**A big congratulations to Ballina Early Intervention!**

BEI underwent Third Party Verification (TPV) on Monday 17th November as part of the Quality Framework Reporting process. Dr Terrence O’Brien and Dawn Skidmore (Third Party verifiers) were very positive and supportive throughout the process. While a written report will be forwarded to BEI within 15 days outlining the results of the verification and areas in need of improvement, a verbal indication of the results was discussed with Leo Prendergast (Director Rainbow) and Sue at the end of the day. The verifiers indicated that BEI had clearly met the following Disability Standards areas:

- **Standard 1** Rights
- **Standard 2** Participation and inclusion
- **Standard 3** Individual outcomes
- **Standard 5** Service access

The verifiers were especially impressed with the quality of BEI planning and documentation with respect to children’s programs, Individual Family Service Plans, Family centred practice, support and interactions. The verifiers indicated that the organisation had a positive work culture and that staff had undertaken extensive professional development and were well qualified.

The verifiers indicated that the remaining standards would be rated partially met and will require a plan of action to improve.

- **Standard 4** Feedback and Complaints
- **Standard 6** Service management

The verifiers indicated that all practices in regard to Feedback and Complaints were highly appropriate and positive.

They noted that considering BEI had no complaints registered, we are obviously supporting families to raise concerns as they arise so that these can be dealt with and feedback taken on board to prevent major problems occurring. It was identified that BEI evaluated their services with feedback from families, staff and the community throughout the year which led to ongoing changes and improvements to meet the needs of clients. A minor addition to the Grievance Policy to include a written statement that there would be no repercussions for families who made a complaint will be added (they will even provide the wording!), which will then ensure the Standard is met.

With respect to Service Management, it was indicated that the Management Committee (made up of parents and community members) would need to have a member with some level of training regarding finance. This may mean that the committee member would enrol in some training (to be paid for by Rainbow Children’s Centre Inc) or that an external advisory group be established so that the Committee could liaise and run certain decisions and information past this group several times a year. These alternatives will be identified more clearly in the written report. BEI will then have 10 days to respond to the report and identify a plan of action. While BEI is not required to have completed the process until the end of June 2015, it is likely that these aspects will be dealt with quickly.

Thank you to Anna (Management Committee) and Helen Scott (parent) who met with the verifiers on the day. A further thank you to all the staff who were on board on the day to discuss standards and for all their ongoing hard work towards the Quality Framework Reporting (QFR) system.

While completing the QFR system and Third Party Verification process has been a focus for the past year, BEI, and Rainbow Children’s Centre Inc, view quality improvement as an ongoing task and will continue to evaluate and review our policy and practice as we have always done to ensure we provide best quality services that meet the changing needs of service users.
Pampering Day Luncheon

2014 National Carers’ Week was held from October 13th-19th, and is an initiative of Carers Australia. According to Carers Australia, there are over 2.6 million unpaid family carers in Australia.

“The combined range of the unpaid family caring effort is extraordinarily large. The replacement cost for this significant contribution to society is estimated at over $40 billion. Mr Tim Moore, President of Carers Australia said that carers are the backbone of the mental health, disability, aged care and health care systems. Carers Week is about celebrating carers contribution to society but it is also about recognising that much more needs to be done to ensure that carers are not forgotten, are not left unsupported and that the needs of caring families are understood recognised and responded to.”

Following on from the success of the Pampering Day Lunch over the past few years, Ballina Early Intervention held a luncheon at The Point in Ballina on Monday 13th October. Gill (BEI administrator) ran a short Tai Chi Qigong Shibashi session for parents, carers and staff. Everyone enjoyed a lovely lunch overlooking the beautiful Richmond River and had the opportunity to catch up with other families and carers, as well as staff from BEI. With the very generous support of local businesses we were able to provide pamper packs (special thanks to Inner Beauty at Lennox Head) for all attendees among other lucky door prizes. Community involvement in making this lunch a success was extremely heart-warming and we hope you had a top day. Thanks to BEI staff as well as Rainbow Children’s Centre for providing childcare.

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Carers Pampering Day

Thank you to our Local Sponsors

- Inner Beauty
- Lennox Gelato & Coffee Co
- Skln, East Ballina
- Muscle and Skin, East Ballina
- West Ballina Chemist
- Boozatorium, East Ballina
The Shibashi consists of 18 different ‘forms’ or exercises designed to enhance fitness for both body and mind. Regular practice of these exercises can improve circulation and digestion, balance blood pressure, alleviate shoulder and knee arthritis, reduce fat deposits at waist and alleviate asthma and bronchitis. The overall effect of the exercise is to reduce mental stress and physical tension carried in the muscles of the body. It takes less than 15 minutes to complete and can be done anywhere you have enough room to outstretch your arms. There are lots of instructional videos on the internet on Tai Chi Qigong Shibashi.
Groups Update

Welcome

Zoe and Maree
Zach and Jasmine
Blake and Bonnie

Monday Group
The Monday group has seen many changes this term with attendees and enjoyed welcoming three new members to the group: Zoe, Zach and Blake. Sienna and Chloe have welcomed their new friends and have been great role models helping them with the routine of the group. Elaina, Simone and Sharee are pleased with the progress in the children with their development in social interactions and communicating their wants and needs. Each child has developed friendships within the group and there has been a lot of focus on taking turns with peers and adults. The separation from parents continues to progress with consistent attendance and reassurance from staff. Elaina, Simone and Sharee look forward to seeing everyone next year and wish everyone a happy, healthy holiday season.

