

THERE WILL BE A TIME NOT TOO FAR FROM NOW, WHEN YOU WILL LOOK BACK AT THIS PHASE OF YOUR LIFE AND INSTEAD OF CONDEMNING IT, YOU WILL FEEL APPRECIATION FOR IT. - ABRAHAM HICKS



# ON *this* MONTH

## AT WATERFORD WEST EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE

Easter Bonnet Display .....	6 - 9
Easter Bonnet Parade (In service only) .....	9
Vacation Care Program .....	6-17

## AROUND THE COUNTRY

Children's Book Day .....	2
World Autism Day .....	2
Nature Play Week .....	Mar 25-April 5
Easter .....	10 - 13
Earth Day .....	22
ANZAC Day .....	25
Pay it Forward Day .....	28

## Letter from the Director

Welcome to our Newsletter for April 2020. I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that during these uncertain times that we will endeavour to communicate any changes and/or updates regarding the impending coronavirus, and /or government's stance on child care centres, in an accurate and timely matter.

At present we will continue to provide the up most of quality care to our centre children and will continue to look to agencies like "Touch of Compassion" to access things like free bread to provide to our centre families.

We will continue to offer programs in our service that are designed to extend children's learning and development as well as provide ongoing opportunities for parents to extend these learnings at home.

We have implemented a new front door policy where an educator will take children from parents in the morning and return children to parents in the afternoon, to limit traffic inside the service. We have also set up several hand sanitising stations within our centre and invite parents and children to use these at all times when entering and leaving or service.

During this time we ask parents to follow the government's advice, where they are able, and keep children at home. We would like to remind our centre families that we are "FAMILY" and if you need any support during this time please feel free to ask, My team and I are happy to help where we can.

Please take care and stay safe!!! Miss Peta



# Room News

## Early Learners Room

Last month, the Early Learners children were busy learning about Farm Animals, stemmed from their interest in the story book, Old MacDonald's Farm". The children have been having so much fun engaging in sensory activities, using their handprints and footprints, along with collage materials to create the farm animals. Old MacDonald is a great song and story for developing language skills. Being a repetitive story, it helps the children expand in their language skills by learning new words and pronunciation, providing them with confidence to join in strengthening their social skills when communicating with peers.

During the last couple of weeks children have been establishing frequent hand washing techniques as we learnt about germs and keeping ourselves and our friends safe.

Over the next month, we will be joining Junior Early Years as we work together through the coronavirus situation. Please keep up to date with your emails from the centre as important information will be constantly sent home regarding new policies and information concerning each family.

## Junior Early Years Room

The Junior Early Years children were interested in exploring and investigating the "We're going on a Bear hunt" story last month and as such had a lot of fun role playing, learning new songs that extended directional language, and pretending to be bears themselves... ROAR!

Last month also saw us celebrate St Patrick's Day, where we did a 'Green Food Taste Test' extending our understandings about Healthy & Unhealthy Foods.' To extend children's knowledge, Mrs Lusia brought in some mini collectable stickeez where the children selected their favourite food item and collaged them accordingly to whether they thought they were healthy or unhealthy.

With the Coronavirus now in full swing in Australia, we have been learning about how germs effect our bodies, including what they look like, and how easily they can be spread. We have been talking about the importance of washing our hands with soap and to ensure children are doing this properly we have implemented a new routine where children sing the "Twinkle twinkle little star" song while washing their hands.

Over the next month, our Junior Early Years children will be combining with our Early Learners friends. We will be sending out one daily reflection every day to keep families posted about what the children in our centre are learning about and what parents can do at home to extend their children's learnings.

## Early Learners Room



## Junior Early Years Room



# Room News

## Early Year Room

Last month our Early Years friends were really connected with nature. Exploring the world of insects, provided incidental teaching opportunities, where we were able to introduce some mathematical concepts, like counting insect legs (spiders), looking for interesting shapes in nature (spirals) and exploring different colours (life cycle of a butterfly).

