

'Glorified Scrapbookers to Technological Trendsetters'

Digital documentation - Enhancing our Childcare Services...

From Neville Dwyer - Nominated Supervisor Dorothy Waide Centre LDC Service



What follows is a brief description of our transition from traditional written, time-consuming and somewhat haphazard data recording and dissemination, to embracing the numerous benefits of easily digitally documenting our children's activities, achievements and progress within a system specifically designed for sharing information with all interested parties (e.g. parents and educators).



How important is maintaining documentation?

In a word - critical. Especially the maintenance of Daily Journals and how we both gather information and share it with families. It's their child, it's what they need to know about - essentially, it's their information.

That information must be provided in ways that enhance relationships - between parent and child, and between parent and educators within an organisation. Data must be current, relevant and comprehensive, and built on in-depth knowledge and understanding of each child and what we, as educators, are trying to achieve with that child.

Originally we used sketchbooks to record each child's story with journals. We graduated to children's portfolios, or "glorified scrapbooks", which took massive amounts of time to maintain. To the point where we were literally paying staff to cut out photographs and stick them into folders - very poor use of an educator's time.

What we looked for in a digital platform.

We required a digital system that mirrored our existing paper-based processes as we'd already planned, designed and developed sophisticated procedures for gathering, capturing and analysing data. It was imperative that any new system was able to process data that was important to us, in ways that were useful to us. It had to be an intuitive, user-friendly application with a common look and feel throughout, that would keep educators and other users engaged in the process.

However, initial research suggested there simply weren't any off-the-shelf applications in the market-place satisfying our various requirements. Until Kindyhub. The team at Kindyhub were able to take our shopping-list of requirements, customising them into their existing application, giving us a fully-functional digital system enhancing what we had already.

Kindyhub in our own words.

A phenomenal tool for recording a child's learning experiences and sharing that information with parents, in terms neither jargon-laden nor geared to industry insiders. It enhances connections and develops relationships between educators and parents by making all information relating to the child easily accessible. Opening another channel for discussion improves communication between children, parents and educators. Built-in planning tools, including events, calendar and messaging enable families to stay abreast of the important milestones in their child's early learning.

How Kindyhub enhances our relationship with families.

Excellent two-way communication allows quick correspondence with parents about anything and everything, planned or unplanned – e.g. an upcoming excursion, a virus outbreak, a sick child or one with an unexpected requirement etc. The system automatically tracks who has/hasn't opened messages, allowing us to enquire if we have correct/current email addresses and to make alternative communication arrangements where applicable – e.g. printing and mailing Daily Journals or Observation Reports.



The kindyhub platform for educators

How our team uses Kindyhub.

We use Kindyhub for practically everything except doing the dishes. It lets us know who won't be coming in each morning. It tracks children's learning and our day's activities through the Daily Journal – the main program. All staff and, most importantly, the children, engage with that process. Children are effectively recording their own day by taking the photographs that are uploaded to the system and relating their observations to educators for entry into the Daily Journal. If it's important to the child, part of the child's daily experience, then it gets recorded – just as they see it. The observation, capture, recording and sharing of information becomes part of the child's learning and development.

How Kindyhub enhances educators' and families' knowledge of children's learning.

We can input information related to the Australian Curriculum – e.g. literacy, maths, science etc. – and then record how children are learning in each of these areas. Families can easily see what information is being captured and how, giving them insight into the range of fields where learning occurs and how each is influenced by a variety of people. This builds our and their capacity to help children to recognise, understand and make the most of their abilities.

How children participate in using Kindyhub.

Phones with inbuilt cameras, iPads and tablets, digital cameras – children use all of these to record the stuff that's important to them, capturing their world and the people who inhabit it. Children's focus is largely different to that of the adults around them. Kindyhub enables adults – educators and parents – to experience the world from the child's perspective by capturing and sharing the images and experiences uploaded by the children. Children in turn know that their parents have immediate access to everything that has been important to them daily and that they can discuss it all with their parents at home. This learning, experiencing, recording and sharing process on an individual basis, when demonstrated to other schools, has astounded them with its sophistication and comprehensiveness.



KEY FEATURES

- Two-way communication allows quick correspondence with parents about anything and everything.
- Built-in planning tools, including events, calendar and messaging.
- Automatically tracks who has/hasn't opened messages.
- Input of information related to the Australian Curriculum – e.g. literacy, maths, science etc.

“Kindyhub enhances connections and develops relationships between educators and parents by making all information relating to the child easily accessible.”

Kindyhub is our platform of choice for documenting children's learning.

Documenting children's learning is the most critical thing we do, and you can't do that by simply selecting boxes; it's not a 'tick and flick' process.

