



BALLYMORE KINDY

Term 1, 2017

March 2017

NEWSLETTER, EDITION 1 2017

IN THIS ISSUE

Desley's dialogue

by Desley Jones, Director

Hello everyone,

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2017. I hope all our families are beginning to feel settled at Ballymore.

I would like to begin by thanking all the parents who have taken on committee positions – without your valuable time and effort we could not continue to run as a not-for-profit community kindergarten, so your involvement is very much appreciated.

On a daily basis, it is encouraging to see the children eager (generally) to arrive each morning. As adults, I think we often underestimate the impact of change on children. Although kindy is a place for children and for play, there are still many things for young children to adjust to: new routines and expectations, new people (remembering the names of other children is a challenge), separation from parents (in some cases for the first time), sharing adult attention with 21 others, and adapting to group demands which may differ from individual desires. It's no wonder the first months of the year leave many children feeling physically and emotionally tired (not to mention parents and teachers!!).

Over this first term it has been great to see the children feeling secure enough to begin to take risks and "have a go" – whether it be at climbing, painting, tidying up, talking at Buzz Groups, or at solving a problem on their own.

Feeling capable of thinking about, and trying out solutions to problems – whether it be how best to balance along the thin beam, how to share the big blocks at inside time, how to enter someone else's play – is very empowering for young children. In this newsletter, I have included an article on problem solving that I wrote in 2013 for The Gowrie's national magazine, *Reflections*. I hope it offers further insight into our work at Ballymore.

Desley



The power of problem solving

Interesting and beneficial paper written by our very own Desley Jones.

Page 3



Important reminders

Reminders for all parents and carers, to ensure the safety and health of our kids at kindy.

Page 7

President's Report

by Suzie George, President 2017



May I extend a big, warm welcome to you all as we find ourselves well and truly into Term One at Ballymore Kindy. I do hope that the children are settling in well and slowly starting to find their feet. 2017 is shaping up to be a promising year full of fun-filled activities for both kids and parents. This year, there are a number of returning families who provide Ballymore Kindy with a sense of continuity and stability. At the same time, there are also many new ones which bring the promise of fresh ideas and vitality.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the committee of 2016 for the tremendous work they have done, particularly in the area of promotions and maintenance, as we reap the benefits of their hard work while sitting in air-conditioned comfort! I would like to extend a special thank you to Deanna Toscano, 2016 President, for making herself available in an advisory capacity for some specific governance projects this year.

March has seen our first committee meeting take place very successfully with some exciting plans for 2017 already in place. And with Treasurer Marty Platz's dry wit entertaining us during the meeting, I anticipate that future meetings will be far from dull! This year's committee members are: Suzi George, President (Tia, Group 1), Julie Rolls, Secretary (Oliver, Group 2), Marty Platz, Treasurer (Finn, Group 1), Lara Maia-Pike, Promotions (Thomas, Group 1), Megan Zugai, Grants (Nina, Group 2), Michael

Huang, Maintenance (Mitchell, Group 2), and Bianca Gamble, Social (Finn, Group 2). The committee is available at all times to chat with you about the plans for the year, as well as answer any questions you may have about the running of the kindy. Please remember that parents are welcome to attend the committee meetings scheduled this year, of which there are ten remaining. Dates and times of meetings can be found on the noticeboard.

Despite it only being March, we have already had a few events at the kindy which have allowed social connections to be made between parents and children alike. The Alumni Family Gathering was held on Sunday, 5 March at Gould Road Park, at which there was a big turnout filled with both present and past families. There was even a family in attendance whose child is now 12 years old! - which goes to show that the bonds forged over the course of the year at Ballymore Kindy are long-lasting indeed.

The social calendar for Ballymore parents offers an exciting year ahead, with the first of the coffee catch-ups for parents having already taken place with a good response. Coming up throughout the year will be more coffee catch ups, a parents' dinner, and a family bush walk. Please look out on the notice board for the dates of these events throughout the year.