This month, has seen us implementing stronger health and safety procedures, like washing hands, use of hand sanitizer and sneeze and cough techniques. We have talked about germs, bacteria and viruses and using a play based approach, we have been able to show our early years children how we can protect ourselves by having good hygiene practices.

With the coronavirus getting more serious every day we would like to take this opportunity to reassure you all of our commitment to provide safe and secure environments for children, and as such over the coming months our Early Years children will join our pre-prep children in the Kindergarten room. During this time, our Kindergarten teacher Miss Alex and myself, Mr Mario will work together to provide children with an environment that extends children's learning and development.

## Pre Prep Room

This past month in Pre-Prep has seen us exploring Dinosaurs with a noteworthy investigation into just how big the Dinosaurs were when they walked the earth. Did you see our post on face book where we hypothesised how many of our feet would make up a tyrannosaurs rex foot before we used a "to scale" drawing of a T-rex foot to find out? We managed to fit over 25 of our feet into the t-rex foot.

With the situation with Covid-19 becoming more serious the Pre-Prep class have been learning all about germs, how they spread and what we can do to minimise this. You may have seen our experiment into how germs can spread from one person to another and how important it is to wash our hands, including between our fingers and the backs of our hands. We have been busy now getting ready for our Easter Celebrations next week and exploring Nature Play week, our magic mud recipe was a huge hit with the children and engaged them in conversations about Bush Kindy and the lovely mud puddles we enjoyed when we were able to go to Bush Kindy. Hopefully the email we sent out on ways to explore nature week from home was useful.

Thank you for all the donations of 2L Milk Bottles that we have received. We still need 20 of them to finish our hat pocket project that has been ongoing this month. Upcoming next after the Easter Break the Pre-Prep children have shown a strong interest in the insects that they have found in our gardens particularly snails and we will be exploring life cycles and learning all about different types of insects. We would love to hear about anything you may find in your own home too.

## Early Years Room



## Pre Prep Room





**ANZAC DAY – APRIL 25**

Anzac Day, 25 April, is one of Australia’s most important national occasions. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the first world war. Although this year you cannot attend your usual ANZAC day

Commemoration you can still remember those who served and died in war on operational service past and present. You can do this by simply sitting quietly and watching the sun rise, talking with your children about ANZAC day and reading books about men and women who served. **Find out more at [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)**

**WORLD AUTISM DAY – APRIL 02**

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> annual World Autism Awareness Day. The 2020 United Nations observance of the Day draws attention to issues of concern related to the transition to adulthood. **Find out more at [un.org/en/events/autismday/](http://un.org/en/events/autismday/)**

**ZUCCHINI SLICE**



PREP 15 min | COOK 45 min | SERVES 8-10

**INGREDIENTS**

- 6 zucchini, *grated*
- 200 grams prosciutto, *finely chopped*
- 1 1/2 cups (185 grams) cheddar, tasty OR provolone cheese, *grated*
- 100 grams feta cheese, *crumbled*
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) basil pesto
- 1 cup (125 grams) plain self-raising flour
- salt and pepper, *to season*
- 8 eggs
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) olive oil

**To Serve:** sliced tomatoes and fresh basil leaves.

**METHOD:**

1. Preheat oven to 180 C and lightly grease an oven proof dish. Set aside.
2. Into a very large bowl place the zucchini, prosciutto, grated cheese, feta, basil pesto, flour, salt and pepper and stir thoroughly to combine.
3. Place the eggs and oil into a separate bowl and whisk to combine.
4. Add the eggs to the zucchini mixture and stir thoroughly to combine.
5. Pour the mixture into prepared dish.
6. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until gorgeously golden and 'set'.
7. Serve with a simple salad of sliced tomatoes and basil leaves.

