



BALLYMORE KINDY

Term 4, 2018

November 2018

NEWSLETTER, EDITION 4 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

This final bulletin is traditionally my chance to extend many thanks to many people:

- To all our families for choosing to send your child to our small community kindy. We hope we have played a positive role in your child's, and your family's, life.
- To everyone for their contributions throughout 2018, in whatever form they took – spending time on roster, helping on maintenance, letter box dropping information for our Open Day, joining in social functions, donating to our book library, gathering collage materials, sharing with us the delights (and dilemmas) of your child's development and learning, sharing news of our kindy with others, etc, etc. Every interaction has played a part in maintaining our identity as a **community centre**.
- To our management committee for running our small business. Thank you everyone for the unwavering support you have given to the staff and families of Ballymore and for all your hard work. It has been another very successful year.
- To our committee president, Catherine Bonifant. Thank you for your cool head and your generous acknowledgement of everyone's valuable contribution to the management of our centre.
- To the fabulous team that I have the pleasure to work with:
 - Yvonne (Mrs Matthews) and Karen (Mrs Curling) – we are a great team!
 - Jo and Caroline who have both contributed so much to our days with Group 1 and
 - Chris (Mrs Nicoll) in the office. We really would be lost without her!

The changes (and excitement and activity) brought about by the end of one year and the beginning of a new year can be stressful for everyone, including young children. At times, they experience emotions – both positive and negative – that they can neither name nor understand. In this newsletter I have included a short article on some strategies for helping young children manage stress.

During our final weeks at kindy we will be cognisant of emotions that the children may be experiencing and our focus will be on:

- maintaining our predictable routine,
- being available to support children in social interactions,
- planning plenty of time for play,
- structuring activities so that children are inclined to cooperate rather than compete,
- being mindful of individual differences as children respond to situations and activities,
- providing guidance and/or direction when needed and
- enjoying music, stories and relaxation together as much as possible.

I am also including a second article for your interest – *Developing Thinking Skills and Learning to Learn*. It may provide some food for thought on ways to support your child as a thinker and learner through the end of kindy and well into their first years at school. Knowing how to think and learn is so much more than recalling facts. I hope you find this article useful.

Thank you again everyone and we wish all our families a safe and restful holiday break in anticipation of all that 2019 will bring!

Desley



Developing thinking skills & learning to learn
An insightful article on how children learn how to learn, and how we can help them!

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Reminders for all parents and carers, including key dates.

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President's Report

by Catherine Bonifant, President 2018

Welcome to Term 4! It seems like only yesterday that we were walking our little people into Kindy for the first time! What an extraordinary year it has been. The children have all grown, developed and learned immeasurably, and have had a wonderful introduction to formal schooling. How very lucky we all are to have been guided by the caring and devoted staff at Ballymore.

In term 4, the children enjoyed their final bushwalk for the year, exploring the beautiful surrounds of the Kindy. They had a visit from the dentist, who shared with the children how important it is to look after their teeth, and provided "party bags" to take home. And the children going to Prep next year have begun doing uniform tests, where they have the opportunity to show their friends their school uniform, and tests its hardiness, putting it through its paces with a few star jumps!

The social calendar for term 4 has been busy, with parents enjoying the end of year dinner at Il Posto at Paddington in October. It was a lovely setting to relax and catch up. Unfortunately, weather didn't permit our family afternoon out at Vic Park, but keep in mind the Alumni Gathering early next year, where past and present families of the Kindy spend a morning catching up with each other and the staff.



The 2018 committee has been making arrangements for the incoming committee, and finalising work from this year. The staff hosted an information evening for new families and held play dates at the Kindy for the 2019 groups. The staff and children are also busily planning for our end of year celebrations being held at the Kindy at the end of November. Such an exciting night for everyone!

Thank you to all our parents for their support and assistance in making the Kindy the wonderful place that it is – without your help at working bees, maintenance, cleaning, donation of craft items, flyer drops, and participation, the kindy would just not be the same.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the 2018 committee for their hard work and dedication – they are an exceptional group of people who ensure the Kindy runs smoothly and support the staff to do the amazing job they do.

Finally, I would like to extend an enormous thank you to all the staff and helpers who made this year so very special for all the children and families at the Kindy. We are so very lucky to have you guiding and nurturing our children – the care you provide, the attention you pay, and the respect you afford is second to none. We are all truly so very grateful.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday, and all the very best for a successful 2019.

Catherine Bonifant

Young Children and Stress

by Desley Jones, Director

Stress is a normal, unavoidable part of life. It affects everyone, even babies and young children. Some stress is useful: it keeps us motivated, wanting to do things and change things. However, too much stress can cause a number of difficulties.

