



We build strong **PEOPLE**
strong **FAMILIES** strong **COMMUNITIES**

YMCA of Sydney

MINUTES OF INAUGURAL REGIONAL ASSISTANTS MEETING
@ ARNCLIFFE - 27.5.11

Agenda distributed to those in attendance. (1 x agenda into p/holes for B/town, C/town & G/acre centres). Agenda also emailed to Arncliffe and Caringbah. Inaugural meeting thus no previous minutes.

Attendees: As per filed list in meetings book.

Apologies: Vicki Dean, Maria Stavros, Julie Pasek, Ghada Sattout and Olga Kronic.

Meeting Opened: 10am

Items for discussion / decision:

Meeting began with Powerpoint Presentation. Mary-Ann explained that the presentation is used for: tenders, kinder orientations and P & C meetings. Also suggested it could be used in school offices or shopping centres.

- **Position description & centre routines (held over from last meeting).** Mary-Ann. All staff should have copies of these. Coordinators have asked to review PDs with you, so that you know what is expected of you. Staff asked to read and become familiar with these as they are used in PDRs. Duties include: Maintain Quality Assurance, confidentiality respected and maintained, hygiene standards met, maintain health and safety of children and assisting Coordinators and other staff. Ensure correct communication with parents is maintained. Keep personal life separate and take into account what you are speaking to parents about. If you hear other staff having inappropriate conversations, communicate this with them. Open communication is the key. We have separated these meetings to give Assistants the opportunity to speak freely, without feeling they shouldn't, with Coordinators in the room. Make the time to speak to the Coordinator about issues, concerns or ideas. If you feel you are not getting the right recognition, please make an appointment to speak with the CSC. We believe your opinions count and we value your efforts. Please remember, we do care and we do want to help. If you don't tell us, we won't know what is going on in your centre.
- **Anaphylaxis – Mary-Ann. Reading of and explain some policies (held over from last meeting).** Anaphylaxis policy shown on screen and copy given to staff to read. Policies are reviewed and then approved by the Board of Directors. When a child with anaphylaxis first comes in to the centre we need to check the policy to ensure we are following the correct procedures. We then need to get info from the parents. Action plans should be displayed in a staff area, that should be quite private too eg inside a cupboard, so that confidentiality can be kept. We are employing a lot of new casual staff. If Coordinator busy it is your responsibility to introduce new staff to the centre and show them action plans so ALL staff are aware of anaphylactic children. (Open communication is really important with families. Ring parents if you are unsure about things eg: if a child is hurt.) It is then the parents responsibility to provide the EpiPen along with the action plan. EpiPen should be labelled – Chemists will provide information on a sticker. Anaphylaxis is a quick reaction. If you have an instance of anaphylactic reaction DO NOT use another child's EpiPen. Call an ambulance, then the parents. The only time you can use another child's pen on someone else is under instruction from ambulance officer. DON'T EVER SEND A CHILD IN AN AMBULANCE ON THEIR OWN. Go with them and call your CSC to cover ratios. As long as you follow YMCA procedures you will not be held liable for any ambulance costs. We are looking at organising training for staff, still working out costing. Should get information before the training then attend a practical session.
- **Child protection reporting Mary-Ann.** Difficult and confrontational subject. If you feel uncomfortable feel free to leave the room. Today is not the forum to bring up issues. This is about building up confidence in the reporting process. If you are seeing something in your centre, it is not up to you to make decisions such as "they are being abused". We simply report on what we see and the concerning behaviour. Example given of child protection case – document everything you see. Be aware that you write down exactly what you see and NOT what you assume may happen. "Keeping them Safe" website shown to all staff. If you have a concern about a behaviour you should report on this site, If you look on the mandatory reporter section it explains what kinds of abuse are included. After you enter in the information the site will tell you where you should go from there and whether you should call DoCS. As much as these issues are uncomfortable, as childcare workers we need to become familiar with what to do if the situation arises. If you do see something, know that you are not alone. Management are here to support you. The Y also has counselling that can be provided. If you go on website you can print off "Keeping them Safe". All centres should have the 8 editions in a folder on display. Keep in mind ALL reports must be based purely on fact. NO ASSUMPTIONS can be made. Protocols for these issues must be followed. Assistants → Coordinators → CSC → Manager →

Program Manager → General Manager → CEO. You must contact someone, go up the ladder until you get to speak to someone. As soon as issues arise we MUST act!! The more info and documentation you can give the better. As childcare workers we are mandatory reporters regardless of whether we are work or not. After the fact there is support – debriefing sessions, counselling sessions and team support. Website is www.KeepThemSafe.nsw.gov.au

- **Food Handling & Hygiene. (held over from last meeting)** In centres follow hygiene procedures. Sponge chart/colour chart should be followed accordingly. Take turns of completing cleaning duties. Use paper towel for spillages not sponges. Ensure gloves are used.
- **Time management (held over from last meeting)** All staff were asked if there are time management issues arising? No comments added. If you are feeling like you can't complete tasks, please let us know.
- **Active supervision.** Examples given: Involved in a game, but still oversee the whole area, not just the game. Position yourself in a spot where you can see the whole area. Move around. Inform children that although you are joining in on the game you also need to watch the other children at the same time. Think about the parents perspective when they walk into the room – what will they see? Will you be in a position where you can see all children? Discuss boundaries with children, where they can go and in what areas. Keep ratios in mind when supervising - only allowed 15 children, inside or outside, with you at a time. Benefits of active supervision: more control, ratios in place & following policies and procedures, parents assured their child is having fun in a safe environment, safety of children in environment, children involved in play and can prevent injury.
- **Making staff aware of the words they are using. Eg telling another staff member, in front of children, that her TAFE teacher "pissed" her off!** Communication: when we speak, how we are speaking. Be conscious of what we are saying in front of the children and the parents. Think about what is appropriate while at work, you must put on a front. Keep your personal life separate.
- **Would like to find out more about craft and inside games for the children that don't really like being outside.** Search google. We have resources you can use. Go by the children's interests to keep them entertained. Ask someone for ideas. Magazines and book stores all have resources. "The almighty google can tell you anything."
- **Talk about chopping board procedure, cleaning, kitchen cleaning.** Noted.
- **Reminder for B/town, C/town & G/acre about sponge colours (changes in some centres). Another centre wrote uniformity across ALL centres = a great initiative.** Noted.
- **Dealing with stressed young children.** This subject was linked with "active supervision" – see above.
- **Could casuals please have directions as to where the Y centre is situated in the school grounds and also where the best place to park is at different centres.** Centre addresses, phone numbers and staff names were provided.
- **Photos of children for TAFE.** Written permission from individual parents required.
- **Do a bit more for the older children in our centre.** Give them leadership responsibilities within the centre to give them ownership. Include interests in programming.
- **All assistants to help out other staff when needed – don't just stand around. Use initiative – try not to wait to be asked to do something.** ALL staff to help out – support Coordinators without being asked. Communicate. Check centre routine and help wherever you can.
- **Confidentiality at centres – limits to interacting with parents.** Limit your interactions with parents and keep work issues CONFIDENTIAL.
- **Newsletters – some were very poor with the information written. It is up to ALL staff to write something.** All staff should be contributing to these, including casual staff.

Items not originally on Agenda:

Nil

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Accepted.

Meeting close: 12md

Next Meeting: Local meetings on 19.8.11