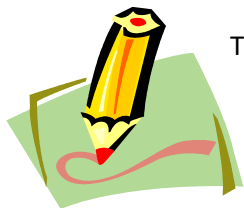


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Desley's Dialogue



This final bulletin of the year is traditionally my opportunity 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 2019, in whatever form they took – helping at working bees and on mowing roster, letter box dropping information for our Open Day, joining in social functions, picking up and returning museum loans, 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 Catherine 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. Sometimes they experience emotions – both positive and negative – that they can neither name nor understand. Even children who seem very mature and ready for the changes may suddenly be impacted by the experiences. 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 – *Helping Children to Develop Social Competence*. Making and maintaining connections with others will continue to be challenging for most children throughout primary school. This article may give some food for thought on ways to support your child to develop their social capabilities. It may provide some food for thought on ways to support your child as a thinker and learner through the end of kindy and

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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 2020 will bring! **Desley**

President's Report

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. The children going to Prep next year will begin doing uniform tests soon, 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! And our families continue to enjoy participating in the various recycling ventures offered by the Kindy – what a practical and interesting project.

The social calendar for term 4 has been busy, with families enjoying the inaugural Ballymore Family BBQ and coffee and play date. The BBQ was lovely opportunity to relax and catch up, and have a bit of a bowl! 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 2019 committee have been making arrangements for the incoming committee, and finalising work from this year. The staff will host an information evening for new families and will hold play dates at the Kindy for the 2020 groups. And everyone is busily planning for our end of year celebrations being held at the Kindy at the end of November and early December. 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 2019 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.

It is my final year at Ballymore – my family has enjoyed 4 beautiful years at Kindy under the guidance of Desley, Yvonne and Karen. It is with heavy hearts that we say goodbye but will remain forever grateful for our time here.

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 for a successful 2020.

With very best wishes

Catherine Bonifant

Last days of kindy for 2019:

Tuesday 10 December (Group 1)

Friday 13 December (Group 2)

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Young Children and Stress

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 warm 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)

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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)



Library Books – both our children’s and parents’ libraries will close from the week beginning 18 November.

Please return any books you may have at home by this time.

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Helping Children to Develop Social Competence

Competence in building and maintaining relationships with others involves a complex interplay of feelings, thoughts, and skills. While these components take a long time to learn, their foundations are laid in early childhood by responsive, patient, and supportive parents, teachers, and other adults, and in the context of a variety of opportunities to interact with peers. (Katz & McClellan, 1997).

Social competence is made up of a number of components:

- Emotion regulation
- Social knowledge and understanding
- Social skills, and
- Social dispositions (enduring habits of mind or ways of responding in situations)

For example: a basic competence required for successful peer-group interaction is turn taking. To take turns successfully a child must:

- * Be able to postpone her wishes (emotion regulation)
- * Understand that taking turns is expected and normal in the social context (social knowledge)
- * Behave appropriately when her turn comes (social skills), and
- * Respond this way each time turn taking is required (social dispositions)

As with other areas of development, the components of social competence take time and practice for young children to master, but are essential skills for life and learning. Many school learning experiences are based on small and large group work. When children's social skills are well developed they engage more effectively in these activities.

Following are some thoughts about children's social development, and strategies that we use at kindy and which may be useful at home:

- Children are individuals and as with other areas of development and learning, their abilities to handle social situations may be different from another child's. Take care not to compare children and their social skills. They are all engaged in a lifelong learning experience. Some may need more time or practice in one area of development than others.
- Children will often come home with tales of woe regarding friendships: "So-and-so said they weren't my friend!" etc. Try not to over-react or to engage into lengthy discussions. Children can read your "vibes". If they sense you are worried or anxious or that you will solve their problems, they may well play on that for attention. A little tough (objective) love or "rational compassion" can help enormously.
- Young children generally see the world from their perspective only. It is very hard for them to see another's point of view. They may actually neglect to tell you how they excluded the same person from play the day before, or that they only wanted everyone to play their way. *There are two sides to every story.*

