

Ballymore Bulletin



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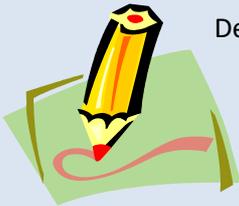


Ballymore Kindy



Term 3, 2021

Desley's Dialogue



Dear Parents,

It is so surreal for me to be writing my 87th, and final, introduction for the Ballymore Bulletin!

I have been so very fortunate to work at Ballymore for over 2 decades. In that time, I have met many wonderful children and their families, and it has been a privilege to work with everyone. We have had our delights, dilemmas, challenges, joys and frustrations, and there have been laughter and tears, but regardless of all of that, there has always been a deep concern for the interests of young children.

I would like to thank this year's parents for entrusting your children into my care and for your friendship and support for both myself and for Ballymore Kindy. Special thanks must go to our management committee led with such strong guidance and calm support this year by our President Christine Smith. Even when I announced my intention to retire at the second meeting of the year, they have only ever offered me their full support and understanding, and for this I am very appreciative.

To spend such a length of time in one setting, has provided me the professional opportunity to explore in a very meaningful way my personal philosophy and pedagogical approach to teaching. I hope that I have also developed the ability to account for it clearly over the years and I greatly appreciate the support that I have received from so many people – parents and professional colleagues alike.

I am especially proud that our educational program is held in such high regard within the wider education community. I often feel amazement, and great satisfaction, that the pedagogy of a small single unit kindergarten in down-town Brisbane has been shared at state, national and international conferences and through a range of professional journals. It even made its way into an undergraduate program at the University of Texas last year – who would have thought!!

I hope you will forgive me for including one last article on relationships in this final bulletin. I wrote it in 2019 for a conference presentation. While it was written for teachers and educators I have included it in this Bulletin because I remain fervently committed to the importance of teaching for relationships – this is NOT a soft option in education. It is imperative, and it should be ongoing for children (and adults) as it supports all aspects of their development and learning. I was at a conference in Prague in 2018 (those were the days!) when the latest early childhood curriculum for the EU was adopted. It has, at its core, the importance of self regulation – both social/emotional and cognitive (executive function). We must value children as individuals but also guide them in becoming positive group members. While some will find this more challenging than others, it just means that it is even more important that, in kindergarten years, we provide them with everyday opportunities to practise being a group member, and the scaffolding to make it achievable.

The success of our curriculum is in no way attributable only to me. I have been so very very fortunate to work with Karen (Mrs Curling) and Yvonne (Mrs Matthews) for 16 and 11 years respectively. They are talented educators in

their own right – supportive, creative, insightful, reflective and great “players”. They make their own significant contributions to our curriculum and I have valued their daily reflections and our collegial conversations at staff meetings. Your children, and the children to come, are so lucky to have them at Ballymore!!

My final thanks go to our awesomely efficient and knowledgeable Office Administrator, Chris. I have worked with Chris across two kindergartens and she brings to her work a deep commitment to the importance of kindergartens in our communities, an unflagging ability to work long hours and to take on way more than her job description requires. She is a dear friend and I can only give her my deepest thanks for keeping the “ship afloat”!

Ballymore moves ahead with this wonderful trio under the leadership of Emily Clark. I welcome Emily wholeheartedly and am so pleased to pass the mantel on to her. We have had great days working together and I thank her for her contribution to our transition program.

I wish everyone the very best for the future,

Desley

Dip Teach (EC), BEd, BSc (Hons Psychology)



President's Report

Hello Everyone!

The year is zipping past! Already, we are nearly at the end of term 3! Well, the children did get two “return to kindy” days this term, thanks to a COVID lock down at the start of this term. I think that made this term feel even faster than usual. During ‘home kindy’, no doubt all the kids enjoyed having Mrs Jones’s story time, some songs and activities planned out for them. Thanks to the staff for remaining responsive to changes and communicating with all of us about how changing COVID restrictions affect life at kindy. The start of term three was also marked with the unveiling of the new fort! What an amazing addition to the kindy and something kindy kids for years to come will enjoy!



