



# ON *this* MONTH

AT WATERFORD WEST EDUCATION  
AND CARE CENTRE

Room Introduction Evening ----- 26

## AROUND THE COUNTRY

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## Letter from the Director

Welcome to the February edition of our centre newsletter for 2021. We have some exciting events happening this month, including; commencement of our Swimming, Music and Bush Kindy Programs. We will also be hosting our first information evening for 2021, which will provide a great opportunity to meet and greet your child’s educators this year, as well as discuss goals and achievements to work towards for 2021. Reminder to all parents . . . If you haven’t already please return your child’s vision statement, as this will also aid in setting goals for your child to reach this year.

In preparation of “What’s on” at the centre, don’t forget to “LIKE” us on Facebook and Instagram to receive daily reminders about upcoming centre events. Also, if you haven’t already downloaded the OWNA app, we encourage you to do this ASAP, as this is another interactive way to communicate with your child’s teacher daily, track upcoming events and be a part of their learning journey.

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. Please see our Centre Director for assistance with allocated pins to achieve this, we are also happy to show you how you can change your pin on your OWNA app to one that is easily remembered for yourself.

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

Early Learners have started 2021 with enthusiasm, welcoming old friends back from their holidays and forming new friendships with new friends.

Early Learners have been reconnecting with transitioning practises - moving between activities for group time and establishing Healthy Lifestyle Habits, such as: washing hands and how to cover our mouths for coughs and sneezes.

We have begun exploring our senses; What we hear in the outdoors and How an item feels when we touch it, embracing the Abecedarian approach to learning by introducing new descriptive words, as children begin to connect with their indoor and outdoor environments. Early Learners have responded with evident enjoyment as they engage with our story "Where is the Green Sheep?" Through this story we aim to introduce colour play and linking children's learning to sensory activities.

As we continue into February, we will introduce the Nature explorer's program and extend children's sensory journey and learn about our environment and community. We are excited to explore with the introduction of our 6 seater pram, which will allow all children to be involved in the concepts of nature play and excited to see how children's learning and development will be enhanced with this embedded into our weekly program

## Junior Early Years Room

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our families and friends into our Junior Early Years Room.

We are slowly transitioning into our Junior Room and everyone's excited of the possibilities that 2021 holds.

For the next couple of weeks, we will be focusing on Feelings and Emotions. Ensuring that the children feel safe in their environment and how to connect to their emotions is our focus for February.

We are also focusing on introducing Routines and transitions which will also aid in our emphasis of developing safe and secure environments and relationships with children this month.

Our Nature's Explores program will also be rolled out this month, so please ensure permission slips are returned ASAP. Bush Kindy allows children the flexibility to learn through play, while exploring outdoor environments, this will also aid in developing confidence and independence as the children explore different areas in our community

## Early Learners Room



## Junior Early Years Room



# Room News

## Early Years Room

This year I would like to focus on interrelationships among children and educators, introducing kindness and independence according to age and individual development, always making sure we respect children's interests and needs, as well to keep in mind parents expectations and making sure we always are safe, secure and having fun.

Some quick reminders, bring bags with drink bottle, spare set of clothes, nappies ( if needed), if your child needs to have medication hand it to an educator and complete the medication form, wet/ soiled clothes would be place on the soiled container in the EY toilet and a tag would be attached to your child's bag to inform you. If you have any questions, please let us know. Remember to add us on Facebook and Instagram and download the OWNA app, these are great ways to be interactive with your child's learning and development.

This year we are excited to introduce Bush Kindy to our Early Years children. Please ensure that your child has closed in shoes daily, as we aim to utilize this program as much as we can. Bush Kindy allows us to explore our local community and engage children in risk taking, pushing them to step out of their comfort zone, preparing them for Kindy next year.

## Pre-Prep Room

This month in the Pre Prep room we have started to settle children into their new environment by focusing on families and our emotions. We have been also focusing on Australian animals after reading about Australian animals and learning that our new class take home friend is a pretend Quokka which is an Australian animal found on Rottnest Island in Western Australia.

We have started to introduce the Heggerty program to support children's phonemic awareness. We will follow the weekly lesson plan for Phonemic Awareness daily during group time. Focusing on letter recognition is also something we will continue and extend on further in the Pre prep class.

We will also be learning the acknowledgment of country together and our group time will start off with the acknowledgment daily.

I look forward to extending all the children's learning through their interests and strengths this year in an inclusive learning environment. We are passionate about outdoor natural learning environments, and are very much looking forward to our Bush Kindy program commencing and ask parents to ensure that their child always has a change of clothes, drink bottle, sun safe clothing and fully enclosed shoes always in their bag.

