

# Taking the lead at childcare centre

ALICIA Fitzpatrick is living proof of how far a Central Queensland Institute of TAFE childcare course can take you, as she is now a director of a childcare centre in Mackay.

Ms Fitzpatrick recently graduated with an Advanced Diploma of Children's Services and is already considering pursuing further study at university.

Alicia said her passion for child care and children was first ignited in high school.

"I had done work experience in a childcare centre in Year 10 and I decided from then on that child care was the way to go," she said.

"I completed Years 11 and 12 and immediately enrolled in the diploma at TAFE.

"I wasn't really interested in teaching, but I still wanted to work with children.

"I enjoyed doing the course and by the age of 20 I was a fully qualified group leader.

"The teachers were great and I made strong friendships with the other students."

She said that during her studies, she completed four work placements at four different centres and even picked up some relief work.

In 2007 Alicia was hired to set up a childcare centre from scratch and even wrote the policies and procedures for the centre and purchased all the required equipment.

"It was a lot of hard work, because I had only started my advanced diploma at the same time and just had a baby earlier that year," she said.

"Wonder Kids came along in

**Alicia Fitzpatrick is now a director of a Mackay childcare centre, after completing an Advanced Diploma of Children's Services at Central Queensland Institute of TAFE.**

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September 2009 and acquired the centre.

"My team and I were hired immediately to continue running the centre.

"We are managed by Guardian Childcare Alliance, based in Brisbane, and they were proud when I and my staff graduated."

Despite being very busy with running the childcare centre and her own family, Alicia still has more plans.

"My TAFE teachers have told me the only way is up - so university here I come - but I will probably have a break from studying and maybe start

late this year or early next year," she said.

"I do also have my eye on a TAFE teaching position one day.

"I hope I can help others in achieving what I have accomplished and show them how much fun child care can be.

"Child care means developing and offering a warm and caring environment where children can learn while playing.

"It's not an easy job, but it is very rewarding."

For more information on the institute's childcare courses, phone 1300 278 233.