*Recipe and Image from 'mylovelittlelunchbox.com'*

**Book reviews**

*Celebrate Children’s Book Day with these beautiful recent release titles.*



**THE KEEPER OF WILD WORDS**

**BROOKE SMITH**

*A touching tale of a grandmother and her granddaughter exploring and cherishing the natural world.*

When Mimi finds out her favourite words—simple words, like apricot, blackberry, buttercup—are disappearing from the English language, she elects her granddaughter Brook as their Keeper. And did you know? The only way to save words is to know them.

**OUTSIDE IN**

**DEBORAH UNDERSTAND**

*Outside is waiting, the most patient playmate of all. The most generous friend. The most miraculous inventor.*

This thought-provoking picture book poetically underscores our powerful and enduring connection with nature, not so easily obscured by lives spent indoors. Rhythmic, powerful language shows us how our world is made and the many ways Outside comes in to help and heal us, and reminds us that we are all part of a much greater universe.

**OLIVER THE CURIOUS OWL**

**CHAD OTIS**

*Oliver the owl questions anything and everything in this charmingly funny story that asks who, what, when, where, and why!* The only question Oliver's family ever asks is *Who? Who? Who?* But he wants to know more. When his curiosity gets the better of him, Oliver -- and his best buddy, Bug -- travel far from the safety of home to get answers about the wonderful world they live in. But after a day of exploration, how will the friends find their way back?



## FOCUS: Mental Health Practices to Maintain or begin during lockdowns and isolation

**As many of us are being told to hunker down in our apartments and houses, and limit trips outside and social contact, things are feeling pretty “real” at this point. Aside from the general worry people may have about their physical health as they digest the news from around the world and here at home, there’s the larger toll this is taking on our collective mental health. Here are some of the mental health practices to make sure to keep doing—or begin doing, for some of us—during the lockdown period.**

**Have a routine as much as you can** We know how important routine is, especially for kids, under normal conditions. And when schools are closed and many people are working from home or told to stay at home, it might feel like all bets are off. But it’s actually much better for everyone’s mental health to try to keep a routine going, as much as possible. “Studies in resiliency during traumatic events encourage keeping a routine to your day,” says Deborah Serani, PsyD, professor of psychology at Adelphi University and author of “Sometimes When I’m Sad.” “This means eating meals at regular times, sleeping, waking and exercising at set times, and maintaining social (socially distant) contact. Unstructured time can create boredom, spikes in anxiety or depression, which can lead to unhealthy patterns of coping.” Another reason is that keeping a routine reduces “decision fatigue,” the overwhelm and exhaustion that can come from too many options. So in the morning, rather than wondering whether to start work or help the kids with their online learning, it’s better to know what you’re going to do—make a schedule that everyone can get on board with, and try to stick with it (as much as is possible—don’t beat yourself up if it doesn’t always work, and it’s sure not to work some days). This will free up some mental bandwidth during this time of uncertainty, which is already straining everyone’s cognitive capacities.

**Start an at-home exercise routine** Working out at home in these times is obviously a good way to stay healthy and kill indoor time. There are lots of options, from the 21st century ones (youtube) to the old-fashioned ones (workout videos and the dusty hand weights in your closet). Many online workout sources are offering free access or longer free trial periods during this time, which might be worth looking into. But again, anything that gets your heart pumping or builds muscle is excellent for both physical and mental health. Chris Hemsworth’s **centr.com** is offering 6 weeks FREE and **Joe Wicks The Body Coach** has a YouTube channel with lots of FREE workout videos. He is also running a PE class online for kids Monday to Friday go to his YouTube channel **The Body Coach TV**.

**Get outside in nature if you can** Lots of recent research finds that spending time in nature is a boost to both mental and physical health. For instance, multiple studies have found that time in green and blue space is associated with reduced anxiety and depression, and the connection may well be a causal one. Just remember to follow current government advise regarding social distancing.