To add to our family wall please bring in a family photo. This can be emailed to me (Miss Teigan) if you do not have a hard copy picture to bring in

## Early Years Room



## Pre-Prep Room





## SUSTAINABLE LIVING FESTIVAL (NSLF) 1 - 28

In this age of environmental, social and economic disruptions it is vital that we don't lose sight of the bigger picture and keep our eye firmly focused on the mission to sustain our planet. In the wake of Australia experiencing unprecedented climate events,

the Festival will urge a groundswell of climate awareness and support for the urgent action we need. In 2021, NSLF events will focus on these themes: 'Culture of Care', 'Emergency Lessons', 'Local Matters' and 'Reboot and Respond'. Find out what events are happening around you [here](#)

## NATIONAL APOLOGY ANNIVERSARY – 13

February 13 marks the Anniversary of the National Apology to Australia's First Peoples – a sacred moment in our nation's history that must never be forgotten. There are 10 things you should know about the National Apology [read here](#)

## CRISPY CAJUN CHICKEN TACOS



PREP 10 min | COOK 10 min | MAKES 6

### INGREDIENTS

#### Crispy Air Fried Cajun Chicken:

500 grams **chicken breast**, cut into bite-sized pieces  
 1/2 cup (125 ml) **buttermilk**  
 2 1/2 cups (300 grams) **corn flake style breadcrumbs**  
 2 tablespoons **flour**  
 2 1/2 tablespoons **store-bought Cajun seasoning**  
 2/3 cup (90 grams) **parmesan cheese**, grated  
**sea salt and pepper**, to season

#### Zesty Lime Sauce:

1 cup (250 grams) **Greek style yoghurt**  
 juice and zest of 1 **lime**  
 1 clove **garlic**, minced  
 1 handful **coriander leaves**  
 1 tablespoon **olive oil**  
**sea salt**, to season

#### Tacos:

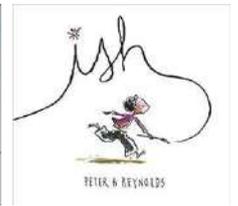
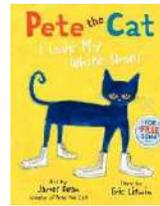
6 **tortillas**, warmed according to packet instructions  
 1 **avocado**, mashed with the juice of 1 **lime**  
 2 cups **iceberg lettuce**, finely shredded

**METHOD:** Place the chicken and buttermilk into a bowl and stir to combine. Into a separate bowl, place the cornflake crumbs, flour, Cajun seasoning, parmesan, salt, pepper and stir to combine. Dredge each piece of chicken in the breadcrumbs and place the crumbed chicken onto a tray lined with baking paper, drizzle with a little olive oil and bake in a preheated oven (200 C) for 10 minutes or until chicken is golden and cooked through. To make the Zesty Lime Sauce: Place the yoghurt, lime zest and juice, garlic, coriander, olive oil and salt into the jug of a food processor and blitz for 1-2 minutes or until lusciously combined. To assemble the tacos: Top warmed tortillas with lime avocado, shredded iceberg lettuce, crispy Cajun chicken bites and drizzle with zesty lime yoghurt sauce. Enjoy x

Recipe and Image from My Lovely Little Lunch Box  
[mylovelylittlelunchbox.com/2020/04/20/crispy-cajun-chicken-tacos/](http://mylovelylittlelunchbox.com/2020/04/20/crispy-cajun-chicken-tacos/)

## Book reviews

Resilience can be learned like any other skill. It takes practice and patience. Check out this collection of books that teach resilience.



## THE MOST MAGNIFICENT THING

Ashley Spires | 1 - 4

Award-winning author and illustrator Ashley Spires has created a charming picture book about an unnamed girl and her very best friend, who happens to be a dog. The girl has a wonderful idea.

"She is going to make the most MAGNIFICENT thing! She knows just how it will look. She knows just how it will work. All she has to do is make it, and she makes things all the time. Easy-peasy!" But making her magnificent thing is anything but easy, and the girl tries and fails, repeatedly.

## PETE THE CAT: I LOVE MY WHITE SHOES

Eric Litwin | AGE 1 - 4

Pete the Cat goes walking down the street wearing his brand-new white shoes. Along the way, his shoes change from white to red to blue to brown to WET as he steps in piles of strawberries, blueberries, and other big messes! But no matter what colour his shoes are, Pete keeps movin' and groovin' and singing his song...because it's all good.

## ISH

Peter H. Reynolds | AGE 4 - 8

A creative spirit learns that thinking "ish-ly" is far more wonderful than "getting it right" in this gentle fable from the creator of the award-winning picture book *The Dot*. Ramon loved to draw. Anytime. Anything. Anywhere. Drawing is what Ramon does. It's what makes him happy. But in one split second, all that changes.



