

FEBRUARY  
2020



# ON *this* MONTH

## AT WATERFORD WEST EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE

Swimming Program Begins -----	4
Bush Kindy Begins -----	11
Date Night -----	14
Information Night -----	28
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## AROUND THE COUNTRY

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## Letter from the Director

Welcome to the February edition of our centre newsletter for 2020. We have some exciting events happening this month, kicking off our Swimming and Bush Kindy Programs, and hosting our first information evening for 2020. This will be a great opportunity to meet and greet your child's educators this year, as well as discuss goals and achievements to work towards.

In preparation for upcoming events, don't forget to "LIKE" us on Facebook to receive daily reminders about upcoming centre events.

Just a reminder, we have noticed recently that a significant number of parents are failing to sign in and out of the centre daily, and that there are increasingly more families going over their allocated hours per fortnight due to late collections of children from the centre.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that it is part of your enrolment agreement that you will sign your child/ren in and out of the centre on their scheduled days, via the tablet located in the foyer, in accordance with the time that you drop them off in the mornings and collect them in the afternoons.

Please be advised that failure to sign you child in and out of the centre may result in your child care subsidy not being paid, if this is the case your weekly / fortnightly payments will increase.



# Room News

## Early Learners Room

Last month, in the Early Learners room we have been getting to know each other and having a lot of fun engaging in Sensory play, as this is a very important part of the children's development. Water play has been a definite favourite especially on HOT days, and will be continuing these type of activities throughout the year, along with activities to strengthen developmental skills.

This month, we will be adding more natural resources to our room so children can experience and experiment with Loose Parts, including leaves, pine cones, timber, rocks, shells, fabric etc. Any recyclable material is always welcomed in our room, if you have anything you may think is junk laying around at home, it could be our treasure.

Please remember to complete and return forms sent home about your child, this is extremely important to us as it helps us to understand your child better and we can construct a better learning environment according to your child's development and needs.

Please come and talk to us and if you have any great ideas for activities that will help to extend your child's learning and development. Also, we would love to have some Family photos to place on the wall and if you have pets at home please include them.

## Junior Early Years Room

Welcome to our Junior Early Years February Newsletter. Over the last month we have been developing a safe and secure environment while the children transition into our JEY room.

This month we will be focusing on getting to know the children more and developing a deeper connection to the children in our care, observing and finding out about their individual interests and developing parent relationships to further children's identity in the classroom. The last few weeks we have been focusing on the Sense of Feel/touch. We have been making play dough, scooping balls, alphabet sensory, coloured spaghetti and so on and will continue developing these senses in upcoming weeks.

We look forward to working with children and parents this year to achieve goals and outcomes for children at this stage in their developmental journey.

## Early Learners Room



## Junior Early Years Room



# Room News

## Early Years Room

Welcome to all families in the Early Years room this year. We have started the year off with an amazing group of children ready to have fun, learn and grow as confident, independent and happy children.

Last month, we focused on settling the room, get familiar with children and families and exploring the interests and needs of our little friends. In the room we had been actively playing with cars, making construction, painting and interacting in home corner, which has given us the opportunity to get to know the children in our care.

This month our aim will centre on children's emotions and feelings while we keep working on routines and transitions, settling the children into their new environment using things such as role play, reading stories, conversations and art crafts to make them feel more at ease. We aim to build a great relationship with the children and families throughout the year, if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please let us know.

Please be reminded you to send spare clothes, named hats and drink bottles with your children daily.

## Pre-Prep Room

Welcome to Pre-Prep for 2020, we are really excited to be a part of your child's final year before venturing off to school next year. I would like to officially introduce myself as the new Kindergarten Teacher for the centre my name is Miss Alex and I have been implementing the Kindergarten Program now for 6 years and am really excited to bring my knowledge and experience to our Pre-Prep room. I have lived locally for the last couple of years and have a son who is in year 8 this year and two dogs and a cat. I love animals and have a strong belief in physical health for myself and supporting this in the program I run.

