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Wynnum child development initiative a finalist in national awards

A Brisbane family day care service that screens for developmental delays and provides early intervention is a finalist in the 2014 HESTA Early Childhood Education and Care Awards.

Wynnum Family Day Care in South-East Brisbane is one of five finalists in the Excellence in Building Inclusion Award category.

The Service has been recognised for its Child Development Initiative, which identifies and supports children with developmental delays.

Manager, Catherine Bavage, said the initiative was established when staff noticed the number of children in their care with developmental delays was increasing.

“The early years offer an important opportunity to address any developmental concerns, yet when families were referred to local public health services, the waiting list was up to nine months,” Ms Bavage said.

“We believed we could help and formed the Child Development Initiative, to support educators in creating individual and holistic action plans for children, which involve parents, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, or other health professionals as required.

The Initiative ensures children to have immediate access to support, while they were on the public waiting list. Now children who are part of the Initiative get reports and recommendations from health professionals to assist with their developmental needs. While day care educators support their educational needs with tailored daily learning programs.

“The signs are that children being supported by the Initiative are making real progress, not only towards overcoming developmental delays, but more broadly in their social and emotional capabilities,” Ms Bavage said.

“We are seeing real improvements in our children’s speech and language development. For example, thanks to the extra support he received, a four year-old boy was able to say his own name for the first time. It was a real breakthrough moment.”

Ms Bavage and other interstate finalists will be flown to Melbourne to attend an awards dinner, where the winners will be announced during the Early Childhood Australia National Conference on Saturday 6 September 2014.

A \$30,000 prize pool will be shared among the winners, generously provided by long-term HESTA awards supporter ME Bank.

The Excellence in Building Inclusion, and Advancing Pedagogy and Practice Award winners will each receive \$10,000 to further implement their program or initiative. The winner of the Outstanding Young Graduate Award will receive a \$10,000 development grant.

HESTA is the super fund for health and community services, with more than 785,000 members and \$28 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

Visit hestaawards.com.au for tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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