As you will be aware, the end of this term sees the conclusion of Desley’s 22 years at Ballymore Kindy. It is with sadness that we say farewell to Desley. It is, however with gratitude

for the teaching, knowledge and care that Desley has imparted to our children and our families, that we wish her all the very best for her future adventures. We certainly know that Hugo is a lucky little chap having you to care for him, Desley! We also wish you well for all those other endeavours you have been planning and hope those borders can open up again soon so that travel plans can be added back to the list. So, with this in mind, I hope to see you all at the festivities on Saturday 18th September at Victoria Park in honour of Desley and her wonderful career. (Just a reminder, that this is an adult’s only event).

In term 4, we formally welcome Emily Clark as the new teacher and director of Ballymore Kindy. Many of you have met Emily already as she has attended the kindy on several days in the past few weeks to meet the children, to get

to know the other teachers and the kindy itself. We also welcomed Emily to her first Ballymore Kindy Committee Meeting last week. The time Emily has dedicated to make this transition smooth is much appreciated and we look forward to seeing her more in the coming term.

If I can please flag a few **dates for the calendars** (as always these are pending changes to COVID restrictions)

Thursday 9th September - Kindy Celebration Night; for Mon/Tues group families.

Saturday 11th September – 9:30-11:30am - Brisbane City Council Creek Neighbours Celebration Day, Gould Park.

Thursday 16th September - Kindy Celebration Night; for Wed/Thurs/Fri group families

Saturday 18th September – Desley's Celebration ("A Date with Desley"); Victoria Park Golf Course. Drop in between 1pm and 4pm.

So clearly there is a lot to celebrate this term!

A *small request*, as a community, not for profit kindy, the enrolments each year at Ballymore is based on word of mouth and recommendations from past and present families. If you have a moment, a **google review of Ballymore Kindy** may help future parents searching for information online understand how great Ballymore kindy is! Thank you in advance.

Take care. Stay safe. Hopefully see you soon.

Finally...To Desley, on behalf of the current families of Ballymore Kindy, **thank you and our very best wishes** go with you into the future.

Christine Smith President 2021

A note from Emily – our incoming Teacher/Director.....

Hello Families,

Over the past few weeks, it has been lovely being able to spend some time at the Kindy, getting to know the children, staff and families before I commence in Term 4. Thank you for welcoming me with such warmth and openness.

I am really looking forward to being a part of the Ballymore Kindy community and honouring the wonderful work that Desley has done during her time as Teacher and Director.

Prior to joining Ballymore Kindy, I have had the opportunity to teach across a range of contexts and am excited to be returning to a Community Kindergarten setting.

At the heart of my teaching is a deep respect for children and a passion for play based learning. I am continually amazed by the potential for learning that is possible through play. I believe in supporting rich and meaningful play experiences, by ensuring they are nestled within a learning environment that fosters positive, respectful relationships and reflect the important role that children play as active participants within their Kindergarten community.

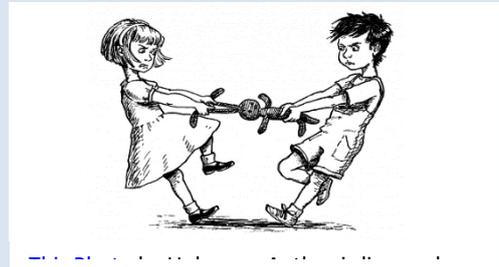
It is an honour to be a part of a community that has such a rich history and I am looking forward to respectfully building on this, as we enter this new chapter together.

Emily

We Are Not ALL Friends But That's Ok: Reassessing slogans for social guidance

It's a busy day working with a group of young children. Social situations come and go – someone has taken a truck; someone is looking for a playmate; someone else is complaining that they didn't get a turn. Often in the busy reality of early childhood education, practitioners resort to "fast" ways to respond and provide guidance to young charges. And particularly in the area of social interactions, and the complexities that come with them, it can seem so much easier and productive to rely on slogans such as:

- "We are all friends here."
- "Sharing is caring."
- "Use your words."
- "You were playing together, you work it out."
- "That's the rule at kindy."



You won't be alone if you have heard these at your centre but it may be time to stop and consider whether these slogans are as useful as some might think or whether, if we are going to use a slogan or saying or rule of thumb, there may be a more appropriate and effective one to employ.