This upcoming month, we are exploring various games and activities to get to know each other and create a sense of belonging to our Kindergarten room including all about me and self-portraits. Bush Kindy will begin this month and be happening weekly to ensure all children get a chance to attend and swimming has begun also. We will be exploring a Talk time roster and a take home buddy too. We are really wanting to encourage donations to the centre and the room in the ways of recyclable materials such as your bottle lids, milk cartons, cereal and packaging boxes etc. but we would also love you to consider donations that you may have in the way of old pots, pans, cake tins, wooden utensils, tea sets and even old clothing/shoes etc. and anything we can't use will still provide us with the learning opportunity to discuss recycling.

Don't forget to ensure your child has a water bottle, a hat and spare clothes each day, the spare clothes is to ensure that we are able to provide a variety of experiences for the children that include messy and water play.

## Early Years Room



## Pre-Prep Room





## SUSTAINABLE LIVING FESTIVAL (SLF) – FEBRUARY 1-29

Everything we care about is now under threat. To enable a sustainable world, we must urgently address the climate emergency. In 2020, SLF explores the impacts of the climate emergency and

will pitch new social, economic and political responses essential for creating the transition to a safe climate.

**Find out more at [www.slf2020.org](http://www.slf2020.org)**

## WORLD WETLANDS DAY – FEBRUARY 2

Wetlands are rich with biodiversity and are a habitat for a dense variety of plant and animal species. Latest estimates show a global decline of biodiversity, while wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests. This year's theme is 'Wetlands and Biodiversity' it's a unique opportunity to highlight wetland biodiversity its status, why it matters and promote actions to reverse its loss. **Find out more at [worldwetlandsday.org](http://worldwetlandsday.org)**

## SPICED SWEET POTATO & CHICKPEA FRITTERS WITH HARD BOILED EGGS



PREP 15 min | COOK 15 MINS | SERVES 6

### INGREDIENTS

1 x 400 g can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed thoroughly  
500 g sweet potato, peeled and grated  
¼ cup chives, finely chopped  
100 g feta, crumbled  
1 heaped tbsps tikka masala spice blend  
2 eggs

1/3 cup (50 g) plain flour  
½ tsp baking powder  
Sea salt and pepper, to season  
Olive oil, to fry in

### Soft boiled egg and salad:

6 eggs  
Salad greens

### METHOD:

#### To make fritters

1. Place the chickpeas into a large bowl and mash slightly using a fork. Add the grated sweet potato, chives, feta, tikka masala spice blend, 2 eggs, flour, baking powder, salt and pepper and mix thoroughly to combine.
2. Heat a fry pan to medium heat. Cover the base of the fry pan with a thin layer of olive oil. Gently place tbs of the mix into pan and cook for 4 mins or until golden and the fritter is holding together.
3. Gently flip each fritter and cook for another 3 mins or until golden and cooked through.
4. Place the fritters on a plate lined with kitchen paper and continue frying until no batter remains. Set aside.

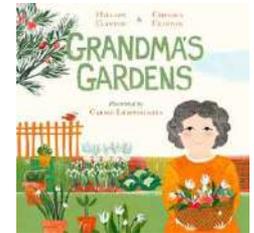
#### To make soft boiled eggs

1. Prepare an ice bath. Set aside.
2. Bring a large pot of water to the boil then reduce heat to simmer. Carefully add 6 eggs to the pot of simmering water and cook for 7 minutes.
3. Carefully remove eggs and place into ice bath until cool enough to handle. Peel eggs and slice in half.

Recipe and Image from '[australianeggs.org.au](http://australianeggs.org.au)'.

## Book reviews

Beautiful books full of heart and fun.



