

Ballymore Bulletin



+think + play + learn + grow =



Ballymore Kindy



Issue 2 March 2016

Desley's Dialogue



Our first term at kindy is rushing to an end! No doubt you have found your child a little weary. This has been a time of enormous change and adaptation for all the children as they settle into the expectations of life at kindy. While we like to think there is a strong connection between kindy and home, the reality is that group life is very different from life at home. The greatest learning curve for the children has been the acceptance of the reality of being one of 22 children with only 2 or 3 adults at their disposal. Needless to say, this means that for many there has had to be a major adjustment in their levels of self-regulation, patience, turn taking, listening and consideration of others. Over the past few weeks Yvonne, Karen and I have all witnessed a significant level of development in all of these areas.

A big thank you to all those new and continuing parents who have taken on committee positions for the year – without your valuable time and effort we cannot continue to run as a not-for-profit community centre, so your involvement is very much appreciated. All our parents are invited to attend committee meetings. Minutes of the most recent meeting are posted on our big noticeboard and will show the date for the next month's meeting.

By the time you receive this newsletter, I will have sent invitations to all parents for one-on-one discussions about their child. Sharing information with home helps us to know your child better and to plan most appropriately for them. If none of the available dates is suitable we can make alternative arrangements.

As part of your late night reading, I am including 2 articles which relate to our educational program at Ballymore. One is on our approach to art in the early childhood curriculum (p.3). There are quite a few questions around the place of art in young children's education and at times it can become focused on end-products. I hope this article clarifies our intentional teaching decisions in this area. The second article (p.6) shares our thinking on annual celebrations in the community. With Easter coming up, this is a great opportunity to explain why we don't plan structured activities for these occasions.

Looking forward to speaking with everyone soon.

Desley

PLEASE NOTE:

Kindy is **CLOSED** from
25 March – 10 April
and recommences on
the week of **11th APRIL**



www.facebook.com.au/ballymorekindy

Friendly Reminders



NOTICE

**PARENT/GUARDIAN
MUST SIGN CHILDREN
IN AND OUT OF
THE CENTRE**

It is essential that your child is signed in and out each day. Our sign-in sheet is used as our record of attendance when we hold our fire drills so having everyone recorded is imperative.

NOTICE

**REVERSE
PARKING
ONLY**

Parents: Can you please reverse your cars when parking at kindy – and please let anyone else know who may be doing drop-off and/or pick-up.

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President's Report

Welcome to first term at Ballymore Kindy. The children and parents are into the swing of things now.

The Committee for 2016 are a lovely bunch, with a good mix of new and returning parents, as well as both groups being represented. We're very grateful to the 2015 Committee who worked very hard getting the new trial hours promoted and keeping everything ship shape.

Please speak to any Committee member about anything of interest, whether you would like to help or just find out more. All parents are welcome to attend the Committee meetings, which are roughly monthly. Dates and times are on the pin board.

Our Committee members this year are:

- ✦ [Deanna Toscano](#), *President* (Verity, Wed-Fri)
- ✦ [Rory O'Shea](#), *Secretary* (Riley, Mon-Tue)
- ✦ [Louise Stoakley](#), *Treasurer* (Lachlan, Mon-Tue)
- ✦ [Megan Zugaj](#), *Grants* (Nina, Mon-Tue)
- ✦ [Sarah Connolly](#), *Social* (Joe, Wed-Fri)
- ✦ [Adrian Stuart](#), *Maintenance* (Alice, Wed-Fri)
- ✦ [Keira Capelin](#), *Promotion* (Riley, Wed-Fri)

[The Alumni Family Catch Up](#)

Was held on Sunday March 6th. Please read column on right for details.

The date for next year is:

**Sunday, 5th March, 2017
(10am to 12 noon)**

@ Gould Road Park, Herston

[Social connections](#)

We had a lovely evening at the wine and cheese night on Friday 26th February, catching up with parents from both ends of the week. The play in the parks have been well attended and there are plenty more social activities coming, including coffee mornings. Look out for notices from Sarah at the sign-in area.

[Newsletter](#)

A final thank you to Emi Nishiyama (Kouki, Mon-Tue) who is kindly putting together this newsletter each term.

Wishing everyone a wonderful year ahead.

Deanna



The **Alumni Family Catch Up** was held on Sunday March 6th at the Gould Road Park in Herston. It was a smaller than usual crowd this year, which was a good opportunity for more in-depth chats. It is a lovely way to keep up with Kindy families. The event is deliberately low key to make sure it will be easy to put together each year. They are always held on the first Sunday in March at the Gould Road Park in Herston. Most past families will be emailed but mark it in your diary for next year – **[10am - 12noon, Sunday, 5th March 2017!](#)**

NOTICE:

Immunisation Records

[Please forward Chris Nicoll a copy of your latest immunisation record](#) once your child has their 4 year old immunisations, as many of the children would not have been 4 when she originally copied your books during Enrolment time mid last year. Thank you.



