1981 Opportunities for Families to Connect

Tuesday, November 17, 1981 THE MERCURY

It was a picnic with a difference at Parramatta Park last Sunday, when Jodie and her little friends gathered for annual celebrations.

For Jodie and her friends are all intellectually handicapped children, ranging from in-fants to five years of

They joined with their parents, friends and teachers in games. And they ate sandwiches and cakes and hundreds of thousands.

There were clowns, music, a toy van and a merry-go-round. There were races and ice creams and drinks and balloons.

The children are all pupils" at the Early Education Clinics at Parramatta, Cremorne and Camperdown.

The Mercury pictured Jodie, who is 18 months old, at the Parramatta clinic at the corner of Charles and Macquarie Streets. She was doing lessons" with the direcor, Sandra Leonard.

Next year the Parramatta clinic will operate rom 5 O'Connell Street in a cottage provided by arramatta City

Fun picnic in park for handicapped

Director Sandra Leonard and two teachers will look after the children. Parents also attend the clinic

and assist where they

Staff have training as special education teachers, speech and physiotherapists and the clinic itself is affiliated with the Special Education Department of Macquarie Uni-

Sandra Leonard said parents benefited from such simple guidelines

- Teach your child to attend. All other learning depends upon this skill.
- Give clear and con sistent cues.
- Be firm because the child cannot always decide what needs to be learned or when.
- · Make learning fun.
- Praise all progress

and interest will be the

child's greatest reward.

• Encourage inde-

pendence where

· Be positive and say

what should be done.

Sandra can be con-

tacted by parents of in-

tellectually handicapped

children by mail - C/-

Box 271, P.O., Cre-

PICTURED: Jodie with

her teacher Sandra

Leonard.

morne, 2090.

not what should not.

possible.

Clinic annual picnics began to be held, starting with the first one at Parramatta Park on Sunday November 15, 1981.

Parent Get-Togethers

Parent get-togethers were organized every second month. For Northside parents it was the first Wednesday night and the venue was St Mary's Church.

On the alternate month, parents from the Western suburbs met at the Charles Street centre on the second Tuesday night. They were relaxed get togethers where many issues relating to parenting of children with a disability were discussed. (1981 newsletter).

Several parents also were happy to act as support parents for any parent who needed someone to call. Phone numbers for these parents were freely advertised in the newsletters. There were parents for particular areas and even one who was willing to talk to country mums as well. They called themselves Supporters of the Early Education Clinic (SEEC).

Financial support was available for parents who needed equipment (e.g. high chairs) if their finances were tight. Some community groups were also available to help such parents.