## FOCUS: It's NOT Funny! What to do if your child laughs at discipline



***We love humour. But...when disciplining our kiddos humour isn't funny. When our child smirks and busts a gut during a serious moment, we feel as if fireworks in our chest are ready to explode.***

**That grin. That giggle. OH! It feels like mocking.** *Let's consider some things before lighting the fuse.* Humour usually brings people together. Humour is a great deflector and distractor. Humour is a positive way to get attention. Humour can be a way to gain or regain control. Humour can be used to manipulate. Humour is an action. But laughter is a reaction.

***Laughter is a physical response to an emotional trigger.*** Have you ever said, "If I don't laugh, I'm going to cry?" Sometimes kids get the giggles or act silly when they feel uncomfortable or nervous. They may laugh or act like a jokester to reconnect or reaffirm the parent-child relationship. When mum or dad express anger, it is possible the child is attempting to make things better with joke to defuse the situation. It's also likely he is scared or uncomfortable and that a laugh is his reaction rather than to fight or take flight.

**Observe your child. Give him the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps his reaction is due to fear. Maybe it is a way to re-establish the relationship. No matter the reason, mum and dad must not ignite the wick. Stay in control.**

During the moment mirror his non-verbal behaviour: "You are smiling." Ask, "Are you feeling uncomfortable?" After the event inquire, "Why do you think you smiled when I was speaking with you?"

Discuss more typical responses to anger or fear. Talk about how a smile during a serious moment can be misunderstood. Once the behaviour is verbalized it is easier for the child to draw up a more appropriate response. If your kiddo uses humour as a tool to alleviate discomfort come up with a different strategy. Commend him on how he has been blessed with a sense of humour. Talk about the right time and place for his antics. You may even want to use a visual or tactile cue to encourage appropriateness. "Put on your left brain, logic hat. It's time for us to talk about....." - "My touch is a sign that this is important but not scary."

In finding out the WHY of the chuckles you will be better equipped to deal with the anger inducing laughter during a serious moment.

Wildenberg, Lori. (2020). *It's NOT Funny! What to do if your child laughs at discipline.* Retrieved from <https://herveiwfromhome.com/its-not-funny-what-to-do-if-your-child-laughs-at-discipline/>

### 8 QUICK TIPS

If your child is like most kids and has occasional periods of defiance, there are things you can do to make things easier.

1. Set Expectations
2. Get to the Root of the Behaviour
3. Set your **Child** Up for Good Behaviour
4. Treat Your **Child** As You'd Want to Be Treated
5. **Take** Advantage of Your **Child's** Verbal Skills
6. Establish Absolute Ground Rules
7. Compromise When You Can
8. Discuss Options

Each of these eight tips are elaborated in full [here](#)

Katherine, Lee (2020). *Effective Ways to Handle Defiant Children.* Retrieved from <https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-to-handle-defiant-children-620106>



## PLAYDOUGH NAMES

Children love playdough. It's a brilliant tactile material, great for developing fine motor skills. This simple activity is great for name recognition and spelling.

**You will need:** Homemade or store bought playdough, paper, marker.

**Set up:** Write your child's name quite large on a piece of paper. Show your child how to make snakes by rolling out playdough, then demonstrate how you can shape the snakes into letters. Allow your child to freely create their name. Ask them if they recognise the letters in their name.

You may like to add additional manipulatives like sequins, toothpicks and buttons. You child can use these to decorate each letter and further emphasise the shape of each letter.

Image and activity from <https://handsonaswegrow.com/play-dough-name-tracing/>



# HEALTH & SAFETY: The Dreaded Drop Off

*As some pre-schoolers may not yet be fully cognisant of their identity being separate to that of their parents, it is quite normal that times of separation, like the 'drop-off', can be loaded with separation anxiety and distress.*

Other pre-schoolers are already **little thinkers**, able to anticipate future separation thus increasing their anxiety surrounding the morning's pre-school drop-off. This child may ask the night before "is it a school day tomorrow?" and then display challenging behaviour from early in the morning in an effort to avoid the anticipated separation.

**Here are a few options for managing this tricky issue of separation anxiety for pre-schoolers and parents alike.** Begin by learning more about your child's day by having a conversation with your child's educators. Questions to ask include: – How long does he or she take to settle? – How are his or her play and social skills developing? – How well is he or she communicating?

Your child's educators can provide valuable feedback around issues such as how well your child is able to do things like share, take turns and manage frustration with peers. If there are significant issues occurring in these areas, difficulty separating from parents and caregivers can reflect your child's distress at entering an environment where they are having consistent negative experiences. If this is the case, it is important to target the skills and behaviours which are less developed and causing difficulty as a first step

If educators report that your child settles quickly and is reaching normal developmental milestones around play, communication and social skills, you can then target the issue of separation and assist your child to learn to cope with this process.