## TOMORROW I'LL BE KIND

JESSICA HISCHE

*In a follow-up to Tomorrow I'll Be Brave, award-winning illustrator Jessica Hische brings to life another series of inspirational words and scenes with her lovely hand-lettering and adorable illustrations. This uplifting and positive book encourages kids to promise that tomorrow, they will be grateful, helpful, and kind. It's a reminder to all readers, young and old, that the smallest kind gesture can make the biggest difference in the world—we just have to remember to be kind to one another.*

## ONE THOUSAND THINGS

ANNA KOVECSES

*A visual encyclopedia of things to spot and say with a difference. Find out what one thousand really looks like. Search-and-find Little Mouse on every page and discover new words with every turn of the page. Compulsive and instructional fun, minimal and modern.*

## GRANDMA'S GARDENS

HILLARY CLINTON AND CHELSEA CLINTON

*From mother-daughter team Hillary Clinton and Chelsea Clinton comes a celebration of family, tradition and discovery, and an ode to mothers, grandmothers and the children they love. Grandma Dorothy shared her love of gardens with her daughter, Hillary, and her granddaughter, Chelsea. She taught them that gardens are magical places to learn, exciting spaces for discovery, quiet spots to spend time with family and beautiful areas to share stories and celebrate special occasions. But most of all, she taught them that in her gardens, her love grew and blossomed.*



# FOCUS: How can you help your child settle into childcare?

**Starting or resuming childcare can be an emotional experience for both you and your child. Children especially can often experience some difficulty settling into a new environment, particularly if they find it hard to separate from family or familiar caregivers. This is part of an information sheet from [startingblocks.com.au](http://startingblocks.com.au) that offers some suggestions that can help you support your child during the settling in period. You will of course need to be patient because they may cry, be grumpy or throw tantrums for an initial time as they get used to the new environment.**

## Prepare them for separation

- Talk about child care with your child and let them know that you are happy and confident that they will have a good time and will be cared for.
- If possible, start with shorter or fewer days then gradually increase their time spent at the care centre. Once they develop a settling routine, they should be more comfortable.
- Don't let your emotions or anxieties affect your child. Try and hold back your tears when you drop them off.
- Say 'goodbye' confidently and reassure them when you leave that you (or someone else) will be back later to collect them.
- Give your child sufficient time to say their goodbyes in the morning. Reach the childcare centre early so you have time to prepare your child for a good day.

## Comfort them

- Ask your child if they would like to take their favourite toy or colour book to the centre.
- Find a preferred staff member that your child can be left with when you drop them off for the day.
- Spend some time settling your child into a favourite activity before you leave.
- Inform the service about what comforts your child and discuss how you manage activities or times of the day they find unsettling. For example, does your child have a toy or blanket that helps them to settle?
- Show empathy – in the morning when you see your child upset on your way to childcare, talk to them. It is advised not to share your own worries but tell your child that they'll be okay. Ask them to share their feelings with you. Listen to them and tell them what they are feeling is normal and it's a big step for them as they are growing up.
- Where possible, organise play dates outside of childcare. This will help your child be more comfortable with the other children at the centre.

## Encourage Them

- Every time you go to pick up your child from their centre, tell them they did great that day.

- Encourage your little one to pack their bag with essentials they will need for the day. If they are too young to pack their bag themselves, ask them if they would like to take a toy/book with them. Pack a comforter – a toy or blanket that is something familiar from home for them.
- Take the time to have a nice conversation at the breakfast table. Tell them the time at what you'll be picking them up, and perhaps offer them a reward if they behave well at their care centre.
- Talking with children and encouraging them to voice any concerns or anxieties they may have is a helpful strategy.
- For your peace of mind, it can be helpful to call the service later to see how your child settled. Children who become very upset when they are left often settle very quickly and happily once the actual separation is over. The service should enable you to contact them throughout the day.
- You may also want to speak to the educators at childcare about how you can better support your child's transition.

