

BallymoreBulletin



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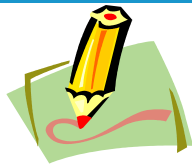


Ballymore Kindy



Term 3 2020

Desley's Dialogue



By the time you read this newsletter, we will be entering the final weeks of Term 3. It will have been another busy time for all of us. As in previous years, we find that Term 3 sees everything “coming together” for the children. They are feeling very capable and confident, their ability to generate and follow through with ideas is expanding and play is becoming more complex.

At this time of year there can be an expectation that we will change our practices at kindy in preparation for the children moving onto Prep. In fact, continuing our pretend play to the final days of kindy is the very best preparation we can offer your child – as highlighted in the article sent home (*The Big Debate* – “a play-based program...is crucial because it allows a focus on whole child development.” And also because of its role in developing executive function). For further reassurance, you may like to take a look at this link:

<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/2013/11/11/the-need-for-pretend-play-in-child-development/>



Imagine my surprise to receive an email from the University of Texas asking permission to use an article I had written in 2015 on Self Regulation. The article will

be used for one class for one semester in the Applied Human Learning class. I have included the article in this newsletter for parents to read. It was originally published in *Educating Young Children*, Vol 21, No 1, 2015.

I have also included a second article from a senior policy writer for early childhood in Education Qld. As adults, we are often tempted to give children letters, words and pictures to trace to build their writing skills. Sheryle presents a different perspective and references brain research in explaining why it is much better to allow children time and opportunity for free drawing, writing and painting. Although the article was written for educators, I am sure it will be of interest to parents too.

In the final weeks of this term, I will be making times for one-on-one discussions with parents. I hope these conversations will be useful in supporting the children's transitions at the end of the year – whether to Prep or to a new kindy group in 2021. At this time of year we talk with all the children about “when you go to Prep” rather than “when you go to Prep **next year**”. It is a subtle difference but does acknowledge that everyone will move on in their own time.

Desley



From the Office



Thanks for the working bee:

Many thanks to all those who gave a hand at our recent working bee. It was great to have so many jobs completed and to have our kindy looking spic and span for Spring!

Upcoming developments at Ballymore:

At the July management meeting, the committee approved expenditure to upgrade our play equipment shed and to beautify our sandpit surrounds. Both jobs will hopefully go ahead over the September school holidays.

Enrolments:

We are currently working through our enrolment process for 2021. At this stage all spaces are filled for the new year, however, if friends or neighbours should be looking for a kindy position for next year, please tell them to give us a call. Changes always occur between now and the end of the year.

Social events:

Please don't hesitate to contact Carly Field (Lexie's mum in the Wed-Fri group) if you have a suggestion for a social catch up for parents and/or children (bearing in mind any restrictions) for the final weeks of this term or early next term.

Hopefully our Family Bushwalk will still go ahead once the maintenance of Bellbird Grove is complete and current restrictions are lifted. We will keep you posted.

Transition Statements

Transition statements are written at the end of the kindy year before children move onto Prep. When the transition statement is shared with the child's school, the information they contain about each child's strengths and interests is helpful for Prep teachers as they prepare to welcome each child and plan for their ongoing learning and development.

From this year, it is anticipated that transition statements will be completed in an online format. In Term 4, I will be asking parents to sign a consent form to agree to Kindy sharing your child's transition statement with their school.

Visiting Kindy

Even in these COVID restriction times, we still welcome parents to come and spend some time at kindy with their child. It is best to have one child's parent at a time – not only for physical distancing but also because too many adults in the environment can be disruptive to the children's play as there is less need for them to interact with the other children – a major goal of our educational program.

Grandparents, and other significant people in your child's life, are also welcome to spend time with us. Younger siblings are welcome but parents are asked to supervise them at all times so that the kindy children's activities are not disrupted. All visitors spending time at the centre, are asked to sign on/off in the children's daily attendance book and to be aware of evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency.



