

# 1979

## North Sydney Council Support from the Beginning



Sandra Leonard,  
Director 1979-1987



*As I recall our first clients came via word of mouth from Cremorne Baby Health Centre, from other parents and paediatricians from Royal North Shore and the Children's Hospital. They initially paid a small fee which later formed the basis of Sandra's salary mine came much later.*

*- Lesley Walters, Speech Pathologist.*



On February 6, 1979 Early/Ed or The Early Education Clinic as it was then called officially opened, with the support to provide premises from the NSW Health Commission and North Sydney Council. They had three rooms in the back of Cremorne Baby Health Centre (The Early Childhood Centre). The first team was the inaugural teacher Sandra Leonard, teacher Betty Hook and a part-time physiotherapist Barbara Elkin and speech pathologist Lesley Walters.

It was Sandra Leonard's vision to establish NSW's first Early Intervention Centre for all children, 0-5, who had an intellectual disability. Other services existed for specific disabilities such as physical disabilities, sight and hearing but EarlyEd was unique at this time. Sandra and Betty as mature-aged students had studied Special Education and Psychology at Macquarie University and had subsequently taught in their Early Intervention Research Programme run by Moira Petersie for children with Down Syndrome. This programme catered for only 25 children.