## How you can reconnect with your child after a day in childcare:

It's not only a new experience for your child, it's also important for you to know how they feel about going to their early childhood education and care service. This will help you connect and build a strong relationship with your child. After you pick them up from their centre, give them your undivided attention. They might be grumpy because they haven't seen you the whole day, so shower them with all the love you can. Create a meaningful conversation with them after their day at a service.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Ask them about their favourite activities of the day.
- Talk to them about the friends they have made. Ask them to name a few children who you know your child is friendly with or spends time playing with.
- If the centre provided food, ask your child how it was and who did they have it with.
- Talk to them about their favourite educator at childcare and what they like about them.
- Ask them if their educator read them any story, which one was it, and what they liked about it.
- Mention some items that your child would see or play with at the service, as this helps them recall situations. For instance, ask them what they and their friends made with the blocks.
- Ask them if they learned anything new.
- Use images or notes from the educators at the centre for conversation. For example, "Look at this lovely photo of you at the sandpit. What did sand feel like in your toes?"

Starting Blocks (2020, January 15). How can you help your child settle into care? Retrieved from [startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources/factsheets/how-can-you-help-your-child-settle-into-child-](http://startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources/factsheets/how-can-you-help-your-child-settle-into-child-)

## Noisy letter Jump

**Supplies: Chalk.** Choose a safe concrete space and write large letters your child is familiar with there. You could choose letters from their name, small groups of letters, or sight words they are learning. When you call out a letter have your child say its name/sound in a funny way: yell it, say it slowly, say it quickly and then ask them to find the letter and jump on it. Repeat the activity until all the letters have been jumped on.

Image and activity from: [theimaginationtree.com/noisy-letter-jump-phonics-game/](http://theimaginationtree.com/noisy-letter-jump-phonics-game/)



# HEALTH & SAFETY: Internet Safety for Pre-schoolers

Pre-schoolers like going online to look at videos or to play games. They can do this using computers, mobile phones, tablets, TVs and other devices. There are safety risks for pre-schoolers online, although pre-schoolers won't usually be exposed to as many risks as older children because they're less likely to be using the internet independently. When you take some practical internet safety precautions, you protect your child from risky or inappropriate content and activities. And your child gets to make the most of her online experience, with its potential for learning, exploring, being creative and connecting with family and friends.

## Internet safety risks for pre-schoolers

There are three main kinds of internet safety risks for children:

**Content risks:** these risks include content that children might find upsetting, disgusting or otherwise uncomfortable. Examples are pornography, violence, images of cruelty to animals or programs meant for older children.

**Contact risks:** these risks include children coming into contact with people they don't know. For example, a child might use a communication app and talk to a stranger.

**Conduct risks:** these risks include children acting in ways that might hurt others. For example, a child might destroy a game his friend or sibling has created. Accidentally making in-app purchases is another conduct risk.

## Protecting your child from internet safety risks: tips

You play a key role in reducing the risks that your child is exposed to on the internet. There are many practical things you can do to help your pre-schooler stay safe while she's online.

Here are some ideas:

- Use digital media and the internet with your child or make sure you're close by and aware of what your child is doing online. This way you can act quickly if your child is concerned or upset by something he's seen.
- Create a family media plan. Your plan could cover things like screen-free areas in your house, internet safety rules like not giving out personal information, and the programs, games and apps that are OK for your child to use.
- Use child-friendly search engines like Kiddle, or content providers like ABC Kids, CBeebies, YouTube Kids or KIDOZ.



- Check that games, websites and TV programs are appropriate for your child. For example, you can look at reviews on Common Sense Media.
- Make sure older siblings follow your internet safety rules when they go online with your pre-schooler. Rules might include watching only age-appropriate programs.
- Set up a folder with bookmarks for your child's favourite apps or websites so that she can easily find them. You can set up folders and bookmarks on all the devices that your child uses.
- Check privacy settings, use parental controls, block in-app purchases, and disable one-click payment options and location services on your devices.