Finally, I wish to extend a big thank you to Agatha McAndrew (Jack, Group 1) for kindly volunteering to prepare the kindy's newsletter, the Ballymore Bulletin, each term this year. This is her second year undertaking this job and we are very appreciative of this.

I wish you all a wonderful year ahead and I look forward to spending time with you over the coming months.

Suzi George

IMPORTANT KINDY EVENTS TO ADD TO YOUR DIARY!

31 MARCH – 18 APRIL Kindy closed for school holidays

11 & 13 JULY School Photos

Government Curriculum Documents that support program planning in kindergartens

by Desley Jones, Director

Early Education Programs are required to adhere to curriculum documents at both the national and state level. At Ballymore Kindergarten our planning is informed by:

- **The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)**

The Early Years Learning Framework is part of the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) reform agenda for early childhood education and care and is a key component of the Australian Government's National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care. It underpins universal access to early childhood education and has been incorporated in the National Quality Standard in order to ensure delivery of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education across sectors and jurisdictions.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as play is the best vehicle for young children's learning providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

- **and the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines (QKLG)**

The *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline* provides advice for planning, interacting with children, monitoring and assessing, and sharing information in kindergarten contexts. The guideline:

- is based on the [Early Years Learning Framework for Australia \(EYLF\)](#)
- is an approved framework under the [National Quality Standard \(NQS\)](#)
- helps services meet the criteria for an approved kindergarten program. For more information, contact the [Office for Early Childhood Education and Care \(OECEC\)](#).

Both documents are available at kindy for parents to read.

A Focus on Relationships: *The Power of Problem Solving*

by Desley Jones, DipT(EC), BEd, BSc (Hons Psych), Director, Ballymore Kindergarten

This paper arose from speculation about the place of “rules” in enhancing social relationships and managing behaviour. A long-accepted strategy has been to involve children in the establishment of rules within the education or care setting. While this is a strategy that acknowledges the importance of children having a measure of ownership over decisions affecting them, the emphasis on “rules” has some inherent drawbacks. This paper presents the argument that an approach which focuses on problem solving with children may be more advantageous than one based on the setting of rules. Problem solving can contribute to a positive group climate, which in turn provides the foundation for a child’s sense of wellbeing within the education and care setting, and plays a crucial role in a child’s involvement, development and learning (Laevers, 2012).

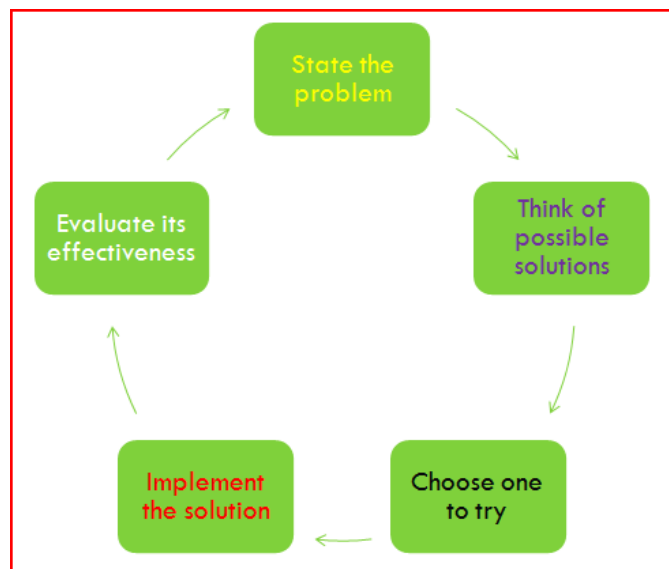
The children’s story, *Library Lion* by Michelle Knudsen, provides a telling example of how “rules”, by their very nature, tend to be inflexible, with a locked-in view of how the world should be. In dealing with relationships, there are limited black and white scenarios and MANY shades of grey. Being flexible to adapt to different perspectives and experiences is of paramount importance. A reliance on rules, even those made in conjunction with children, may bring with it the disadvantage of “being backed into a corner” from which it can be hard to extricate oneself. An over reliance on rules may also slip easily into being a soft option where the voices of children are rarely heard.