Please review us on Google

Traditionally most enrolments for Ballymore Kindy have tended to be as a result of word-of-mouth and we are very appreciative of families speaking highly of our small centre. With this in mind, it may help us to maintain enrolments into the future and spread the message if parents would also review us on Google. Just a few short words from more parents would hopefully raise our profile when families are searching for kindergartens in our area.

Thank you in advance for your time, effort and kind words.



To Trace or not to Trace?

"In all my years of experience in early childhood settings this is one of the most widely used practices amongst teachers. I have seen this activity consistently given to children from 3 years of age through to school age. Why do we think that this is a successful practice?"



Will tracing over letters help children learn letters and sounds?

Spending time on phonemic awareness activities is far more beneficial for young children than tracing activities. Songs, rhymes, playing with words and letters and valuing children's own attempts at writing will assist children's development.

So what is the purpose of giving children a letter or sentence to trace?

Neuroscience tells us that free writing on blank pages helps the brain to learn about patterns and shapes. It is thought that each time a child forms a letter; their brain is getting better at recognizing the pattern, so the process of writing letters free form helps children's brain to activate and recognise that this is a useful "shape." Tracing does not have the same effect on the brain.

There are many commercially produced books that have tracing activities in them so why can't I use them?

Remember that as an early childhood educator/teacher you understand child development and can advocate for the correct process in early education. Commercially produced products available in supermarkets do not know the child or child development like you do.

If continuous improvement, best practice and quality outcomes underpin your practice, current research, theories and understandings need to be considered and applied through a process of critical reflection. Before you prepare a tracing letter activity, ask yourself what is the benefit for the child and how much learning is really taking place. Remember developmentally appropriate guidelines, neuroscience research and early years experts do not endorse tracing letters as evidence based practices. Tracing does not activate the area of the brain that develops good readers or writers.

Are we giving children this activity to increase their fine motor skills?

Children's fine motor and eye hand coordination are still developing; the best way to enhance these skills is through activities such as threading, blocks, puzzles, playdough and picking up small objects using tongs. Free drawing, with crayons and pencils, needs to be offered consistently to children as it strengthens their eye-hand development and fine motor skills as well as allowing them to be creative and use their imagination. (Limit the use of felt pens as children don't need to put pressure on these which is not assisting their muscle development)

What about painting at easels, does this help children's literacy?

Painting at easels should be available to children every day and is considered as a pre writing activity. As well as developing posture, colour and shape recognition and creativity, painting and then telling the story about the painting is an early literacy activity. Do not forget to let the child write their own name on their work. A child's attempt at writing their name needs to be valued and encouraged.



I have children who mirror image letters so will tracing help them to form letters correctly.

No! Young children (0-6 yrs) are still developing directionality and may see letters and numbers as a mirror image. Tracing over letters at this young age will not help their brain develop directionality and in fact could make children think that they are not competent learners. By giving them a dot to dot letter to trace we could be doing more harm than good as we are making them concentrate on a task that they learn to dislike because they are not good at it.

Sheryle Croft

(Sheryle is a Lead Principal Early Years with Education Qld)

Please help us.....

Just a friendly reminder re pick up time at the end of the kindy day.

It is very helpful that a number of parents are arriving from 3.30pm on Mon/Tues and from 2.00pm on Wed-Fri) as it helps to limit the number of adults in the space and supports our physical distancing at this particular time.

Under regulations, children must be in the care of their parent (or caregiver) by 4.00pm (Mon/Tues) and by 2.30pm (Wed-Fri).

Staff are limited in the amount of time in which they can be responsible for the care of children each day. After these times, staff are required to attend to matters including answering phone calls and emails, attending meetings with Gowrie and local schools, preparing for the following day, completing a thorough clean prior to the next day, as well as ordering supplies and taking visitors around the centre.

We appreciate your assistance in this matter and of course, if you are unintentionally delayed please advise us as soon as possible.

Want help managing screen time with your child?

Find out more at: esafety.gov.au/early-years

An Australian Government initiative from the eSafety Commissioner, eSafety Early Years supports online safety for under 5's.



Reminders

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 your Parent Information Handbook for more details.