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- Acknowledge your child's feelings. It is OK to feel sad or disappointed, but don't dwell on them. One of the most important attitudes we can help children to develop is resilience and the emotional perspective to distinguish between what is a tragedy and what is not. Being able to cope with, and move on from disappointments in life is a valuable skill. Young children should not be encouraged to think it is a disaster if they miss a turn with a toy or that they must always get what they want. Being able to face the disappointments in life with a sense of good humour is a special gift we can give children.
- Don't encourage your child to feel they are a victim when social problems arise. Rather than focussing on how someone may have treated them badly, concentrate on empowering your child. Problem solving is a **BIG** part of what we do at kindy and this is important in social situations too. Encourage your child to brainstorm possible actions they may take: "What could you do if Mary won't let you play?" Accept all answers without judging – (eg tell the teacher, cry, go and play with someone else, ask them again) – and then help them to select the most appropriate one to try.
- Children may say "So-and-so hurt my feelings". Encouraging this response places them at the mercy of someone else. It makes them a victim. It is important to acknowledge that instantaneous feeling of sadness or disappointment; "I bet you felt a little sad about that?" but then begin to empower them by reminding them that other people cannot make them feel one way or another – feelings are controlled by their own brain, they are in charge of their feelings. Help them to find ways to change their feelings – play with different people, move on to an activity they enjoy, have a cold drink and relax and then go back to play. As adults we should also avoid placing a child in the position of being responsible for how another child feels. Again it is OK to feel sad when you miss a turn or when your mum won't let you go to play at someone's house – that is part of life. Relying on another child to make you feel happy is an inappropriate response.
- It can be a good idea to try to avoid asking your child: "Who are your friends?" or "Who did you play with today?" Questions such as these can be hard to answer at the end of a busy day when children are tired. They can also create the expectation that children must have a friend, and can cause pressure when "friendships" run into trouble. In reality young children are just beginning to develop the skills of reciprocity, attachment and responsibility, that make friendships possible, so relationships with peers can be very changeable at this age. Rather it may be better to ask: **"What games did you play today? Who else was in the game?"**
- Difficulties can also arise when children have a reliance on one particular "friend" making it harder for them to manage when that person is away from kindy or school. While we want children to be interdependent, we have to balance this with independence and the ability to get along with a wide range of children. At kindy we regularly manage situations so that children are partnered with someone who they don't usually play with – this may be at the lunch tables, when completing tidy-up tasks or in group activities such as transition games, music experiences or relaxation sessions. Initially this can be a big challenge for some children but participating in these experiences is great practice at getting along with different personalities.
- At kindy our group circle times are one strategy that we use to develop children's sense of belonging to a group, that their contribution to the group is valued and that their actions impact on the people around them. At kindy we emphasise the idea that because we spend time together we should care for each other and support and respect each other. We deliberately avoid saying that we have to be friends with everyone

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in the group. Instead we talk about speaking to, and treating each other, in a “caring” way. Being friends with everyone is not realistic but being respectful and caring to everyone is.

- When social conflicts arise we are careful not to take sides. This avoids identifying either child as victim or aggressor – neither role is useful to a child’s development at this age. Often one child’s action may be a reaction to something that happened 5 minutes before, an hour ago, or the day before. Instead we approach this as a problem solving opportunity – helping the children to state the problem, think of solutions, implement and evaluate. Role playing ways to communicate with each other is another valuable learning tool.

Social skills are complex and children learn messages about how to relate to others from their parents. Mrs Curling (Karen) shares that the greatest lesson she learnt from her father and that she passes on to her own children is that “**optimism is the key**”. Early childhood is the ideal time for children to learn that:

- Mistakes are great because when we make mistakes we can learn something and we can always try things differently next time, especially if we have had our problem solving skills encouraged, and
- Disappointments won’t last forever, but they are important for us all. They help us to become more understanding, empathetic, caring and resilient.

End-of-Kindy Celebrations

We look forward to celebrating our End-of-Kindy with all our families and hope you have marked your diaries: **Thursday 28 November** for Group 1 and **Thursday 5 December** for Group 2. Both evenings will be from 6.30 til 7.30pm.



In case you are wondering: As in previous years, this celebration will **not** be a 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.



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

BEESWAX WRAPS

Fancy a special activity for the holidays? The following link provides instructions for making beeswax wraps for food – a great sustainable alternative for clingwrap!

<https://www.jakeandmaya.com/home-made-wax-wraps/>