

July
2019



ON *this* MONTH

Around the country

NAIDOC Week -----	7-14 July
World Population Day -----	11 July
National Tree Day -----	28 July
National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day -----	4 August
National Science Week -----	10 - 18 August
Children's Book Week -----	17- 23 August
RSPCA Cupcake Day -----	20 August

As the end of financial year closes out, we look to the new financial year and what opportunities this may bring. The Federal election was an interesting time in the early childhood space as the Labor government had promised an increase to our early childhood educators Award. These electoral promises would have been interesting to see the potential impact to the sector as a whole. I'm not sure how Labor saw these increases being rolled out without substantial impact to fees and subsidies. Our educators are our greatest asset and deserve appropriate monetary recognition while also providing a good balance of affordability and subsidization from the Federal Government.

As we move forward into the new financial year, the educators all receive the 3% Award increase and we continue to invest further in their careers through our support office structure and coaching and mentoring occurring across each location. This investment means better programs, better services and better outcomes for your children. Thanks for choosing Story House!

K. Perren

Kellie Perren
Chief Operating Officer

NAIDOC WEEK 7-14 JULY

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life.

The week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.



Chicken Tacos w Grilled Corn & Avo



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 chicken breasts
- 1 tsp cumin, ground
- zest of a lemon
- 1 tsp sweet paprika, ground
- extra virgin olive oil
- 2 corn cobs
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1 punnet cherry toms, halved
- zest and juice of 1 lime
- 1/2 cup parsley, roughly chopped
- tortillas

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Place chicken breasts on an oven tray lined with baking paper, sprinkle the cumin and paprika over the chicken breasts and turn the chicken to coat evenly in the spices. Zest over half a lemon, drizzle with a little olive oil and pop into the oven to bake for 18 minutes or until the chicken is golden and cooked. Remove and use two forks to roughly shred. Set aside.

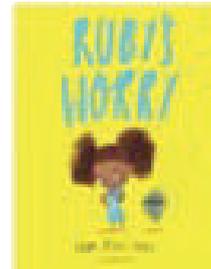
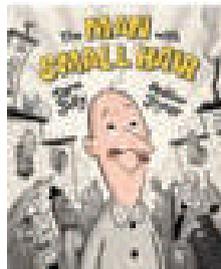
Place the corn on an oven tray lined with foil, zest over the rest of the lemon and drizzle with a little olive oil. Wrap up the corn in the foil to create a packet and pop into the oven along with the chicken to bake for 15-20 minutes or until the corn is tender. Heat grill to high. Remove the corn from the oven, carefully open the foil packet and pop under the grill for 5 minutes or until slightly charred. Allow to cool slightly. Place the corn onto a chopping board and run a knife down each cob to remove the kernels. In a large bowl place, the corn kernels, cherry tomatoes, avocado, parsley, lime zest and juice and olive oil and toss to combine. To assemble; top each tortilla with a little shredded spiced chicken and a good helping of grilled corn & avocado salsa.

Enjoy x Remember to always supervise kids.

Recipe and Image from 'mylovelylittlelunchbox.com'

BOOK REVIEWS

A FEW HEART-WARMING TALES FOR BEDTIME



THE MAN WITH SMALL HAIR JANE JOLLY

The man with small hair does everything he can to blend in with the crowd. He covers up his small hair, short pants, colourful boots and beads so that he looks like everyone else. Then one day he looks in the mirror and doesn't recognise the person staring back at him. A lovely story about having the confidence to be whoever you are.

RUBY'S WORRY TOM PERCIVAL

Ruby is a happy adventurous girl, until she discovers a worry! The worry starts small but grows and grows until Ruby thinks she will never be happy again. But a worry shared is a worry halved and that is what happens when she meets a boy who is also a worrier. Simple text and fun illustrations.

ANOTHER BOOK ABOUT BEARS LARA BUNTING AND PHILIP BUNTING

The bears are on strike! Every time a book is opened with a bear in it, a bear has to perform the story and they have had enough. An elephant or a kitten cannot take the part of a bear. Find out what happens in this heart-warming story that has a hilarious twist to it.

FOCUS: Empathy and why we need to teach it to our children.



Why does empathy matter?

Empathy involves the ability to understand someone else's perspective and understand how they feel about it. Empathy is essential in interpersonal relations, has been linked to moral behaviour and in general, humans are kinder when they can understand one another's perspectives and emotions. Positive strengths in this skill have also been linked to emotional intelligence.

In a child, the skill of empathy advances as their cognitive structures develop. Between the ages of two and four years children start to become aware of their own emotions and feelings. Between five and seven years children start developing compassion and reading emotional cues from others.

