

## Desley's Dialogue



Dear Parents,

Welcome to the "Summer Edition" of our Ballymore Bulletin. I hope all our families have had a relaxing and happy summer break and are looking forward to the year ahead.

Each year brings a unique group of unique children and Yvonne, Karen and I are always curious to see where the ideas and interests of your children will take us. No two years are ever the same! 2020 certainly presented challenges but throughout it all, kindy remained a predictable, secure place where the children could explore possibilities and ideas.

In this Bulletin I have included a brief outline of what to expect when you arrive with your child on their first morning at kindy, and a short article on **"Creating Caring Communities of Learners"**. Our focus on relationships underpins all the work that we will do with your child. Focussing on emotional and social wellbeing is not a 'soft option' in education. Current brain research consistently shows that such a focus is not only enormously important in its own right, but also has direct benefits for children's engagement in learning experiences and their later achievement in school and general social adjustment throughout life. In our educational program at Ballymore we all place emphasis on developing children's executive functioning and using make believe, or pretend, play as an effective teaching and learning tool. We will talk more about these elements of our program at our first Parent Discussion Night early in Term 1.

Relationships with, and between, parents are also important to us at Ballymore. Many past parents have made contacts at kindy that have continued on well past their children moving on to Prep.

2020 was a year in which we were limited in the social gatherings that we could initiate. However, we hope that in 2021, we will again (with the support of our management committee) be able to provide social opportunities for our parents and families throughout the year.

We will begin the year with our initial Meet & Greet for parents (please see notice in this Bulletin) and then hope to follow up with events including: Family Sausage Sizzle and Bowls Afternoon, Alumni gathering, coffee mornings, play dates, parent discussion nights, and Family Bushwalk. We trust that families will find some ways to connect with our kindy community throughout the year.

Welcome to 2021 at Ballymore Kindy!!

*Desley*



# From the Management Committee



Hi Everyone,

Welcome to Ballymore Kindy. Over your first weeks at kindy you'll discover that the centre is an excellent place for your children to start their education. And by the end of the year, you'll be astonished by the wonderful progress they have made in their four terms at Ballymore.

The kindy is in great shape! In 2020, we rebuilt the shed that houses our play equipment, gave our sandpit a facelift, and replaced lighting and flooring in the main play room. In 2021, plans are in place to redevelop aspects of our playground, including the two forts.

We very much hope that parents will be able to come along to our **Meet & Greet** on **Wednesday 3rd February**. This is the first of our social events for the year. As part of the meeting, we will also hold our **AGM**, reflecting on 2020 and electing our 2021 committee. Our independent community kindergarten relies on parents to form our committee and it is a great way to be involved in the kindy. But be assured there is no pressure to take on a position and we thank all those parents who have already indicated a willingness to step into a committee role.

If you would like to be involved in our Management Committee in 2021, please email us for more information.

Thank you, and we wish you and your families all the very best for a memorable year at Ballymore Kindy!

*Adam Parker*, President 2020.

## 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:

- ❖ 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 that lends itself to being glued sticky taped or painted – corks, bottle tops, ribbons.

THE LIST IS ENDLESS!



## T-Shirts for Sale

Our kindy shirts are a great way to avoid wear and tear on other clothes and also advertise our centre!!

Our new styles look great and reflect our kindy logo colours. They are available for \$15 each from Chris in the office.

Suncorp Bank BSB: 484 799 A/C: 507875746 Ref: Child's name

Email: [admin@mpc.net.au](mailto:admin@mpc.net.au) to confirm your order with size/colour and date of deposit.



# First Day at Ballymore

We know there is a lot for new families to become familiar with at the beginning of the year, so we will try to make the first day as easy as possible. Arriving at about 8.20 will allow time to settle your child in to the day. When you arrive, Yvonne, Karen and I will be there to guide everyone in remembering to:

- **Sign the sign-in book, which is located on our new reception table near the front door.**
- **Help your child to wash their hands and apply sunscreen if not already applied at home.**
- **Help your child to find their locker** (There will be a list on the wall in case you have forgotten yours!).
- **Help your child to put sheets into the red box, (and afternoon tea for Mon/Tues group into the green basket).**
- **One of the teachers will show your child where to keep their water bottle for easy access through the day.**

Please stay on the carpet with your child until 8.30. Puzzles and books are available for parents and children at this time. At about 8.30 (first day can be hectic so it may be a little later) the teachers will come to the carpet to begin our day with the children. This is usually the best time for parents to say "goodbye", and leave (perhaps for a quiet cup of coffee somewhere - or shopping!!)

*Young children take their cues from their parents - engaging in long goodbyes or long discussions at this time can give them the message that you are feeling anxious and that they should be worried too - so please be very strong and resist the urge to linger or to look back.*

If there should be tears please be brave (for your sake and your child's!) - we are well practised at handling tears! and we will certainly contact you if your child does not settle.

**Feel free to phone us during the day if you are feeling concerned. But try and enjoy your day - it is a new step for you and your child.**

Please return by 3.55 (Mon/Tues) or 2.25 (Wed/Thurs/Fri), so that children are in the care of their parents and leaving the centre by 4.00 and 2.30 respectively.



# Creating a Caring Community of Learners



Staff at Ballymore are strongly committed to the goal of creating a caring community for the children at our centre. What a caring community looks like though may be different to what you think. A caring community is not simply one in which children are protected and have all their problems solved. Rather it is one in which they feel **empowered**! We will share more information on aspects of this curriculum focus throughout the year.