Children, as well as adults, face stress from time to time, and stress can result from situations that incur both negative, and positive, emotions. Each child will react individually to different stress factors depending on their personalities, their own needs, and family and cultural reactions. Events which may cause stress for one child may not affect another child at all.

Some examples of situations that are likely to cause stress for children include:

- Loss of a loved one
- Moving house or major changes in routine
- Birth of a new baby
- Beginning or changing school
- Learning difficulties
- Excessive expectations from families
- Social difficulties
- Managing intense situations particularly when hot or tired.

At this time of year, with children leaving a familiar environment, anticipating their beginning at prep or in a new kindy group, facing the excitement of celebrations, holidays away from home and its routines together with the vagaries of Queensland weather, it is reasonable to expect that most children will experience some level of stress in the next few months.

Children show stress in many different ways. Some of these are:

Accident proneness	Hitting
Aggressiveness	Kicking
Anger	Indigestion
Anxiety	Insomnia
Appetite loss	Stuttering
Baby talk	Thumb sucking
Bedwetting	Pounding heart
Biting	Grinding teeth
Crying spells	Fingernail biting
Detachment	Tattling
Extreme laziness	Illness

Helping children manage stress. If we can teach stress management skills to children at an early age, we can give them a life-long ability to cope with anxiety and tension. We can teach young children helpful techniques for handling stress – and they may quickly generalise these ideas to helping to manage other problems in their lives

Ways of helping children manage stress:

- Physical management of stress: through diet, sleep, exercise
- Relaxation techniques: Relaxation can be therapeutic and beneficial. Learning how to relax is one of the most useful ways for children to manage stress.
- Deep breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation (sequentially tensing and releasing muscles – fingers, toes, eyes, teeth, shoulders, tummy muscles)
- Doing an activity that they identify as calming (eg hot bath, read a book, listen to music)
- Creative visualisation: Relaxation exercises which use visual imagery or stories (eg floating on a cloud or lying on a beach) paint a picture of calm and peace, helping some children to relax more deeply.
- Teach children to identify stressful situations, talk about them and name emotions (“That would make you feel disappointed, frustrated, embarrassed...”). Boys especially find this difficult and their expression of emotions is often only through anger.
- Get into the habit of talking to children about their day. Share good things or funny things that have happened to you, as well as examples of how you solved problems in your day.
- Children need to know that it is ok to make mistakes. Adults can model that mistakes are a great way to learn how to do things.
- Teach positive self statements to help them cope in challenging situations (eg “I can do this” “I will be ok” “I can be brave”)
- Help your child to identify GREEN thoughts (helpful thoughts that lead to pleasant feelings) and RED thoughts (unhelpful thoughts that lead to unpleasant feelings). Encourage them to let the RED thoughts slide away and the GREEN thoughts to stick.
- When children are in a stressful or hard situation encourage them to take a deep breath and think what to do. ‘Even when we are scared we can still think.’
- Allow periods of ‘quiet time’ when children can learn to relax. A rest after lunch, a regular period of listening to music or family rest time when everyone is quiet, will encourage this useful skill.
- Use humour as a model to manage stress. A child who learns to use humour will be better able to keep things in perspective.
- Develop personal mantras: “I can be brave, mum will be back at the end of the day”
- Acknowledge feelings: “I know you find it hard/feel sad when it is time to say goodbye, but...”
- Engage children in problem solving about the situation “What do you think might make it easier to say goodbye without crying?” eg earlier drop-off
- Reward your child for doing something that is difficult (different from doing the right thing) eg No tears > time with mum/ go to library together. (Make it something that is achievable and that cannot be easily manipulated)



Developing Thinking Skills and Learning to Learn

by Desley Jones, Director

One of the main goals of our educational program at Ballymore is to help children to develop their thinking skills. People often assume that when we talk about developing children's intellectual, (cognitive or thinking) skills, we are referring to teaching them knowledge or facts such as the alphabet or numerals. Children's intellectual development is actually far more complex -these 'facts' are only one component.

The thinking skills we aim to encourage at Ballymore include:

- Problem solving
- Predicting, inferring and hypothesizing
- Comparing and categorizing
- Representing ideas (including using symbol systems such as the alphabet and numerals)
- Recalling information
- Assimilating prior and new information
- Reflecting and evaluating

"If one of the goals of education is to promote children's intellectual development, it would seem that children need a program that develops all components of the intellect rather than one that concentrates on increasing their knowledge bases alone. Rather than being taught facts, children need to learn how to think.