These stages of development are the foundations that help develop empathy in children. For some, the ability to feel empathy comes naturally. Interestingly, it is not an innate deposition that unfolds equally in all children.

Fortunately, parents can have a considerable influence to help develop empathy in children. If you encourage empathy, children can become more empathic to others. This is particularly important for children on the spectrum, children who lack 'theory of the mind' and for children who just naturally have a lower empathetic capacity than others.

- What does empathy look like? Decety and Cowell (2014) believe the word empathy has become a broad term for three distinct processes;
- Emotional sharing: which occurs when people experience unpleasant feelings because they saw or heard distress in another person.
- Empathic concern: which is a person's motive or desire to care for others who are vulnerable or experiencing distress.
- Perspective-taking: which is the ability to consciously put yourself in another person's situation and imagine what they could be thinking or feeling. All of which can be explored and encouraged through a child's early years.

10 Ways to Teach Your Child to Be More Empathetic

1. Empathise with your child and show empathy towards others. This is all about role modelling empathy and being mindful of your own responses to your child's emotions. The easiest way to do this is to be reflective of the emotions your child displays and validate how they are feeling.
2. Teach children to effectively manage their emotions and self-regulate. Expressing empathy is not always easy for children, particularly if they themselves are experiencing negative emotions or feelings that are overwhelming. One of the initial steps to developing empathy towards others is to be able to manage your own emotions effectively.
3. Use every day opportunities to address perspective taking. Use moments from everyday life to encourage caring and compassionate thoughts through 'perspective taking.' Talk openly about how another may feel when you identify situations that elicit an empathetic response in books, movies, at the park or in your home.
4. Help children discover what they have in common with others. Encourage inclusion, diversity and warmth by helping your child discover what they share in common with people of all different perspectives.
5. Encourage kindness, thoughtfulness and compassion for all living creatures. Prioritise these traits across all situations and to all living things.
6. Help children develop the ability to read emotional cues. Empathy requires children to identify how others feel, not only based on their own emotional insight but also on the other person's emotional cues – not every person reacts and feels the same in every situation.
7. Develop cognitive awareness of empathy using literature. While you are reading you can engage in empathy building by: discussing the character's feelings and emotions, pointing out the facial expressions or body language of characters, asking your child how they would feel if it were them.
8. Engage in emotional awareness games and play.
9. Encourage younger children to develop empathic concern during imaginary play. By engaging in play with your child you can role model and encourage empathetic concern.
10. Encourage and praise emotional sharing. Your child needs to be reassured that it is okay for them to experience both negative and positive emotions. They should also feel safe to express all emotions to you. You can encourage this by asking your child how they felt when they experienced a situation or event that might have produced a particularly strong empathetic response. When they do exhibit empathy, reinforce the behaviour by praising them for showing compassion. If your child shares an emotion with you, even an unpleasant one, make sure to tell them it is wonderful that they are sharing their emotions, and that it demonstrates how kind and caring they are.

Source: Product Childhood101 (2019, April 16). Develop Empathy Retrieved from <https://childhood101.com/develop-empathy/>

SUPPORTING NUMERACY

Most construction toys, from wooden blocks to Lego bricks, are designed so that they fit together neatly and easily.

Typically, the pieces of such toys are scaled so that their dimensions are in proportion to all of the others. The nature of these proportions means that such construction materials are an ideal medium for teaching and learning about mathematical relationships. This may sound complex, but when you observe it in action, it shows how much maths is present in children's everyday play.

At a basic level such materials encourage the use of positional language and the language of measurement. This can be relatively informal - long and short, big and small, over and under, on top of and below - but it can also become more specific and precise. Watching children play with Lego demonstrates this. The dots on top of each Lego brick not only help to join the bricks together, they also provide an inbuilt system of measurement. Listen as experienced Lego builders talk and build - 'I need another four', 'I need a little piece - just two dots', 'I need a thin piece to make this as high as that', 'I need a one to fill this gap' - and you will see that they are doing quite complex maths, involving addition, subtraction and even fractions, in order to work out the exact pieces that they need to complete their creations.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Anxiety in Children

Anxiety is something everyone experiences from time to time; it is a normal and natural response that occurs when a person feels threatened or is worried that something bad or unpleasant might happen.

It's usual for children to feel anxious or fearful about a variety of different things during their development. After all, children are confronted with all sorts of new experiences and challenges as they grow up and learn about the world around them. In most cases these fears are transitory and do not significantly interfere with a child's academic, social or family life. Some common anxieties of different childhood developmental stages are outlined below.

