the SWAY Program by engaging pre-school children with stories and songs.

4th August was National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day. This special day celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in our community and was also an important day to acknowledge those people in the Stolen Generation who do not know their actual birth date. Noah's marked this occasion across our Aboriginal Programs.

We are so grateful for the support of individuals and organisations who help us to deliver our Aboriginal Programs. We will continue to grow and evolve these programs to meet the needs of the community and prioritise Aboriginal reconciliation.



Uncle Sonny Simms and Drew Longbottom talk to Noah's staff

Alice Lans, CEO

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT HELPING FAMILIES TO THRIVE

Behaviour Support is a growing aspect of the services we provide for children and families. Many parents turn to us for help with this important part of parenting and family life.

For some families, the Be My Best Program (formally known as the Noah's Behaviour Support Program or MCP) is the best option to gain support and guidance. This program is for families with a child aged between 2 ½ to 7 years experiencing major problems with behaviour at home, preschool or school. Children may have special needs in addition to their behaviour challenges but many do not. Parents are coached to practise positive parenting strategies in a safe and supportive environment.

For other families whose child has an NDIS Plan, a Behaviour Specialist can develop a Behaviour Support Plan. This helps families identify causes of behaviours in a child and to have a consistent approach to addressing them encouraging positive behaviour over time.

Noah's practitioners are part of a multi-disciplinary team of psychologists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists and behaviour specialists working collaboratively with other professionals including school teachers, paediatricians, case managers and other allied health professionals. Our Behaviour Support Plans are based on years of research, feedback and consultation with carers, support workers and families. We have taken 'what works' and have combined this with all the elements of best practice in behaviour support. Coupled with our person-centred approach, we help families to turn negative patterns of behaviour around.

All behaviour has a 'function' or a reason. Our specialists will assess the reasons and develop the intervention needed. Positive Behaviour Support is not just about managing the problem behaviour, it's about learning to communicate and developing the skills needed to be independent and/or to learn self-control or manage emotions. Positive Behaviour Support aims to reduce challenging behaviour by helping the person develop skills they need so they no longer rely on using problem behaviours.

Behaviour can be a complex area and we are always happy to discuss your family's situation and needs to see how we could assist you.



GET TO KNOW US

I'm Sophie Jakimyszyn and I am the new Occupational Therapist at Noah's. I have recently moved back to the Nowra area from Wollongong. My partner and I have purchased some land and are excited to build a home and settle here.

For me, the best part about being an Occupational Therapist is helping families to understand and connect with their children and helping individuals be their most authentic, confident and happy selves. I love learning and being an OT has endless learning opportunities.

When families see me at Noah's they can expect to be on the floor playing a lot. I am trained in DIR-Floortime and a range of sensory integrative frameworks and am passionate about incorporating these into the work I do with families.

I'm excited about working at Noah's and getting to know the children and families. I am also excited to be working in such a large and experienced team of therapists with a great reputation over many years.

When I'm not working you can find me kayaking, canyoning, camping, bushwalking and mountain biking. I like reading books and learning, I have interests in neurobiology, sensory integration and attachment theory. I am also reluctantly learning to enjoy lantana pulling on our property!

Sophie Jakimyszyn



FUNDRAISING AND EVENTS UPDATE

2020 continues to be a challenging year for our community. With this in mind, we have scaled back all of our fundraising events and activities for this year.

We will not be holding our annual Noah's Challenge later this year. We have instead chosen to postpone it until the first half of 2021. We think this is in the best interests of our sponsors and community. With 2021 being our Noah's 40th Anniversary, we are planning for the Noah's Challenge to also be a great opportunity to celebrate this wonderful milestone.

Despite the difficult times for our economy, we are extremely grateful to have received some generous end of tax year donations, especially the \$10,000 received from our long-time supporters Disability Assistance Shoalhaven Inc (DASI). We are also grateful to the Shoalhaven Council for a recent grant to purchase some new technology equipment for our Be My Best Program - more on this in the next newsletter.

Thanks to all our donors and supporters for your ongoing support and generosity - we are truly grateful.

[With thanks to our major community supporters](#)