When a child's interpersonal side is well developed - when they feel emotionally and psychologically safe and capable of dealing appropriately with social situations - then they are more comfortable and open to engaging in a range of learning experiences.

Features of a caring community include:

- **Respect** for all members of the community
- A sense of **security and order** that includes an organised, predictable physical environment and supportive adults who remain calm even in the most emotional times.
- Support to develop **self-regulation**, an important aspect of development in these preschool years.
- A sense of self-worth, competence and **agency** for ALL children. We need to value all children, regardless of their behaviour, abilities or disabilities and help them to see themselves as capable and appreciated.
- The use of **problem solving** as an essential life and learning skill, including as a way to address social issues. Problem solving empowers young children, encouraging them to think through situations and deal with them with the (background) support of adults. When we constantly step in and solve problems for them or allow them to walk away from problems we actually are disempowering them.
- Caring **communication** - we have to take the time (and it does require a lot of time, patience and follow through) to help children communicate in a CARING way with one another. Communication involves "caring talking and caring listening".

## Here are just a few of the practical strategies that we use to create this environment

- Our day follows a structured routine allowing children to feel secure in knowing what will come next. Within that routine however there is always space for flexibility to allow us to capitalise on unexpected moments. Changes are talked through with children so that, as a group, we know there are reasons for those changes.
- We actively encourage children's self regulation, knowing that they require practice and scaffolding of this area of development. We actively encourage the children to problem solve for themselves, and collaboratively establish reasonable expectations and support children to follow through with these. At times, they may require more direct assistance and we will state quietly and calmly what needs to happen at that moment. "I can see you would like to finish that drawing now but it is time to go so we will put it in a safe place to finish another time." We will support the child to follow through with that request.

- Our circle times at the beginning, and throughout the day, are important for acknowledging EVERYONE in the group. Being able to see the person who is speaking is important for developing listening skills as a group and for identifying as a member of a group.
- When discussing games, all ideas are valued and respected. We assist children to clarify and to find the space, equipment and co-players to put their ideas into operation.
- Most importantly we encourage the children to respect the games and activities of other children. While we know that games look attractive and inviting, it is important to remember that they are the result of someone else's ideas and efforts and we need to ask them before entering. This respect is two-way - if we respect the games of others then they will respect our games.
- All our equipment has particular storage spaces so that children will know where to find, and where to put, things. Again this gives a secure feeling and a sense of control and empowerment when children know they can access what they need in games. We also establish clear expectations that children will put away equipment when they are finished playing with it, rather than leaving things on the floor or table, so that both the equipment and the space are cared for and ready for the next person.
- We model for the children our appreciation of the ideas and efforts that everyone brings to our group but we are also careful with our use of praise. Rather than evaluating (i.e. saying "good boy/girl") we will give a description of what has happened "You spent such a long time working on that painting"; "Thanks to everyone's help, tidy up was finished very quickly."; "Thanks for discussing that problem. I hope that solution works."
- We spend a lot of time on modelling *caring communication* for children and following through with them on expectations. We will bring children back and support them to look at someone who is speaking to them and to give them an answer, even if it is only one word or a thumbs up or a nod. We also model the importance of not interrupting when a person is speaking to someone. We avoid encouraging the use of "Excuse me" which can become a way of controlling situations. Rather we talk about standing near the person and waiting until we can see they are no longer speaking or listening to someone else.
- We do not shy away from times of conflict between children. Rather than saying "Let's share and be friends" we take the opportunity to talk through social problems that arise, helping children to verbalise feelings and to find solutions to problems.
- We actively avoid the pressure for everyone to be "friends" and even avoid use of the word. Being friends with everyone is simply not a reality in any group situation. What is achievable though is everyone being "cared for" and feeling "comfortable".

Building a caring community means focussing on relationships. This focus not only provides children with emotional and psychological security, but also develops skills that will greatly enhance their progress through life. These include problem solving, language use, perspective taking, recognising and responding to a range of feelings, emotional regulation, depth of thought, empathy and assertiveness, and action and reaction to name just a few.





# Housekeeping Matters

- It is important that we have all relevant forms completed before your child commences at kindy. Please check for any emails from Chris asking for information to be sent in. Thanks.
- Each child should have received a letter from kindy with reminders of start dates, what to bring, and which locker will be theirs at kindy. The Mon/Tues group commences on Monday 25 January and the Wed/Thurs/Fri group commences on Wednesday 27 January.
- Please ensure that:
  - all your child's belongings are clearly named
  - your child has a spare set of clothes in their bag each day
  - hats and clothes provide good sun protection
  - that your child washes their hands on arrival and departure from kindy



Each child will require at least 1 small washer for hand wiping. Having a second (back up) one in their backpack can be really helpful.

**It is essential, under safety regulations, that the washers are not touching each other** so we ask that washers be no larger than approx 30cm x 30 cm in size. Hair bands make easy loops to sew on in **the centre**.

## Parents' Meet & Greet

Come and join us for a glass of wine, tea, coffee etc on Wednesday 3 February at 7pm. It is a great way to get to meet other kindy parents from both groups.

Our AGM will be included in the event (7.30 pm) but will take no more than 30 minutes.

If you would like to know more information about committee positions available please email [admin@ballymorekindy.com.au](mailto:admin@ballymorekindy.com.au)