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Art in the Curriculum at Ballymore

As young children engage in art, they talk, laugh, ponder, think, argue, tell stories, share, experiment, get exasperated, take risks, play, enjoy.

Art is such an important experience in the lives of children of all ages. In these early childhood years we must do our utmost to foster a willingness to venture into art.

Goals of our art program

- enjoyment
- playfulness
- creativity
- self expression
- communication
- experimentation
- problem solving
- emotional release



Art experiences also allow for the development of other concepts and skills such as visual discrimination, fine motor skills, literacy and numeracy.

Strategies we use to encourage and extend art experiences

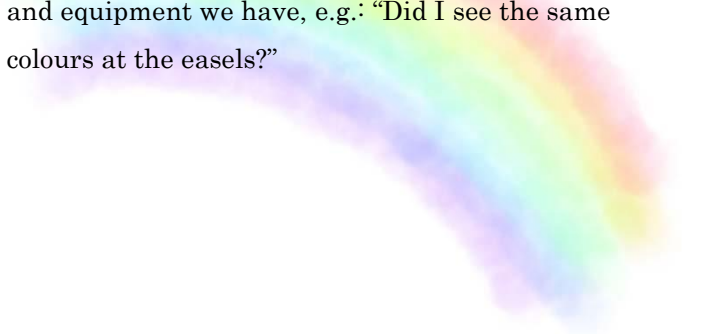
At kindy we are focusing on children's involvement in art, engaging them wholeheartedly in a range of experiences, and exciting them about possibilities. Encouraging them to "have a go", to see what happens, to be risk takers as they work with a variety of mediums.



Talking about the paint available each day is an important strategy that we use in our first group session. This gets children thinking about art and discussing possibilities before they get to the paint, brushes etc.

We relate art experiences to the children's ideas and games e.g. painting a red sheet of paper to be the flames for the fire, painting the poster for the "disco". In this way we help children to find a "reason" to paint when they may not normally choose to do so. We also support children to find their own solutions to problems that arise as they use art materials e.g. how to make a car, bird, fairy wand; how to put bees on the flower painting.

We draw attention to the artwork we see around us – artwork in books, on posters etc. and to features of the environment – commenting on the colours of the rainbow lorikeets and making links with the materials and equipment we have, e.g.: "Did I see the same colours at the easels?"



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We listen carefully to children as they engage in art, responding to individuals in different ways. Some may have a story to tell as they paint, others may play a game with you as part of their experience, others just want to know that someone is interested.

Children's Approach to Art Experiences

Children approach art experiences in a variety of ways commensurate with their individual personality, stage of development and style of learning. Some are enthusiastic and jump straight in. Others are more watchful and reflective, taking time to get the feel of an experience before committing to it. Some children are interested in the colours and effects that are created, while others are more drawn to the textures and effects that are created, textural experience that art can offer.

Young children only rarely approach an art experience with the intention of producing an end-product, i.e. a 'nice' painting. Their interest is much more in the **process** of the experience; that is: what happens if I scrape my nails through the paint, how about if I add some green. How often have you seen a child paint a "beautiful" painting, only to cover it with black paint or mix all the colours until it is a khaki mess?

Questions we are often asked about art at kindy

Why don't we do craft at kindy?

Craft generally involves showing children a particular way to make something or to achieve an end result. While we may end up with a 'nice' picture, in these structured activities children miss out on some of the most important experiences: opportunities for



creativity, problem solving, self-expression, experimentation and emotional release.

Why don't we MAKE children do a painting each day at kindy?

Children are individuals with differing interests and learning styles. They also go through phases in their development when some types of activities take precedence over others (for 4's social play is VERY important and takes a lot of their time and energy). As mentioned above we often use children's games to give a reason for painting e.g. painting what is seen on the screen at the DVD game, painting the water for a boat game. Having a personal reason for engaging in a particular activity is a great motivator.

"Making" children do a painting when they are really not interested, may also impede their art development and their enjoyment of art as they no longer feel free to use art for THEIR purposes. It also means they are missing time in the area of learning or development that they REALLY want to be engaged in.



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How can adults assist in children's art development?

- **Rather than asking "What is it?"**, talk about the painting or drawing in terms of colour, brush strokes, patterns. If it is 'something', your child will let you know.
- **Try to avoid saying "That's a good painting?"** or saying "Good boy or girl" when they do a painting. If one painting is "good" does that mean another is bad. Are they only "good" in your eyes when they paint? Instead use comments such as; "You must have really enjoyed using that blue" "What a stripey painting!"
- **Please take care about drawing or painting for your child** – this may lead to the child feeling his/her attempts are not good enough or that there is only one way to draw a house or a person.
- **At going-home time ask your child "Do you have something to collect?" rather than "Did you do a painting?"** It seems a small point but again it gives an important message to your child. One says: "I know you have lots to do at kindy. Is there anything you want to take home from your day?" The other says: "I hope you have done a painting today. I might not be very happy with you if you didn't."
- **Here is a tough one: Try to avoid asking them to do a painting for you** or Grandma, or anyone else, when they are at kindy. Children's days at kindy are filled with many experiences. Some of these end in a tangible something to take home, many do not. When you ask your child to do a painting they usually do not want to disappoint

you. The only problem is that this can mean that:

