

Livvi's Place rally

VERA BERTOLA

A VITAL and well-used children's facility in Campbelltown is rallying support to stay open after it failed to attract government funding.

Supporters of Livvi's Place, at Macarthur Square, insist the much-loved centre won't go down without a fight, and have organised a rally on site at 10.30am on Wednesday, December 15.

Livvi's Place opened in May 2007, and is a partnership between Macarthur Square, Touched by Olivia Foundation (TBOF) and Good Beginnings Australia.

The foundation was established by John and Justine Perkins in honour of their baby, Olivia, who died in 2006 aged just eight months from a rare disease.

Mr Perkins said Livvi's Place was funded by the Macquarie Bank for 1½ years, then had financial support from Vodafone and the foundation, but the foundation was no longer in a position to maintain the level of funding.

"We've been trying to get government funding for the last two years but to no avail," he said. "We've made representations to ministers and state MPs and had no luck."

He said if the rally was unsuccessful Livvi's Place would shut its doors for good in January.

The centre's indoor playground services more than 1000 families in Sydney's south west through programs run by Good Beginnings



Manager Jesse Garcia (front, left), Lisa Demeio and Harpreet Uppal, of Macarthur Diversity Services Inc, and parents and children are determined to keep the childcare centre open.

Picture: IAN SVEGOVIC

Australia, Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative, The Benevolent Society, Sing and Grow and Burnside.

"Our program is like a 'mother group on steroids' and has been very successful in building social and support networks among families," Mr Perkins said.

Regular user Liz Willis said her family was socially isolated before

she discovered Livvi's Place.

"It was almost impossible for me to get my young kids out anywhere in the community to meet other kids and families," she said.

"Livvi's Place has enabled us to make great friendships."

Community Services Minister Linda Burney has been invited to the rally.



CHILDREN'S HAVEN

■ **WHAT:** Livvi's Place, at Macarthur Square

■ **WHY:** Promoting children's health and happiness

■ **FUTURE:** Doubtful because of a lack of funding