Receptive learning which concentrates on increasing children's knowledge bases only, may result in:

- *Knowledge that is not necessarily interrelated and accessible*
- *Inexperience in using higher-level cognitive processes like hypothesizing, reasoning and reflecting*
- *Inexperience in using effective problem solving strategies*
- *Poorly developed executive control (ie monitoring the use of mental processes) and*
- *Children who are dependent on the teacher.*

When children learn how to learn, however, they become flexible, independent learners capable of mastering learning tasks.

Learning how to learn involves:

- *Learning general and specific problem solving strategies*
- *Being supported in developing representational abilities*
- *Learning to use the arbitrary knowledge of the culture*
- *Learning through actions on the world*
- *Learning to regulate learning, and*
- *Being confident enough to take risks."* (Thinking and The Young Child, 1987)



How can adults assist children in developing their thinking skills and in learning how to learn? The following are a sample of strategies that we use at kindy/pre-prep and that may be useful at home.

Ask **open-ended questions** that encourage children to think, and make a judgement or give an opinion. Open-ended questions require more than a one word answer – *What did you think of that story? What do you think the firemen would do if they got a flat tyre? Why do you think they put a fence around the playground?*

Help children to **access knowledge** they already have – *How do we know it is a meat eater and not a plant eater?* And to **make connections** between existing and new knowledge – *How is this dinosaur like the one we saw at the museum? I think this boat moves in a different way to Grandad's. What do you think?*

Recall past experiences together – *Do you remember that disco game we played? How did we make the disco light? How will we make it this time?*

Encourage children to **make comparisons, to notice similarities and differences** – *What can you see that is the same about these birds' nests?... these cars?...these two words?*

Encourage children to **experiment** to find answers for themselves - *Try adding more red and see what colour you make?* and to **reflect on and evaluate** their actions – *How do you feel about that colour? How might you change it next time?*

Encourage children to **think about their thinking** – *What made you guess that answer for the What-is-it Bag? Which of your ideas do you think will be best? Why did you pick that one?*

Help children to **find patterns** in their world whether it be in music, nature, language, art – eg *patterns on a snake's skin, rhythms in music, rhyming patterns in books or poems etc.* Identifying patterns has been found to be fundamental to intelligence.

Reading books together is vital, including fact and fiction books. Encourage children to predict the ending – *What do you think will happen next?* And to use the illustrations to infer what is happening - *What do you think he is doing? I wonder what's going to go wrong?*

Make using numbers and reading and writing a natural part of the day rather than specific tasks on their own. They are so easy to set in meaningful contexts – *helping your read the shopping list, counting heads to see how many are at preschool, or 'writing' the menu in a restaurant game.*

Encourage children to **represent their ideas** in a variety of ways – *drawing, painting, construction, pretend play, story telling, "play writing", collage, clay.* There is no one right way! Representing ideas helps to firm understandings.

Encourage children to **use a problem solving routine** – *state the problem, think of possible solutions, choose one to try, implement, evaluate, make a second choice if needs be.* These strategies can be used in a range of situations, including social problems.





performance by the children, nor a Christmas celebration. Instead it is a time for parents and children to share some of what has made our year together so special. Hope you can make it!

More details will follow closer to the time.

Library Books

Both our children's and parents' libraries will close from the week beginning 19 November. Please return any books you may have at home by this time.



Kindy Sheets

If you no longer require yours, please feel free to leave with us! They will come in handy as spare sets!!

Last Day of Kindy for 2018

Tuesday 11 December (Group 1)

Friday 14 December (Group 2)

New Parent Books

We have used commission from our Book Fair to purchase some new books for our parent library. If you are a returning parent please keep a look out when you are next at kindy, and for those moving on, you may be interested in following up these titles:

- *Mindset: Changing the way you think to fulfil your potential* by Carol Dweck
- *Unselfie: Why empathetic kids succeed in our all-about-me world* by Michelle Borba, and
- *You Are Not Special and other encouragements* by David McCullough Jr

These books offer some interesting food-for-thought in that fascinating role called "parenting".

Toy Catalogue

Just a reminder that it is not too late to order from the Toy Catalogues distributed to families (Great for birthdays, Christmas or for a special surprise to keep young minds busy over a long summer holiday!).

Ballymore Kindy will earn vouchers for approximately 20% of the orders received and will use that for purchases for kindy.

Order online at:

www.parentdirect.com.au

www.edex.com.au/fundraising/

Please remember to nominate Ballymore Kindergarten on your order form.

THANK YOU!!



Thank you

Special thanks to Juliet Hoey for supporting the kindy in providing social opportunities for our parents and families this year.

From the very beginning of kindy with our AGM, through to our Alumni event, coffee mornings, play dates, parent discussion nights, Family Bushwalk, Wine & Cheese Night, Parent Dinner and culminating in our Family Celebration Nights in a few weeks, we trust that families have found some ways to connect with our kindy community.



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