My Time—Ballina and Cabbage Tree Island
Ballina My Time continues to provide such a great opportunity for the parents to 'put their feet up' and enjoy a cuppa and in the company of other parents. Although gaining information has been valuable, it seems that the social aspect is equally as important. There were lots of discussion on food, behaviour, speech, specialists and of course, the changes that NDIS would bring and the uncertainty for some. It has been wonderful to hear everyone's stories as they all share the joy of all of the children's achievements and milestones. A common comment was 'it hasn't been 6 weeks already!

Cabbage Tree Island My Time continues to be a meeting and gathering place for families as they come together to relax and share a meal. We did have some difficult moments when our numbers dropped for a short while but we are now back up to our regular numbers with lots of new families. We have been very pleased with our on-going links with the school on the island and particularly with the Transition to School program. We also have a Maternal health nurse who comes to playgroup and visits with our expecting Mums.

For both My Time groups, welcoming new babies has been an absolute joy and there is never a shortage of helpers.

I am really looking forward to 2015 and the possibilities it will bring.

Sharee

Thursday Group—Getting Ready Together
The ‘Getting Ready Together’ group have enjoyed visits from Louie the dog and some fluffy chicks this term. The children demonstrated very responsive and caring behaviour around the animals and had fun following up with some artwork and games.

It has been lovely to see the children develop stronger friendships and interactions with their peers and be more consistent with turn taking, sharing and being aware of the needs of others. They have also demonstrated fantastic listening and participation with stories which encouraged some great conversations and involvement. “The Old woman who swallowed a fly’ is still recovering from her feeding frenzy!
Wednesday Transition to School Group

The TTS group have had a very busy term consolidating skills and spending longer time on tasks and activities. They have done really well and are in great shape ready to start school next year! All of the children have experienced orientation in their new schools giving them the opportunity to meet their teachers and become familiar with the environment. Simone has made some wonderful ‘Starting School’ social stories which children can share with their families over the holidays.

Next term, a member of BEI staff will be in contact with families and the schools to see how the children are settling in. We will be available to visit and provide further support and advice as required. Everyone at BEI would like to wish all the children (and their families) making the transition to school next year all the very best in the next part of your journey!

Oliver and Xavier - Lennox Public
Mckayli – St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary
Deklan Sahara, Taylia and Tyrese - Ballina Public
Vincent, Tully, Bronx, Josh - Southern Cross K12
Ashton - St Joseph’s Catholic Primary
John—Emmanuel Anglican College
Matilda – Summerland Christian College
Logan – Biala

The children in the Transition to School Group painted their interpretations of Louie.
We have enjoyed visitors to the BEI group of the furry and feathery kind this term. Carole brought in Louie the poodle and fluffy baby chicks. It was wonderful to see the children interacting so gently and responsibly with the animals and it confirmed how such experiences can be positive, therapeutic and motivating for them.

BEI children also had the opportunity to experience a therapeutic horse day in Teven facilitated by equine experiential educator, Kerry Johnston.

Some of the BEI children had a wonderful morning at Teven Equine Centre. The children had the opportunity to stroke, hug, sit and ride on the horse.
We have had lots of positive feedback from parents and children about the animal visits and experiences this term which supports the research available about the benefits of animal interactions. An animal in a session can help with emotional awareness and regulation, behaviour management skills, communication, gross and fine motor, social interaction and assertiveness. We definitely saw some ‘golden moments’ between the children and animals as the photos demonstrate. We hope to see more furry and feathered friends at BEI in 2015!

Training Update

Early Childhood Intervention Australia, NSW
Does This Child Need Help—Train the Trainer Course

I was fortunate enough to attend an amazing Train the Trainer workshop in October. It was “Does this Child Need Help? Identification and Early Childhood Intervention”. It was a 2 day event aimed at preparing me to deliver this course to Early Childhood Educators and provide them with the tools that may assist them to identify if a child might need Early Intervention and help them approach these difficult issues with families. The participants were given the opportunity to work through information both as an Educator and then as a trainer. So much valuable discussion took place and I came away with lots of ideas for delivery. I believe that ECIA has done an amazing job putting together this training package.

Sharee Bloomfield
Calendar Updates

- School Holidays commence Friday 19th December and Term 1 commences Tuesday 27th January, 2015

- CareFlight—Magic Mania show—Friday 19th December at Ballina RSL—tickets have been posted to those who requested them.

Families—your BEI Keyworker will contact you soon to discuss services for 2015.

Quotes

May your walls know joy, may every room hold laughter, and every window open to great possibility.
— Mary Anne Radmacher

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart. Wishing you happiness.
— Helen Keller

“Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn’t before! What if Christmas, he thought, doesn’t come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!”
— Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!

Wishing everyone all the best for the holiday season.
BEI teaching staff will be on leave from 19th December 2014 until 27th January, 2015

BEI office will be closed from 24th December until 5th January, 2015

BEI Staff— From L to R—Gill Hunter, Sharee Bloomfield, Carole Piper (holding Louie), Elaina Creighton, Simone Bennett, Caroline Jordan & Sue Farmer.

Louie—our companion