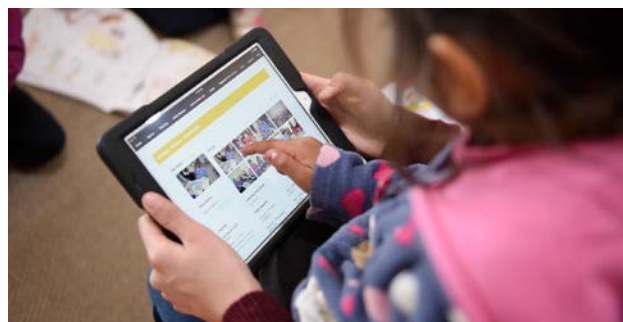
We required a feature-rich, fully functional and sophisticated system enabling our educators to gather and record information about the children in our care. We needed a system allowing us to easily share that information with parents and families in ways that enhance the learning experience for everyone involved – educators, parents and, importantly, the children.

Kindyhub gives us precisely that. Better recording ability. Improved communication between educators and families. Greater understanding of the children and what's important to them. Accurate insights into each child's development. All easily accessible within a user-friendly application that everyone can use to great effect.

Kindyhub and the EYLF (Early Years Learning Framework).

Our dog-eared copies of the EYLF are well-thumbed and we fully understand the required outcomes. Kindyhub's matrix on each individual child shows exactly which outcomes that child has met and identifies any areas to be addressed. Educators use Kindyhub to ensure important data is accurately captured and matrixed, mindful of the need for outcomes to be satisfied.

Of course, the EYLF isn't only about outcomes, although that is what is measured in the transition statement. We also record how children are learning and how they are feeling about themselves as they go about their daily activities. This helps demonstrate to parents the level of happiness and engagement displayed by each child and how that contributes to positive outcomes.



Kindyhub is easily accessible within a user-friendly application that everyone can use to great effect.

Kindyhub helps our educators complete the planning cycle for children's learning.

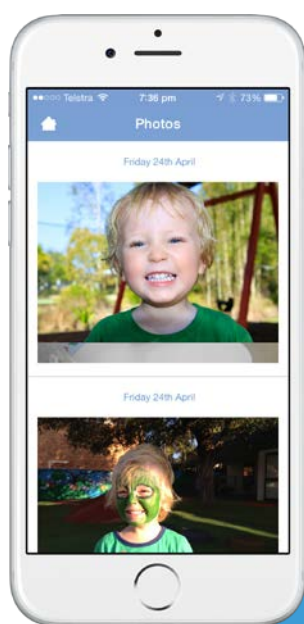
Kindyhub is a comprehensive platform allowing input from children, parents and educators to capture both text and images. Within specified curriculum areas we record what children are learning about, their mindfulness and an assessment of their wellbeing. Kindyhub caters for recording data on every aspect of the child's learning experience - how they feel about themselves, how they interact with friends, adults, their parents and their environment, as well as what they are learning about.

Parents and educators can see from within the system how complex children's play actually is, where everything is inter-connecting and moving all the time within a broad learning experience.