Spare Clothes and Old Clothes

We are really enjoying our mud patch and the water trough will be out soon in time for Spring.

Please send your child in old clothes to kindy – it is so much easier for them to fully engage in play if they are not feeling anxious about clothes getting dirty and we definitely don't mind if they come in stained clothes!!

And please pack spare clothes for your child each day. They are sure to be needed!!



Raising Children in Your Neighbourhood Survey – Have Your Say!

Your community has been chosen to participate in a survey conducted by the Every Family research project at The University of Queensland. This survey aims to capture parenting experiences and beliefs about parenting support and raising children within your community. Any parent or carer of children aged under 18 years can participate. The anonymous and voluntary survey takes 15 minutes to complete. You will have a chance to win 1 of 200 \$50 Coles Myer gift vouchers for participating. Complete the survey online at: <https://exp.psy.uq.edu.au/racyn/>

Pumpkin loaf recipe

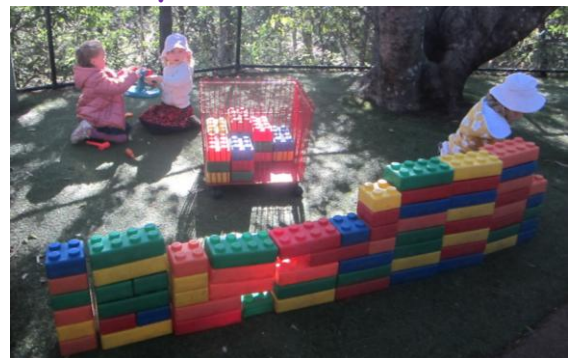
Ingredients:

- 1 ½ Cups self-raising flour
- 1 tablespoon ground nutmeg
- 2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 cups (350g) coarsely grated Kent pumpkin
- 4 Eggs
- 2/3 cup golden syrup
- 2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Method:

1. Combine flour, nutmeg, cinnamon and pumpkin in a large bowl
2. Whisk the eggs, syrup and oil in a large jug
3. Add to flour mixture and stir until just combined
4. Pour into a 10cm x 20cm loaf pan lined with baking paper
5. Cook for 1 hour in 160 deg oven until skewer inserted in centre comes out clean
6. Transfer to wire rack and when cool – ENJOY!

Term 3 fun at kindy



Self-regulation: the what, the why and the how

By Desley Jones, 2015

Self-regulation: what is it?

"Children experience ups and downs when they are trying to manage their feelings and behaviours...helping them to find ways to balance this is called self-regulation" (KidsMatter)

Berk (2001) describes self-regulation as the capacity to use thought to guide behaviour. She asserts that the self-regulated child follows rules, makes deliberate decisions, well reasoned choices and decisions and takes responsibility for his or her own learning and behaviour. Early childhood is a crucial period for its development. It is a time when children learn to overcome impulses by thinking before they act.

Self regulation is one of many terms used to refer to emotional regulation. Others include: emotional regulation, emotional control, affect regulation, effortful control and emotion management. According to Nagel (2012, (153-4): *"emotional regulation ...is the process where children increasingly gain greater control of the behaviours that allow them to achieve functional goals."*

Nagel also identifies that the neural mechanisms that underlie emotional regulation may be the same as many that underlie cognitive processes including higher-order thinking processes such as sustained attention and working memory.

The importance of these higher order thinking skills and their relation to self-regulation is investigated together with their impact on social emotional development and learning in a Working Paper produced by the Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011). Executive functioning skills include:

- of working memory (the capacity to hold and manipulate information over short periods of time)
- inhibitory control (the skill of mastering and filtering thoughts and impulses to resist temptations, distractions and habits and to pause and think before acting)
- cognitive or mental flexibility (the capacity to nimbly switch gears and adjust to changed demands, priorities, or perspectives, and to apply different rules in different settings)

These skills are essential to 'the deliberate, intentional, goal-directed behaviour that is required for daily life and success at work.' (Harvard University, 2011, 1)