**If your child happily gets ready for school and appears quite relaxed until the actual moment when you are leaving, we recommend:**

Keep drop-offs short and your actions consistent e.g. Spend a period of time settling your child by engaging them with a carer and/or activity. It may help if you narrate your actions, so your child is clear about what is happening "Let's take you over to (carer) or Let's go and set you up with the blocks.... It's time to say goodbye now. Mummy will come and collect you at (time). OK Mummy is going now, (kisses/hugs) bye.

Stay calm and make sure to also use your face to communicate, e.g. I know you are sad when mummy goes (show sad face) but you have a great time with (carer/ friend's name) (show happy face)

**If your child is a "little thinker" and anticipates separation well before the event, we recommend:**

1. Create a 'days of the week' chart so your child is aware of school days and the weekly routine.
2. Normalise the anxiety or worry by validating your child's feelings e.g. "You're a bit worried about going to school and being apart from mummy. It's OK to feel worried"
3. Encourage your child to persevere even though they are worried by reflecting on their past experiences. e.g., "You were worried about leaving mummy last week but you were very brave and went to school and then you had lots of fun", "you were worried when we went to the party on the weekend but then you settled in and had a great time"
4. Create some catch phrases with your child to assist them to manage. Use these phrases on multiple occasions and have your child repeat them back to you. e.g., "I just need to play some games then I'll get used to it", "Even though I miss my mummy, I'm OK and my mummy is OK", "I will have a lot of fun today and mummy will pick me up soon".
5. Praise your child for being brave and doing things even though they are worried.

Be aware of supporting your child's worry by allowing him or her to avoid attending pre-school or a feared event as a way of managing their anxiety. This usually exacerbates your child's anxiety rather than diminishing it.

Rocker, Leonardo. (2011). *The Dreaded Drop-Off!*. Retrieved from <https://childpsychologist.com.au/the-dreaded-drop-off/>



## EGG HEADS

**Gardening is a great way to keep children busy, whether you have a large garden, a small patio or even an apartment without a balcony, you can always find a way to do some planting and bring a bit of nature into your children's lives.**

All you need is some empty egg cartons (even egg shells), a bit of soil, some seeds... You don't need much to have a good time! Simply fill the cartons with a little soil, add your seeds and water.

Choose fast-growing seeds. Radishes, fava beans, dried beans, lentils and chickpeas, etc. are all ideal for planting with children, because their journey from seed to shoot to plant is fast and they require little care - just a little water and you'll be seeing progress every day. Some flowers, such as nasturtiums and marigolds, grow quickly and can be used to decorate salads or desserts.



Image & Activity Source: [klorane.com/au-en/content/tips-eco-friendly-school-holiday-activities](http://klorane.com/au-en/content/tips-eco-friendly-school-holiday-activities)





## MUSIC AND DANCE

If you've ever witnessed pre-schoolers grooving to music, you can't help but smile. They obviously love the feeling of moving to the tunes we play for them. But music and dance are much more than just fun activities for children. In fact, it's very beneficial for pre-schoolers to participate in these "performing arts". Here's why:

**Music and dance engage the brain:** Children learn new things, like sounds, words and patterns through music. And with dance, they can explore and control their body movements. These activities are great for development and stimulate connections in the growing brain.

**It helps cultivate communication skills:** Bringing together kids with songs, rhymes and actions lets them discover how to interact and connect with others. They develop listening and social skills that will give them self-confidence and better prepare them for school.

**Music and dance allows kids to express themselves-** Happy, nervous, tired? Engaging in creative activities lets kids release their emotions and express their feelings. It's a fantastic opportunity for children who aren't yet able to put their thoughts into words.

**It helps foster physical skills:** Young musicians and dancers learn skills like balance, control and coordination. Singing and movement is also good aerobic exercise- linked to stress reduction, physical fitness and overall good health.

**Music and dance contribute to creativity and imagination.** With children spending more time in front of screens rather than physically playing, music and dance encourages them to be curious and imaginative. This creative outlet can also give them opportunities to learn about other cultures through the arts.

Source: <https://www.nvrc.ca/notices-events-blog/active-living-blog/5-benefits-music-and-dancing-preschoolers>

**National Quality Framework | Quality Area 1:**  
Element 1.1 – *Program*. The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.

## 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.*



## CRAWL CHASE

When was the last time you got on your hands and knees and crawled like a baby? Give it a go, it is quite tiring and is a great brain workout too. This activity is simple and requires no equipment just a little space.

It is tag on all fours. Take turns being 'in'. Everyone gets into crawling position and crawls away trying to avoid being tipped!  
*Have fun.*