

Bethany – a family centred approach

Our regular readers may remember Grace's story in our last edition of Matters. Today Grace and her family are living in Waragill, Victoria. Her mum Rachel writes...

As well as the support and advice I received from the wonderful Bethany staff, I found my time with the other parents was something that I looked forward to each week. When you have a child with special needs, there is no greater support than other people in the same boat, experiencing similar challenges in life. The friendships we developed over a cup of tea each Wednesday at the Early Learning Group, helped us all get through many a tricky situation and gave us confidence and reassurance to tackle the events of the coming week. We laughed and cried together and I believe this gathering together of parents was every bit as important to the family as the program for the children. Overall, our experience with Bethany has been an integral part of our whole family's ability to thrive in the challenge of having a child with special needs in our family rather than simply to survive. A big thank you to all."



Sean, Rachel, Grace, 4 years, Lachlan, 2½ years and Patrick, 5 months.

Mater Dei's Bethany Early Intervention Program was established in 1993 to address the lack of early intervention services for developmentally delayed young children, aged from 6 months to 6 years, in the Camden Wollondilly area.

The name Bethany comes from the Jerusalem village which, according to the New Testament, was the site of the resurrection of Lazarus.

Bethany's team of therapists and educators visit a child in their home, preschool or child care service and provide both therapy and educational sessions. Over the years support to other specialists who work with the child and support to the child's family have emerged as major focus areas of the multi-faceted and family centred Bethany team.

Bethany has grown from a service catering for 10 families and 2 staff to a service that today meets with 33 families each week. Currently the team consists of two teachers, a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist and a program assistant and we look forward to providing, improving and possibly expanding the service in the future.