**Declutter your home** Working on your home if you have time can be a good way to feel productive and in control. “Studies say the predictability of cleaning not only offers a sense of control in the face of uncertainty, but also offers your mind body and soul a respite from traumatic stress,” says Serani, referencing the book *Trauma-Informed Care*. Just be careful that you don’t become obsessive about cleaning, since there’s only so much you can do.

**Meditate, or just breathe.** Meditation has lots of research behind it, as most people by now know—it’s been shown to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and even increase the volume of certain areas of the brain. There are lots of FREE websites and apps available, try; **Smiling Mind, Headspace, mindful, the Kinderling app, Calm.com.**

**Maintain community and social connection** We’re fundamentally social creatures, and during crises it’s natural to want to gather. Unfortunately, it’s the opposite of what we can do right now, so we have to be creative, to maintain both psychological closeness and a sense of community. Texting and social media are ok, but picking up the phone and talking or video conferencing, or having a safe-distance conversation on the street, is probably much better. Using video chat for kids is a great way to keep them connected with friends in a safe manner.

**Let yourself off the hook** This might be the most important thing to keep in mind—don’t beat yourself up when things are not going perfectly in your household. On top of everything else, being upset with yourself is totally counterproductive. If the kids watch too much Netflix or play too many hours of video games, it’s not the end of the world. Things are going to be hairy for a while, and if you can’t stick to your schedule or can’t fit in your at-home workout every day, it’s really not such a big deal in the long run. It’s much more valuable to everyone to cut yourself some slack, use the time to reflect on the important things, and try to keep a sense of “we’re all in this together” at the forefront.

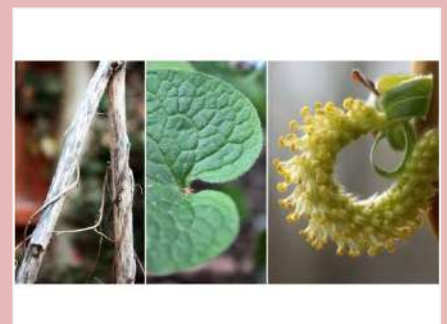
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### LETTERS IN NATURE



**Supplies:** Marker, Card or paper.

On card or paper clearly write a letter your child knows. Go into your yard (or stay inside and look around your home) for something in nature that represents that letter. For example, see the image on the right of letters in nature, (A, B, C). Do the first few together and then allow your child to take the lead. Choose letters they know or are learning to begin with and then expand this to new letters. Discuss their sound, their shape, draw them in the air and then search for them in your surroundings. Find out more at <https://www.kiwico.com/diy/Science-Projects-for-Kids/3/project/Natures-Alphabet/2054>



# HEALTH & SAFETY: Boost your child's immune system through food

**Paediatrician Dr Alan Green says, "A fully functioning immune system is what keeps your children healthy." (Natural Health Magazine). The immune system is what your body uses as its defence mechanism against infectious organisms and other foreign invaders. Most of the time, the immune system does an excellent job of keeping you healthy. On occasion however, it can run into trouble which may lead to infections and illnesses. When you child's immune system seems to contract every bug that crosses their path resulting in recurrent runny noses, colds and repetitive gastro intestinal infections, it is time to take a closer look at their immune system. You don't have to accept your child's constant infections. There are many measures you can take in order to empower yourself with the right tools to boost your child's immune system. These measures can actually boost their defences as well as speed up the healing process.**

**It all starts with food** - In order to maintain a healthy and strong immune system, fresh, real food is the key. It is important to keep packaged and processed food to a minimum. This includes crisps, chocolate, cakes and cookies. These foods should be given as an occasional treat food only. Focus on feeding your child foods such as fresh fruit and vegetables, poultry, meat, fish, whole grains, legumes, eggs and if there are no allergies, nuts and seeds can be included as well. It is also important to give your child water instead of fruit juices and cordials. Both of these are high in sugar which can be suppressive to the immune system, it can also cause inflammation and dysbiosis, amongst other things.