Importance of self-regulation

Acquiring these early building blocks of executive functioning are one of the most important but challenging tasks of early childhood. These skills assist children to learn to read and write, to remember the steps in mathematical problems, to take part in class discussions or group projects, to enter into and sustain play with others, to plan and act in ways that make them good students, classroom citizens and friends, and to establish a foundation to study, sustain friendships, hold a job and manage in a crisis. These underlying skills are "distinct from, but foundational to, school readiness and academic success." (Harvard, 2011, p4)

Fostering self-regulation

Self-regulation develops as a result of development and learning. It is linked to a range of cognitive abilities including language capacity and it takes time to develop. In terms of brain development, Nagel (2012) highlights the interconnectedness between the cerebrum (the portion of the brain that plays a role in complex adaptive processes such as learning, perception and motivation) and the limbic system which is widely assumed to play a role in emotion. Nagel (2012, 154) suggests:

"This is one of the reasons why children may have temper tantrums in the first couple of years of their lives; increasing independence collides with emotional and verbal immaturity."

According to both Nagel and the Harvard University Working paper, the most essential elements of environments that foster self-regulation are **positive relationships** and the **scaffolding** of children's development of their regulatory abilities.

"Enhancing the development of executive functioning skills (and subsequent self regulatory abilities) involves sensitive, responsive caregiving and individualized teaching in the context of situations that require making choices, opportunities for children to direct their own activities with decreasing adult supervision over time, effective support of early emotion regulation, promotion of sustained joint attention and the availability of adults who are not under such pressure that they cannot make time for children to practice their skills."(Harvard, 2011)

Nagel recommends particular attention be given to:

- Security, structure and routine

- adult-child relationships that demonstrate the principles of scaffolding - guiding children from complete dependence on adult support to a gradual assumption of the "executive" role for themselves
- the establishment of a framework for scaffolding which includes routines, cues for behaviour, breaking big tasks into smaller chunks, thus helping children to use executive function skills to the best of their abilities, and
- the use of reasoning and explanations as a strategy for compliance rather than continuously reverting to power and control, which according to Nagel may derail emotional regulation (2012, p156-7).

When children feel respected, valued and acknowledged; when they experience a secure, supportive environment which encourages them to generate ideas, engage in personally meaningful experiences and see themselves as highly effective problem solvers; and when the communication in the centre is one of caring talking and listening then a substantial foundation is laid for the enhancement of young children's self regulatory abilities.

In considering more specific strategies to enhance self regulation, preference needs to be given to those approaches which incorporate an understanding of children's cognitive (ie executive functioning skills) and language development and its role in emotional regulation.

Such strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Describing emotions and physiological responses
- Calming experiences
- Encouraging private speech or self talk
- Discussing expectations, reasons, consequences
- Pre-empting positive behaviour
- Providing descriptive feedback as an alternative to praise
- Problem solving and conflict resolution
- Reframing situations
- Making reparation

Make Believe Play

Special mention should also be made of the role of make believe play in children's development across all areas including self regulation. "In social pretending, preschoolers engage in lengthier interactions, are more involved, draw more children into their activity, and are more cooperative. In view of these findings, it is not surprising that 4 and 5 year olds who spend more time at sociodramatic play are advanced in intellectual development and are judged more socially competent by their teachers. Furthermore, pretend play fosters a diverse array of specific cognitive and social skills, which contribute to these broad-based outcomes." (Berk, 2001, p119)

Make believe play provides opportunities for encouraging:

- a strong sense of agency for young children
- social activity
- mental flexibility including switching gears and seeing different perspectives
- inhibitory control through natural consequences (if you want to be part of the game, you may have to comply with the group rules of the game)
- problem solving and a focus on goals
- using working memory in the recall of details for the game
- language use in planning and playing
- sustained attention over hours, days and even weeks
- scaffolding as children operate above their usual level in purposeful activities
- sensory input through building spaces, music, roles, props.

The development of self-regulation is a complex interplay of several areas of development. In supporting self regulation, those working with young children require a holistic view of children's development together with a strong understanding of the role of relationships and the importance of high quality environments in children's development and learning.

References:

See Desley Jones for list of references.