In comparison, introducing a focus on problem solving brings with it opportunities to work with, and listen to children, to encourage children to work and think together and to significantly contribute to development and learning in many areas. Problem solving can be employed with individuals as well as small, and large, groups of children. It can be used to address issues across the whole program - ranging from how to make the bus at inside time, people speaking angrily to each other, disagreements over who is using the wheelbarrows, coping with a visitor being delayed in traffic and arriving late, a broken toilet, what is the best food for a fairy party – the possibilities are endless!

Problem solving can be approached in a variety of ways. It can be as simple as **posing questions** to children - “How do you think you could make the wings for your jet?” or “How will you and Sonja share the fairy crystals?” or by engaging in **wondering** with children - “I wonder how you can let the other children know how much your cakes will cost?” or “I wonder what you will do if all the pipes are being used in the mud patch?”

For problem solving to be a major focus in a program, it is also of benefit to introduce a **problem solving process** to children.

This process involves the steps of:



As a strategy for enhancing social relationships, problem solving has a very obvious role to play in assisting children with conflict resolution. However, the actual *process* involved in problem solving, for whatever purpose, also provides authentic opportunities to enhance relationships within a setting. Problem solving with others can facilitate exposure to and acceptance of different perspectives, practice in talking and listening to others, and the scaffolding of deeper level thinking as children consider actions and reactions. It has the potential to contribute significantly to a sense of community as children engage in the process with a wide range of peers beyond their preferred playmates. The conversational approach of the problem solving process involves children in sustained shared thinking, with such interactions being identified as crucial in extending children's thinking and learning (NQS PLP e-Newsletter No.43 2012). Rather than resulting in a "rule" to be followed, problem solving can lead to a decision being made about action to be taken and it has the potential to become an ongoing conversation within a group.

"Walking inside": *A kindergarten group had been having issues with children forgetting to walk inside. This was brought to everyone's attention at group time. It was a problem because a child had fallen down and two other children had "collided" with one another when they were running inside. The question was posed to the group: "How can we help people to remember to walk inside?" Solutions offered by children included - tell them to stop, tell them they are naughty, put up a sign, put up a stop sign, put up your hand and say stop. All the suggestions were accepted without judgement (a crucial part of this step) and everybody was thanked for sharing their ideas. After some discussion it was decided to make a sign that said "please walk inside kindy". We knew that not everybody would be able to read the words so it was also decided that children might help to draw pictures on the sign to help us remember what the words said. This led to further discussion of what the pictures would be about – maybe a smiling face because we would be happy, maybe someone walking, maybe the colours of kindy, maybe two people bumping into each other. The sign was duly made with six children choosing to add drawings. When finished it was placed on the wall at child height. Several times, children have been overheard saying to others "Remember the sign (or "Look at the sign"). Walk inside."*

Even when the problem to be solved is not related to a social issue, the process itself provides an experience which can build on a child's sense of wellbeing and enhance connections within a group. It facilitates turn taking and the consideration of others and can afford children a sense of agency as, by its very nature, the process infers the competency and capability of children and their ability to impact on their environment.

"Food for dinosaurs": *At group time, Bill announced that he was going to make an island for dinosaurs to live on. The discussion turned to what the dinosaurs would need to eat on their island and trees were an agreed option. And so the problem was stated: "How could Bill make the trees? Does anyone have a suggestion?" Several hands went up and possibilities were voiced. Again suggestions were accepted without judgement. Ideas included drawing on paper and cutting out, building with blocks, using cardboard rolls, using the plastic sticks from the shed. Everyone was thanked for sharing their ideas and it was also stated that now Bill would be able to decide how he would solve his problem. Bill implemented a solution during play and when the group came together again, he was able to tell us what he had done (he had elected to use stickle bricks to build trees) and if the solution had worked.*

Utilising a problem solving process requires teachers and educators to employ a range of skills to allow such conversations to take place, and to expand and flourish. These skills include management of situations so that children's voices are heard, modelling acceptance of ideas and contributions, and maintaining sustained shared thinking through clarification, reframing, speculating, questioning and showing **genuine** interest (Siraj-Blatchford, 2005).