7mth to Toddler: fear of strangers, separation, loud noises, large machines such as the vacuum cleaner or lawn mower, animals

Toddler to Middle Childhood: fear of animals/ insects, the dark, separation from parents, supernatural beings such as monsters, thunder and lightning, sleeping alone, 'bad' people

Middle Childhood to Late Childhood: supernatural beings, the dark, bodily injury, heights, getting lost or trapped, burglars, doctors/ dentists, death and dying

Late Childhood to Early Adolescence: fears revolve around social or evaluative situations, e.g. being teased or rejected by peers, being embarrassed, dating, giving oral reports, taking tests, fear of death or physical injury.

For some children, fears and anxieties can have a significant impact on the way they perform at school, on their ability to make or maintain friends, and on their family life. Children who experience problematic anxiety generally meet several of the descriptions below:

- they are extremely well behaved at school and tend not to bother anyone.
- they avoid trying new things even when safe or fun.
- they tend to become distressed by normal changes, breaks from routine, or taking risks.
- they become upset (e.g. cry) very easily.
- they have a tendency to highlight the negative consequences of any situation, e.g. 'all the kids will hate me', 'mum and dad will have an accident and die'.
- they avoid situations or objects they fear, e.g. a child with social anxiety will avoid attending parties or participating in groups.
- physical complaints are common. Because some children don't have the vocabulary or awareness to describe their anxiety, they may express it via physical symptoms such as feeling sick, having a lump in their throat, or sore shoulders from muscle tension.



- they may ask many unnecessary questions and require constant reassurance.
- they may have difficulty separating from parents.
- they may be very clingy with a parent or loved one in situations outside home.
- they may repeatedly have worries about school at the beginning of each term or each Monday.
- they may avoid unfamiliar situations, become sick, not turn up or endure situations with significant distress.
- they often ask questions which begin with 'what if...?'.
- they may be perfectionistic, taking excessive time to complete homework because they try to get it absolutely correct.
- they may have difficulty sleeping, taking a long time to get to sleep or waking during the night and needing comfort from parents.
- they can be argumentative (but rarely aggressive) if trying to avoid a feared situation.

Supporting children with anxiety:

You can support your child by acknowledging your child's fears – don't dismiss or ignore them. Gently encourage your child to do things they're anxious about. Wait until your child actually gets anxious before you step in to help. Praise your child for doing something they're anxious about. Avoid labelling your child as 'shy' or 'anxious'.

Helping your child overcome anxiety issues is easier if you seek help. Talk to your doctor, or go to these online programs for help. raisingchildren.net.au, understandinganxiety.wayahead.org.au/ brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au

Anxiety In Children (2019, May 10). Understanding Anxiety Retrieved from <http://understandinganxiety.wayahead.org.au/anxiety-in-children/>

Anxiety In Children (2019, May 10). Health Direct Retrieved from Anxiety In Children (2019, May 10). Understanding Anxiety Retrieved from <http://understandinganxiety.wayahead.org.au/anxiety-in-children/>

AIR POLLUTION

Air connects us all. Without air there is no life. But the pollution we release into the air harms our health and the environment.

There are so many things that we can do: from cycling or walking to work or school and back, to recycling non-organic trash, to pressuring local authorities to improve green spaces in our cities.

Experiment: Air pollution is a hard thing to explain to children because typically it cannot be seen unless you live in an area where smog is common.

There is a simple experiment you can complete to show children what is in the air. You only need simple materials that are commonly already in your home.

Go to education.com/science-fair/article/dirty-air/ For the experiment details.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Healthy Habits for Kids to Prevent Cold and Flu



While it's not possible to shield your kids completely from catching a cold or the flu, especially while they are attending childcare, you can teach them healthy habits to boost their immune systems and decrease their chances of picking up an infection.

Teach your children these important healthy habits for kids to prevent colds and flu (and protect others when they are sick):

Get them into the hand washing habit

Almost 22 million school days are missed due to the common cold alone, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Studies have shown that hand washing can reduce absenteeism from infectious illness among school-aged kids. Hand washing is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of common school-age child illnesses such as cold, flu, pinkeye, and more. Since children spend so much time together in close quarters during the school year, it's a good idea to make sure hand washing becomes something they do automatically, as a matter of habit. Teach your child to wash his hands often, especially before eating, after blowing his nose, and after using the bathroom

Teach Them How to Wash Their Hands Properly

Getting your child to go to the sink won't matter if she merely splashes her hands in the water for a second and calls it done. She should wash properly for at least 30 seconds with soap and water. Simple soap will do -- you don't need antibacterial products (in fact, studies have shown that antibacterial soaps are not any more effective at killing germs than regular soap, and health experts have expressed concern that increasing use of antibacterial products may, in fact, be giving rise to antibiotic-resistant bacteria).