**Maintain a healthy gut** - Gut microbiota or gut flora are the complex community of microorganisms that live within your gut. These protect your digestive tract and play a role in supporting your immune system. In children as well as in adults, when the gut bacteria becomes imbalanced, your ability to fight off infections is altered and you may experience an increase in colds and flu.

Probiotics are a supplement containing live bacteria. When taken they can boost your friendly gut bacteria. A supplement containing lactobacillus, bifidobacterium and acidophilus is a good place to start. Yoghurt contains live bacteria such as these. However, the supermarket is saturated with different types of yoghurt – most of which contain mammoth amounts of sugar. Opt for plain or Greek yoghurt rather than the fruit flavoured ones which contain very concentrated sugar levels. To add some sweetness to your plain yoghurt, try a dash of maple syrup, rice syrup or fruit!

**Keep calm, support your immune system** - In order for your child's immune system to thrive, they need time to rest. It is important for children to have lots of down time to relax as well as opportunities for creative and imaginative play.

**Sleep** - Sleep plays a very important role in the healthy development of your child. It is also very important in building a strong immune system. According to the National Sleep Foundation, toddlers between the ages of 1-2 years need 11-14 hours of sleep per night, pre-schoolers between the ages of 3-5 need 11-13 hours of sleep per night and school children between the ages of 6-13 need

9-11 hours of sleep per night. In order to increase your child's quality of sleep, it is important that your child sleeps in a room that is dark. This is because the sleep hormone, melatonin, is secreted in the dark. Make sure all electronic devices are off before you put your child to bed.

**Supplement to boost immune function** - When your child's immune system is a bit run down and colds and flu seem never ending, there are a variety of supplements that are very supportive to the immune system. Namely, these are zinc, vitamin D, fish oils, and probiotics. For individualised advice on the dose and brand of supplement you should be giving your child, please check with your health care professional.

## Immune boosting foods for kids

**Garlic** - One of the best ways to boost and strengthen your child's immune system is to give them garlic. This amazing food contains anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties. Garlic stimulates the immune cells and increases antibody production. It also contains the compound sulphur which has potent antioxidant properties. **TIP:** You can add garlic into your child's favourite meals such as the sauces of pasta dishes, spaghetti Bolognese. You can also add it to hummus to be used as a dip for those carrot fingers. *When adding garlic into your cooked meals, always add it at the very end. This way you don't destroy too much of the immune enhancing properties.*

**Berries** - Berries are one of the best sources of antioxidants and immune boosting nutrients. The beautiful and bright red, blue and purple colours get their pigment from the potent antioxidant called anthocyanin. They also contain vast amounts of vitamin A, as well as vitamin C, both of which bolster your child's immune system. **TIP:** Add a handful of mixed berries to your child's breakfast oats or morning cereal. A delicious snack idea could be a handful of mixed berries stirred through a bowl of plain yoghurt topped with a dash of maple syrup. You can even try and mix in some flaxseed meal for added nutrition.

**Green leafy vegetables** - Although incredibly healthy, kids just don't want to eat green leafy vegetables. Green leafy vegetables are exceptionally rich in immune boosting nutrients. One of these is iron which is important for the production of white blood cells and antibodies. Unfortunately, green leafy vegetables are not always the favourite option on your child's menu. Getting them to eat a handful of greens is often quite laughable. **TIP:** Try making a green 'Smurfie' smoothie. Throw some kale or baby spinach, frozen banana or frozen mango with your choice of milk into a blender and blend until smooth. You can add a tablespoon or two of maple syrup or rice syrup depending on the desired sweetness.

**Source:** <https://www.kidspot.com.au/health/early-life-nutrition/food-for-toddlers/how-to-boost-your-childs-immune-system-throuPpPppgh-food/news-story/9d982ef8a6ba0ed7754288c0bea70610>



**RECYCLED CRAFT:** Collect, milk bottles, cardboard rolls, bottle caps, egg cartons etc.

Having a box filled with recycled items provides an open-ended engaging activity for children. Add some masking tape and markers watch your children's imagination take over.

