

'Footprints in the Sand'

Bereavement Service



At Bear Cottage, providing support for you and your family through our 'Footprints in the Sand' Bereavement Service is an essential part of our care. In the days or weeks following your child's funeral your Key Worker and/or Bear Cottage Social Worker will make contact with you. You can talk to someone from Bear Cottage at any time by contacting us on **(02) 9976 8300 or (02) 9976 8309**.

Sometimes it can be helpful to return to the hospital or Bear Cottage to meet staff to go over aspects of your child's illness or to talk with the people that were involved in your child's care – we are happy to help organise this if you feel it would be beneficial.

For some families returning to Bear Cottage is important and helpful. Although families are welcome at any time we also organise regular opportunities for families to come back, see staff and meet other bereaved families.

Back to Bear Cottage BBQ

Every few months we hold a family BBQ for bereaved families. They are held at Bear Cottage on a Saturday or Sunday and are an opportunity for families to catch up or meet other families and see staff. Bear Cottage may have become a very important place for siblings and the BBQ gives them a chance to re-visit the building, the people and meet old and new friends. This is an informal event where families and staff can come together and give each other support.

Footprints in the Sand Camp

This Camp for our bereaved families offers an opportunity for families to spend a weekend together with other bereaved families. Our planned program includes activities for all ages. Families can relax, be pampered and meet new or re-connect with old friends.

Remembering Day

Bear Cottage values the importance of remembering and paying tribute to the children who have died. Our Remembering Day includes the whole family, with activities for siblings and a formal Remembering Service. They are held regularly for families and staff.

Bereavement Morning Tea

Our morning teas enable parents to come together in a supportive environment. Limited child care is available.



Camps

As well as our Footprints in the Sand Camp, Bear Cottage also runs a number of other camps throughout the year that cater for the needs of the whole family.

- **Siblings**

Our **Sibling Days** and **Sibling Camps** cater for all ages and are for bereaved and non-bereaved siblings. They offer a planned program of support, fun, creativity and challenging activity. It is a chance to catch up with friends and just have fun.

- **Parents and Grandparents**

We offer camps for mums, dads and grandparents that offer the chance to take time out to relax and connect with others who are travelling similar paths. Over these few days, lifelong bonds and friendships are built allowing for opportunities to share tears, laughter, advice and to offer support.

- **Wellness Program**

BootCamp and **PitStop** are our wellbeing programs held over several months for mums and dads. Each participant sets personal health, nutrition and life goals. They include information and education on healthy eating, the importance of exercise and stress relief and an opportunity to try a variety of exercise options.

Superhero Week

The children and their families who come to Bear Cottage are all superheroes in our eyes so one of our fundraisers is Superhero Week. We kick-start the week with a huge superhero party at Bear Cottage with all Bear Cottage families invited.

Christmas Party

Every December Bear Cottage holds an enormous family Christmas party. Although we acknowledge how difficult Christmas can be for our bereaved families, it is an opportunity to come back to Bear Cottage to see staff and other families.

There is no 'right' way or time to grieve. Many people find additional support and counselling helpful at this time. If you are worried about yourself or someone you care for, contact a health professional to discuss your concerns.

For further information about support groups and services, please call our Social Worker on (02) 9976 8336.



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Bear Cottage's Bereavement Service