Show Them How to Cough and Sneeze Properly

Cold and flu viruses can become airborne on droplets of saliva when someone sneezes or coughs. Teach your child to cover a sneeze or a cough with a tissue or with the inside of her elbow. A recent study showed that most people cover their sneezes, but do so with their hands (a bad habit that can spread the illness to others).

Tell Them to Avoid Touching Their Eyes

If your child touches something that someone with a cold has touched and then touches his eyes or mouth, the cold virus can enter his body through those points. Infections such as conjunctivitis can also be transmitted through touching eyes after touching an object that has been handled by someone with that infection.

Encourage Them Not to Share Utensils and Cups With Friends

Kids naturally love to share (well, sometimes...especially when it's not a favourite toy), but it's not a good idea to share eating utensils with friends, especially during cold and flu season. Viruses and bacteria are easily transmitted through saliva, so this is one type of sharing that you should teach your child to avoid.

In addition to these healthy habits, be sure to give your kids plenty of healthy and nutritious foods, which will help keep his immune system strong and ward off colds and flu. And make sure that he gets plenty of sleep, which is not only important for keeping him healthy but helps school-age kids focus in school and prevents crankiness and moodiness. Getting kids to go to bed can be a particular challenge for school-age kids, but it's important for his health as well as his emotional and cognitive well-being.

At your Story House service, we follow our hand-washing procedures and teach children to do this many times throughout the day. Our Infectious Diseases procedure guides our practice around how we work with children who are unwell. Please always remember that if your child is unwell to please keep them home – this ensures they recover quickly and that the other children attending the service are less likely to become sick. Under the Education and Care Regulations, we are strongly governed by what is acceptable and appropriate for us to do, which includes medications and how this is administered and triggers around when we should be sending children home when they are unwell. If you are unsure, please chat with your Service Manager.

Very Well Family (2019, April 16). Healthy Habits for Kids to Prevent Cold and Flu Retrieved from <https://www.verywellfamily.com/good-kids-habits-to-prevent-cold-and-flu-620491>



KIDS HOUSE CHELTENHAM NOW OPEN!

We have a wonderful new service open in Cheltenham VIC. This service is located over 3 levels and offers a really unique play space across these levels.

It's a wonderful service that has been architecturally designed to have lots of wonderful play spaces for children.

We have an opening special taking place – so if you know anyone in the area, please tell them to contact our Service Manager Melinda to arrange a tour!



SINGING TOGETHER

“Through singing, children share in rich communication and relationships, a sense of belonging, meaningful learning and many happy experiences.”

Songs are a great way to help anyone learn and remember, and they are an awesome tool used by teachers all over the world. An important part of any preschool classroom, singing contributes to teach behaviour, basic skills, and social skills. Preschool songs also use rhymes to help children to learn vocabulary and communication skills. Why we sing:

- Being sung to is special, creating closeness and relaxation.
- Shared singing with adults supports the development of secure and trusting relationships.
- Participation in action songs and singing games promotes togetherness
- Learning songs of their culture supports children’s sense of belonging: in families, communities and early childhood settings.
- Singing aids joint attention, listening and concentration.
- Singing promotes speech and language: rhythm, rhyme, repetition and slower pace of articulation make songs a valuable developmental tool.
- Singing builds social and pretend play skills: the structure and actions of songs provide a framework, supporting the development of intersubjectivity (shared thinking and understanding).
- Our voice is our built-in musical instrument: awareness of beat, rhythm and pitch, acquired through singing and being sung to, lay foundations for all musical learning.

Source: <http://thespoke.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/sing-belonging-becoming-song-infanttoddler-child-care-settings/>

National Quality Framework | Quality Area 1:
Element 1.1 – The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.

RECOMMENDED PARENTING SUPPORT

Have you heard of Maggie Dent?
She is a wonderful author, educator and parenting specialist.
Her website: www.maggiedent.com is a great ‘go-to’ for parents and educators alike.
Maggie has a wonderful way of providing great tips and information based on her experience as a researcher, educator and parent. She has wonderful books, articles and videos that provide advice on areas such as:

- sleeping
- tantrums
- screen time
- death & loss
- learning issues
- bullying
- building family relationships & many more



5 MINUTE MOVES THIS MONTH LETS... DO YOGA

Short simple activities to get some active minutes in the day.

You might already do yoga yourself, but have you ever included your children in your yoga session? Or maybe you have never done yoga before.

Jump on google and search simple yoga positions and learn together.

www.flowandgrowkidsyoga.com/blog/kids-yoga-day-free-yoga-poster