If you wish to create a more guided activity simply search google for 'recycled craft for kids'. There are endless ideas of what you can create with a few simple household items.





### Filling the gaps

Currently your playgroups are cancelled, extra-curricular activities like Little Kickers, Gymnastics and Dance are suspended for now. You are not going on outings or staying away from friends and family where possible. So, what do you do with all that additional time?

#### PLAY IDEAS:

- More than likely you have a lot of toys in your home that probably haven't been played with for a while, pull these toys out. If you have empty boxes categorise them i.e. Games, stuffed animals, Blocks etc. This allows children to clearly see what is there and will make packing up much simpler.
- **Morning basket:** Create a morning routine by using a morning basket. This is a simple basket of things you gather that children can explore while you're busy in the morning. Simply choose a theme (insects, pirates, cars) and gather a range of books, toys, and activities (colouring in, puzzles, toy cars) you already own and place them in the basket. This activity may require some direction at first but with consistency children will soon get into the rhythm and enjoy the routine.

#### ONLINE ACTIVITY LINKS:

**KIWICO** – Have created blogs full of STEAM activities to engage your child in fun meaningful activities.  
<https://www.kiwico.com/blog/2020/03/14/activities-for-2-4-year-olds-at-home/>

**KIDSACTIVITIES.com** – Find 100s of screen free activities for a wide range of age groups.  
<https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/50136/ways-to-learn/>

**ZOO WEBCAMS** – Most Zoos around the world have webcams set up in exhibits. Go on a virtual tour of your local zoo or one in a foreign land.  
<https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/countryside/g31784857/live-animal-webcam-zoo/>

Families across the county are adapting to the evolving changes in daily life caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important during this time that we help children to cope with these changes by helping them stay calm, listen and offer reassurance. The following tips can help . . .

- **Be a role model.** Children will react to and follow your reactions. They learn from your example.
- **Be aware of how you talk about COVID-19.** Your discussion about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child's fear carefully listen or have them draw or write out their thoughts and feelings and respond with truth and reassurance.
- **Explain social distancing.** Children probably don't fully understand why parents/guardians aren't allowing them to be with friends. Showing older children the "flatten the curve" charts will help them grasp the significance of social distancing. Explain that while we don't know how long it will take to "flatten the curve" to reduce the number of those infected, we do know that this is a critical time—we must follow the guidelines of health experts to do our part.
- **Demonstrate deep breathing.** Deep breathing is a valuable tool for calming the nervous system. Do breathing exercises with your children.
- **Focus on the positive.** Celebrate having more time to spend as a family. Make it as fun as possible. Do family projects. Organize belongings, create masterpieces. Sing, laugh, and go outside, if possible, to connect with nature and get needed exercise. Allow older children to connect with their friends virtually.
- **Establish and maintain a daily routine.** Keeping a regular schedule provides a sense of control, predictability, calm, and well-being. It also helps children and other family members respect others' need for quiet or uninterrupted time and when they can connect with friends virtually.
- **Identify projects that might help others.** This could include: writing letters to the neighbours or others who might be stuck at home alone or to healthcare workers; sending positive messages over social media; or reading a favourite children's book on a social media platform for younger children to hear.
- **Offer lots of love and affection.** Take time to talk and be honest and accurate. Keep discussions age appropriate.
- **Practice daily good hygiene.** Encourage your child to practice simple steps to prevent spreading the virus. Talk with them about signs and symptoms

### 5 Minute MOVES Tissue Dance

Short simple activities to get some active minutes in the day.

This is a fun game that works on posture, body control, balance and concentration. Have everyone start by placing a tissue on their heads. When the music starts playing, everyone starts dancing. But be careful; don't let the tissue fall off your head! If the tissue hits the ground, you're out.

So simple yet so much fun! Who pulls out the craziest moves to keep that tissue on their head?