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ON THE JOB

Karen Cawthorne

Karitane mothercraft nurse

Age 35

Qualifications

I'm a trained nanny through TAFE, an enrolled nurse with Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and a mothercraft nurse through Karitane in Randwick.

Did genes, environment or accident get you here?

I grew up around lots of children and babies, and always saw myself working with them. It was while working in a day-care centre that I came across my first mothercraft nurse (someone that handles the babies) and realised that that's what I wanted to do.

What do you do?

We run a residential unit where parents who are having problems with their babies come to learn new strategies. It could be difficulty with breastfeeding, adjusting to parenthood, or they might have unsettled babies, night wakers or

fussy feeders. We get an overview of the problem and then support and guide them in practical ways to teach their children how to settle.

Toughest part of job?

Not enough time. There is a lot of ground to cover from Monday to Friday.

Most satisfying part?

Helping heal the way for loving families to develop.

What would you change?

We have a 20-bed unit but we are only funded to use 10.

How do other people see you?

They tell me that I lighten the place - a bit of a larrikin.

What are you proudest of?

Knowing that I help nurture this very important relationship.

What do you most regret?

Not doing my bachelor of nursing.

Who inspires you?

I look forward each day to working with Andy Ayling, clinical nurse consultant who set

up our new outpatient program for toddlers.

What do you do for fun?

Kick a ball with the kids - Kevin, who is nine, Adam, who is five, and Bianca, who is 18 months.

In another lifetime, what would you do?

Go into space.

Motto?

All things are difficult before they are easy.

Sharon Lindsay