Here is a scenario to consider:

Brianna has just made a fairy game. She has a space in the play room marked out with pieces of material attached to posts. On her small mat she has arranged artificial flowers, a china tea set with glitter for food and small china fairies. Another child approaches Brianna's game and wants to play. As the educator working nearby what would your response be? What information might you need to guide your intentional teaching decision?

Initial responses for most people might be: ask Brianna if she is happy for the other child to play, support the other child to build their own game nearby if Brianna isn't happy to include them, or support Brianna to allow the other child to join in, or even to say "Brianna, sharing is caring!". However, on reflection, might our responses vary if we know that: Brianna always plays alone, or that her mother is currently very ill and in hospital, or that this is the very first time that the other child has asked to join a game, or that the other child always wants to take over when they see new materials being played with?

Would "sharing is caring" if Brianna's mum is sick and Brianna has built this small game as a safe space for her to care for herself in? Is it caring if the child who always wants to take over when they see what someone else is playing with, actually gets their way? Who wins in this situation? – certainly not Brianna who has HAD to relinquish her safe space and certainly NOT the other child who has just learnt that if they complain loud or long enough or if they look sad and despondent, they will get their way. No support was given here in helping them to inhibit responses and to problem solve what else they might do if they see something they want to play with.

Slogans can become simplified notions of what relationships entail. By accepting and perpetuating these views, we diminish children and their capacity to understand the complexities of relationships and to interact positively in a range of situations and with a range of people.

Here are some other points to consider:

The saying "We are all friends here" seems, on the surface, to demonstrate a well-meaning sense of caring. However, if we consider the issues of friendships from other angles we may decide that this is in fact not a useful statement to make to young children. Expecting everyone to be friends is not realistic in any group, or at any age. But it is realistic to expect everyone to care for one another or to be respectful of one another. Friendships are complex relationships and often young children have not reached a level of development to understand the reciprocity of friendship, and that this does not have to be an insular relationship. Taking away the pressure "to be, or to have, friends" can allow children the opportunities to experience a range of relationships.

Likewise, a reliance on "rules" can have some unintended consequences. In supporting the development of self-regulation, it is essential to link children's cognitive, language and emotional development. When children verbalise the reasons behind certain actions – "We won't run and jump off the fort because someone may be underneath." – they combine these areas of development, building understanding and thoughtful action. This experience is more conducive to growth than attributing an action to the fact that "It's a rule at kindy".

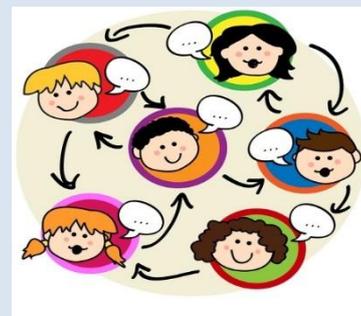
Similarly a comment such as “You were playing together, you work it out” will not be helpful to young children who have not yet developed the Theory of Mind needed to understand and predict another person’s mental processes, including their intentions, emotions, motives, thoughts. When we leave children to “work it out” it seems likely that the person who is loudest, strongest or fastest is most likely to have the upper hand.

Working with large groups of young children, early childhood practitioners are often faced with making “on the spot” decisions bearing in mind all that we know about the individual child and group dynamics. Relationships are complex and there are often no black and white rules. A clear long-term planning strategy for positive relationships can, however, provide a useful tool in clarifying goals and guiding responses.

In evaluating and integrating the current science of early childhood development, *From Neurons to Neighbourhoods* asserts that positive relationships require:

- Reliable support to establish confidence and trust,
- Responsiveness to strengthen agency and self-efficacy,
- Protection from harm and unforeseen threats,
- Affection to build self-esteem,
- Opportunities to experience and resolve conflict cooperatively,
- Scaffolding of new skills and capacities,
- Reciprocal interaction to build understanding of the give and take of sociability and
- The experiencing of mutual respect.

(Shonkoff et al, 2000)



From current brain research we know that “...overall neurological development which is arguably the cornerstone of cognition, emotion and all other aspects of development, thrives when parents and caregivers ...nurture an environment of healthy relationships” Responsive relationships have been linked with “stronger cognitive skills in young children, fewer behavioural problems, enhanced emotional and social competence, and long-term achievement in school.” (Nagel, 2012, p157)

Research also points to the importance of emerging executive function skills (including working memory, inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility) for a young child’s learning and development and the strong links between these skills and social and emotional growth.