## Teaching safe and responsible online behaviour

You can help your child learn how to use digital media and the internet safely, responsibly and enjoyably. If you teach your child how to manage internet safety risks and worrying experiences for himself, he'll build digital resilience. This is the ability to deal with and respond positively to any risks he encounters online. You can do this by: going online with your child, being a good role model, teaching your child about good and bad content and teaching your child about in-app purchases.

**February 11 is 'Safer Internet Day'.** Use this day to start a conversation with your child about internet safety. Got to [esafety.gov.au/safer-internet-day/families](https://esafety.gov.au/safer-internet-day/families) to find a wide range of resources to assist your family's internet use and register your support for 'Safer Internet Day' while you're there.

Raisingchildren.net.au (2020, January 11). Internet Safety: Children 3-5 Retrieved from <https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/screen-time-healthy-screen-use/internet-safety-3-5-years>



## AIR QUALITY

Prior to our recent bushfires air quality was never really a concern for most Australians. We are lucky, generally we look outside and the skies are clear and the air is fresh and breathable. Bushfire air pollution has changed that so much so that some days it is actually dangerous to be outside. So how do you check air quality and how can you prevent adding to the problem.

To check air quality in your area go to:  
<https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/air-quality/current-air-quality>

You may need to change your planned activities when considering your families risk factors and the current reading.

## Prevent air pollution:

**In your home:** Do not smoke, ensure your oven ventilates properly, use non-toxic cleaning product, Use a dehumidifier or/and air conditioner to reduce dampness, reconsider your use of any aerosol sprays. Dust regularly, keep lids on scented candles.

**Outside:** Drive less, ensures engines run properly, reduce fireplace use, don't burn rubbish, use environmentally safe paints.

<https://www.consumerreports.org/health-wellness/avoid-the-negative-health-effects-of-air-pollution/>





## STEM

STEM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and math. Skills developed by students through STEM provide them with the foundation to succeed at school and beyond. young children learn through active exploration—and the drive to observe, interact, discover, and explore is inherent in their development.

During the earliest years, infants and toddlers develop 700 neural connections every second,” Buchter said. “These biologically driven neurological processes and natural curiosity of how the world works make early childhood an optimal time to introduce children to scientific inquiry.”

### What does STEM look like in Early Learning Settings?

- Cooking activities
- Nature walks
- Challenging building activities
- Grocery store exploring
- Water play

**National Quality Framework** | Quality Area 1:  
*Educational Program and Practice*

**1.1 The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.**

**1.2 Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development.**

University of Nevada. (2020, January 15). The Issues: Why STEM Education Must Begin in Early Childhood Education  
Retrieved from <https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/issues-why-stem-education-must-begin-early-childhood-education>

## Nature Explorers Program

As part of our kindergarten program our centre is offering all children the unique experience to participate in our Nature Explorers program. This program runs alongside our other centre; Edens Landing Childrens Centre. Our area manager has had extensive experience developing this program and has successfully run this program over the last 2 years exploring different environment’s around the Gold Coast.

This educational program has proven to have many benefits to the children’s learning such as increased confidence, motivation and concentration, increased social, physical and language skills, deeper conceptual understandings and respect for the natural environment (Borradaile, 2006; Massey, 2004; Murray, 2004; Murray & O’Brien, 2005; O’Brien & Murray, 2008; O’Brien, 2009), increased social and imaginative play (Fjortoft, 2001; 2004) as well as more varied risk-taking behaviours and positive dispositions towards risk and challenge (Waters & Begley, 2007).

The program will run over the school terms and allows the children opportunities to explore different environment around the Logan area from the bush to the beach.



## Simon Says

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

This is a very simple fitness activity using the basic ‘Simon Says’ framework. Take turns being Simon and setting the fitness challenges. Here are a few examples to get you started:

Simon Says: Shake your whole body, jump up and down, spin around, walk like a bear on all 4s to the clothes line, hope like a frog, pretend to sit on an invisible chair 5 times, Hop on your left foot, Jump as far forwards as you can then jump back again.