The benefits of involving children in problem solving are many, and easily address the Early Years Learning Framework Outcomes. Through involvement in problem solving, children have opportunities to:

- Develop their sense of confidence, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency, to feel supported and to interact with others with care, empathy and respect as all contributions are accepted and valued (EYLF 1).
- Develop a sense of belonging to groups as they contribute to the problem solving process, to respond to diversity with respect as they listen to the ideas of others, and to become aware of fairness as they take turns to contribute and engage in the process of choosing and evaluating possible solutions (EYLF 2).
- Become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing as they demonstrate trust and confidence in the problem solving process, working collaboratively with others and self regulating and managing their emotions as issues are addressed (EYLF 3).
- Develop dispositions for learning such as cooperation, creativity, enthusiasm, persistence and imagination, and skills and processes related to problem solving, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating, and to transfer and adapt what they learn from one context to another as solutions from one problem are adapted to another situation (EYLF 4), and
- To interact verbally with others (as both speakers and listeners) as problems are discussed, and to go on to express ideas in a range of ways as solutions are implemented (EYLF 5).

Problem solving takes time and commitment on the part of adults but it provides opportunities to make a significant impact on the quality of the group experience.

References:

Dept of Education, Employment and workplace Relations. (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Commonwealth of Australia.

Knudsen, M. (2006). *Library Lion*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

Laevers, F. (2012). 'Pointing the compass to wellbeing – why and with what kind of result', *Every Child*, 18 (3), 26-27.

NQS PLP e-Newsletter No.43, 2012. <<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/>>

Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2005). 'Quality Interactions in the Early Years', *Birth to Eight Matters!*

Seeking Seamlessness – Continuity? Integration? Creativity? TACTYC Annual Conference, Cardiff, UK.

<http://www.tactyc.org.uk/pdfs/2005conf_siraj.pdf>

Kindy Playdough Recipe

by Mrs Matthews and Mrs Curling

Ingredients

- 3 cups plain flour
- 1 ½ cups salt
- 6 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 3 cups water
- Colouring/food dye

Method

1. Put all ingredients into large saucepan.
2. Mix thoroughly and consistently, until it all comes together.



3. Take off heat and cool.
4. Knead, Store in an airtight container once cooled.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Kindy Wishlist

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.

Signing in and out

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

Notification of absence

Please advise us in the morning if your child will be away due to ill health. Thank you.

Reverse parking in car park

Parents, please remember to reverse your cars in when parking at kindy – and please let anyone else know who may be doing drop-off and/or pick-up. While we have no control over other people who may park in this area, reverse parking helps in keeping children safe as they move through the area. Please see you Parent Information Handbook for more details.



ALUMNI FAMILY GET TOGETHER

The alumni family get together was held on Sunday 5 March. It was a great day with families past and present given the opportunity to catch up outside of the centre. This is an annual alumni gathering which we hold on the first Sunday of March. Thanks again to everyone who came along.

CONGRATULATIONS to this year's committee members:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Suzi George (Tia, G1) | President |
| Julie Rolls (Oliver, G2) | Secretary |
| Marty Platz (Finn, G1) | Treasurer |
| Lara Maia-Pike (Thomas, G1) | Promotions |
| Megan Zugai (Nina, G2) | Grants |
| Michael Huang (Mitchell, G2) | Maintenance |
| Bianca Gamble (Finn, G2) | Social. |

**Saturday's Working Bee!**

Thank you to all those who attended the Working Bee on the weekend, lots of work was done! Due to safety concerns, the high fort was taken down. We will be planning to make some further improvements to the area along the back fence line during the year.

Thank you!



Like our page on Facebook: **Ballymore Kindy**