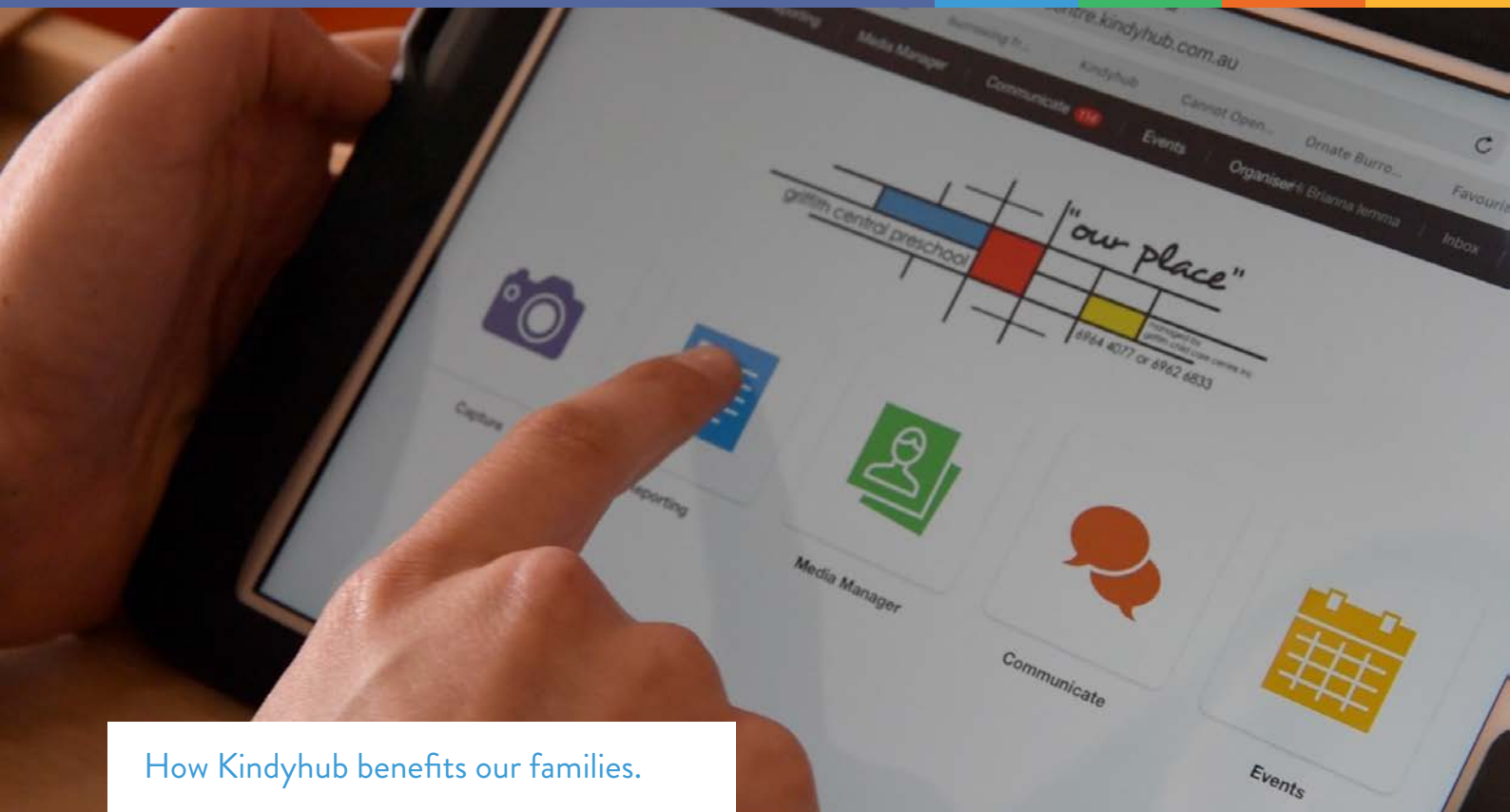


Benefits of using Kindyhub during the Assessment and Rating process.

Critical observations and other information are stored in a single, centralised location. The learning plan and outcomes for each child are stored in their individual profile. The system makes it easy to demonstrate and share information gathered for each child. The system records a child's complete journey from the beginning of the formal education process and the comprehensive history is immediately available for passing on to the next organisation (pre-school, school) in the process. Data is stored in 'the Cloud', easily accessible from anywhere and with multiple backups for security.



"Kindyhub enables adults – educators and parents – to experience the world from the child's perspective by capturing and sharing the images and experiences uploaded by the children."



How Kindyhub benefits our families.

Kindyhub has provided a deeper understanding of their children. It gives them greater information about what's happening in the early years.

That information is shared every day and is easily accessible by the families. It's more than just photographs. It's also about stories. About capturing moments and being able to create a strong narrative to articulate what the moment means within the child's learning framework.

Our favourite aspect of Kindyhub.

The time it saves on documentation; time that educators can spend with children instead. The ability for each service to mould it to whatever they are doing.

Its professional look and feel, presenting information to families in a better manner.

The framework it provides us as educators for increasing our understanding of children's development and how we can best make that work for each child, helping each one be the best they can be in whatever area they pursue.

"All data must be stored on Australian soil. Kindyhub is based here in Australia and complies completely with all relevant legislation."

The simple, easy to use interface saves time on documentation; time that educators can spend with children instead.

Legislation impacting the digital world.

Privacy Legislation changes in 2015 impacted how and where children's records and medical records are stored and accessed. All data must be stored on Australian soil. Kindyhub is based here in Australia and complies completely with all relevant legislation.

It's important for us to have confidence that the people we work with in this sensitive area are conversant with all applicable legislation and fully compliant with it. Our relationship with Kindyhub is built on that confidence.

Assistance and help provided by Kindyhub.

In short, we think they are pretty amazing. There are a lot of services out there engaging with technology in many different ways. We ourselves have staff who are really competent with IT and others who are not tech savvy. Kindyhub caters for everyone. Their team is constantly thinking of how they can develop our requests within the application.

They engage with our whole team and our educators are encouraged to communicate directly with Kindyhub's support team if they need help; Kindyhub engage and resolve issues straight away.

We need people who are accessible and friendly, and that's always been the case with The Kindyhub Team.