“Children’s executive function skills provide the link between early school achievement and social, emotional, and moral development” and “...some researchers have hypothesized that the complexity of human social relationships, rather than the need to do higher math, is why the human prefrontal cortex is so large and our executive function abilities are so advanced.” (Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2011, p5-6).

It is essential to remember that:

- Positive relationships are essential for children’s overall development and learning.
- Relationships are complex and require ongoing observation, reflection, pedagogical challenge, and the use of both overt and subtle supportive strategies.
- There is a need for an overall coherent long-term plan in supporting the development of positive relationships rather than a reliance on spontaneous responses to incidents as they arise.
- That such a plan, with a focus on developing positive relationships, can form the basis of curriculum planning, meeting the learning outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework, and can (and should) inform the intentional teaching decisions that underpin planning for all parts of the day in an early education/care centre.

If, however, slogans remain a preferred option in a busy early education or care setting maybe it’s time to consider some alternatives:

“We are all friends here.”	“We are all practising to care for one another here.”
“Sharing is caring.”	“Let’s think of ways to care for one another.”
“Use your words.”	“What words do you think you might say to...”, or “Maybe you could try saying...”
“You were playing together, you work it out.”	“Think about how you could solve this problem in a caring way. I’ll be here to lend a hand.”
“That’s the rule at kindy.”	“Why do you think this might (or might not) be the best thing to do?”

Relationships **are** complex, but when we remember that helping children to build attitudes and skills to navigate the complexities of relationships will in fact support all areas of their development, it makes the investment of time, patience, thinking, and energy so much more manageable.

Desley Jones

References:

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011). *Building the Brain’s “Air Traffic Control” System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function: Working Paper No. 11*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Nagel, M.C. (2012). *In the Beginning: The brain, early development and learning*. Camberwell, Aust: ACER Press.

Shonkoff, J.P. & Phillips, D.A. (2000). *From Neurons to Neighbourhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington DC: National Academy Press

Family Bushwalk:



It was great to see so many families at our annual Bushwalk in the final week of Term 2. Bellbird Grove is such an ideal spot to gather with its quite achievable walks for young legs and the safe and BIG space in which to run and play and share a picnic morning tea together.

The Family Bushwalk is not

only a great social experience for families but also supports and extends our walks to the park behind kindy. To be out-of-doors, curious about the natural environment, brave enough to experience what the bush might offer but feeling secure enough to take on challenges is crucial to a young child’s developing environmental awareness and personal growth.



Book Fair

We hope you have had a chance to browse through the selection of books that have arrived from Riverbend Books, Bulimba this week.

Thank you for supporting our Book Fair. All books on the teachers "wish list" will go into the children's lending library and we are looking forward to some new additions!

Any books that are donated will have the child's name printed in the front of the book and will be given the opportunity to borrow them in due course.

You may also purchase books for yourself – Ballymore Kindy receives a 20% commission on all orders.



RECYCLE YOUR COFFEE CAPSULES

Please keep dropping in your coffee capsules to the bin near the sign on book.

We are regularly sending boxes full to Terracycle and collecting points which are transferred to \$\$ which are then donated to the Ronald McDonald House!

Ask your friends and family to collect as well!

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.

Transition statements will be completed in an online format. In Term 4, we will be asking parents to sign a consent form to agree to Kindy sharing your child's transition statement with their school.



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.



Spread the Word about Ballymore Kindy!

Do you know of anyone who is looking for the right Kindy for their child to attend in **2022 or beyond?** Our beautiful, community kindergarten might just be the place for them. Ballymore Kindy now has their enrolment list open right up to 2025, and we would love you to help us **get the word out!**

You could do this by:

- ✓ liking us on Facebook (Ballymore Kindy)
- ✓ sharing Ballymore Kindy Facebook posts to Groups or Business Pages you may be involved in (such as Mother's groups, playgroups or schools)
- ✓ simply talking about Ballymore Kindy at school pick-up/drop-off or playgroups/mothers' groups and directing interested parents to our website: www.ballymorekindy.com.au

Please encourage all parents who are interested in enrolling their child at Ballymore to contact Desley or Chris by email at admin@ballymorekindy.com.au or by phone on **3252 3732**.

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!!