1. They do a painting just to please, not because they have an interest in the experience. At these times, how much learning or development is occurring?
2. They stop what they would really prefer to be doing (perhaps solving construction problems in the sandpit with a group of 4 or 5 other children) to fulfill your wishes, missing out on involvement in what may have been an extremely valuable experience in socializing, negotiating, problem solving, using physical skills, or
3. They feel guilty that they ran out of time (they were so engrossed in that sandpit game) and could not fulfill your request



You will see from our strategies above that we use many ways to incorporate a variety of art experiences into children's play. **If you are feeling very concerned that your child is not engaging in a lot of art, please talk with us.** We can share with you our observations of their day at kindy and the range of activities they take part in and the relevance to them personally.



Celebrations

Why We Don't Plan Activities For Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day etc.

I hope that by now it is becoming obvious that quite a lot of thinking goes into the teaching decisions that we make at Ballymore, and addressing topics such as celebrations is no different. The fact that we do not plan "structured activities" around celebrations is a considered response. These celebrations are not banned at our centre. They are, however, approached within the framework of what we know to be in the best interest of young children in an education setting. Following are just some of the points in mind when we make our curriculum decisions regarding celebrations:

1. Planning structured activities for young children such as making presents or decorations, compromises much of what we value in early education. When such activities are planned by adults, problem solving opportunities for children are lost. Why think of a way to make something when someone else has already thought of how to do it! In addition, when children sit together at a table making something in a predetermined way, the possibility of comparison is accentuated – "That's not the way to do it." "Your drawing is just scribble". In such situations, we can inadvertently set children up for negative experiences. Materials will always be available for children to use **in their own way**, including to make Mother's day cards, decorations etc.
2. Children arrive at kindy with their own goals for the day. We want them to be building on **THEIR** ideas – that is the basis of our educational philosophy – we know this is a fundamentally important psychological experience for children and enhances their confidence and their development. If however we then say "Now you have to leave what you have been thinking about and come and make a present or decoration", how consistent is our message to children about the genuine value we place on **their** ideas, and **their** ability to generate ideas and make decisions?
3. Children will often include aspects of celebrations after the event. It is not unusual to have a game of Christmas in April! Playing after the event means that their ideas are not overwhelmed by the sheer excitement of anticipation. Children can really think about how the celebration fits into the context of the story they are building through play. And the role of teachers does not become one of behaviour managers!! - as often happens when young children find the anticipation too much for their **developing sense of self-control** to manage.
4. Because our program allows children opportunity to pursue **personally relevant experiences**, relationships and celebrations are explored throughout the year in many different ways that are meaningful to the children involved – parties are held for the fairies, celebrations take place when the surfers catch a wave, we have even said "goodbye" to a favourite tree when it was removed.
5. As we all know the lead-up to some celebrations can be very intense. For weeks (even months), children can be surrounded with the excitement of events that are still some time away. The fact that children arrive at kindy each day focussing on their games of doctors, firemen, mums and babies, rescue vehicles, ballerinas and deep sea divers, rather than celebrations, tells us what is important to them. Kindy – **their space** – may be a haven from the excitement surrounding many celebrations.
6. We are very conscious that families within our community have different perspectives on all of these celebrations. There may be concerns about food/diet, religious beliefs, commercialism and hype, families' emotional responses, how young children internalise messages. Some aspects of a young child's life are more appropriately dealt with within the family unit, where parents can feel comfortable with their control over the messages their children are receiving.

These are just a few of the factors we take into account when making curriculum decisions.

Please feel free to approach us if you would like to talk further.

Council Elections

Local Council Elections will be held this Saturday 19 March and Ballymore Kindy will again be in operation on the day as a polling booth. Please let everyone in your neighbourhood know, since it is a great way to help people become acquainted with our kindy.

If anyone is able to give a short time to help at the drinks stall that will be great. Please contact Desley or Deanna. There is a roster by the sign-in sheet.



Week of 11th April – Start of Term 2

23rd and 27 May – the two groups will be visited by Evergreen Children's Theatre. Kevin will present a puppet show with a conservation message.

Your contribution to our Newsletter is warmly welcomed.

If you have any bits of interest you would like to share please contact Desley or Emi, our Newsletter Editor (emi.naraba@gmail.com).



Kindy Wish List



When you have your next spring clean please keep us in mind. There are lots of things we can reuse at Kindy:

- ❖ Mobile phones
- ❖ Laptops
- ❖ Small flat screens
- ❖ Cardboard boxes of all shapes and sizes including very big ones.
- ❖ Lengths of material
- ❖ Ribbons
- ❖ Paper – any shape, size, colour, thickness, lined and plain
- ❖ Used envelopes
- ❖ Cardboard rolls – toilet, gladwrap
- ❖ Old saucepans and plastic cookware
- ❖ Anything lends itself to being glued sticky taped or painted – corks, bottle tops,