

NEWSLETTER – Issue 2



Thank You So Very Much!!!

Our first 2 working bees were huge successes. We managed to build a vegetable garden, put up another set of swings, install some chin up bars and plant over 800 plants! We could not have done it without the tireless efforts from our parents and team members who so kindly donated their free time. Thanks again.

2006 Kinder Enrolments

Is your child about to turn 3 or 4 and are you currently looking at preschools in the area? Are you aware of our new Kindergarten Program?

We are currently in the process of allocating new places at Smartie Pants for semester 2, 2006. Please feel free to speak to Linda to find out more information about our program!

Our Website

A reminder again that our website www.smartiepants.com.au continually receives new updates! We're looking forward to adding some new pictures, our handbook etc. Check out our updated Team section where you can read a little bit more about each team member.

Changes to our Invoicing, CCB & Payment of Fees

Invoices/Receipts

Please note that invoices/receipts are now available for collection from the blue box next to the EFTPOS machine. It would be most appreciated if outstanding balances are paid upon receipt of the invoice to ensure that payments are up to date.

Payment of Invoices

Payments can be made to Smartie Pants via: EFTPOS – instructions are located next to the machine; EFT - Bank Details are located on invoices); Cheque; or Cash (payments can be made to Sharon, Natalie, Bree or Tabitha). If you require assistance in making a payment, please speak to the aforementioned.

Child Care Benefits Lump Sum

Please be aware that all families who will be claiming Child Care Benefits in a lump sum payment for the 2005/06 financial year will need to register with Family and Community Services. Copies of the forms can be obtained from Sharon or by phoning 136 150.

Changes to Child Care Benefit

Parents utilising Smartie Pants who are eligible for the base hours will now be able to claim 24 hours per week effective 3 July 2006. Please contact Sharon should you wish to increase your child's attendance days.

Changes to management and improving our communication



Smartie Pants welcomes Bree & Tabitha to our management Team and we encourage you to discuss ideas, problems or concerns with them.

Bree (left)



Tabitha (right)

Team Member	Key Communication Role	Contact Details
Bree	2 nd in Charge (Monday – Wednesday) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enrolment & booking <u>requests</u>; ▪ Occasional & replacement day bookings approval; ▪ Tours & Orientations; ▪ Payment processing; ▪ Feedback & Complaints. 	Available onsite: Monday 8:30 – 5:30pm Tuesday 8:30 – 5:30pm Wednesday 7:00am – 2:00pm
Tabitha	2 nd in Charge (Thursday - Friday) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enrolment & booking <u>requests</u>; ▪ Occasional & replacement day booking approval; ▪ Tours & Orientations; ▪ Invoices, receipts & payments; ▪ Feedback & Complaints. 	Available onsite: Thursday 10:00am – 7:00pm Friday 7:00am – 2:30pm
Sharon	Director Parent Liaison Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permanent enrolment & booking <u>approvals</u>; ▪ Occasional & replacement day bookings; ▪ Tours & Orientations; ▪ Invoices , receipts & payments ▪ Feedback & Complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Onsite daily 10am – 6pm. ▪ Available for discussion between 3pm – 6pm or at any other time by appointment. ▪ Alternatively, for non urgent matters, Sharon can be contacted via email at sharon@smartiepants.com.au. ▪ For all urgent matters, outside of business operating hours, Sharon can also be contacted on her mobile: 0414 370 588
Natalie	Director Operations Management In the absence of Sharon, Bree or Tabitha, Natalie is able to process <u>any</u> urgent enquires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Onsite daily 11am – 7pm until baby is born (due late July 2006!) ▪ Available for discussion at any time by appointment. ▪ Alternatively, for non urgent matters, Natalie can be contacted via email at natalie@smartiepants.com.au. ▪ For all urgent matters, outside of business operating hours, Natalie can also be contacted on her mobile: 0407 882 076

Special Events & Activities Held

Hey Dee Ho

Our Hey Dee Ho program was a great success this term. The children really enjoyed participating in the singing and dancing. We will be running the program again this term. If you are already participating, there is no need to do anything, we will continue to invoice you. If you are not enrolled to attend the sessions, please complete the attached form and return it to Bree, Tabitha or Sharon. The sessions take place fortnightly on Thursdays mornings with the next session scheduled for 4 July 2006 with a cost of \$3 per session. For children who do not attend the Centre on Thursdays, we encourage parents to bring their children in for this delightful event.



Sled Dog Visit (late March 2006)

One of the children's father's is a professional sled dog racer & during the famous Alaskan Sled Dog Race's; The Iditorod, he was kind enough to visit our centre with 2 of his dogs. He also provided cool photos, trophies and books about Sled Dog racing in Australia. The Kinder children also watched Balto (a cartoon Disney movie) and read the heroic story of Balto and a very famous mushing team who saved the Alaskan town of Nome during a diphtheria epidemic when during a fierce blizzard, closed all routes of transport. This sled dog team raced across 600 miles (approx. 1000km) to bring back antitoxin to and saved the town.



All the children of the centre were invited to join in on the experience, meeting and patting the dogs, and a great time was had by all. See our website for more photos!

Easter Bonnet Parade (April 2006)



On Thursday 13 April the children and team at Smartie Pants celebrated our very first Easter Hour. The children put on a very colourful Easter bonnet parade where they were able to show off the hard work they put into creating their Easter bonnets. The children were excited as we drew the winners from each room for the raffle and then headed outside for an Easter egg hunt. The atmosphere was wonderful, with parents, children and staff enjoying the afternoon together. Hot cross buns were served for afternoon tea as the children sat around counting their Easter eggs. We would like to thank the families for donating the raffle gifts and for the hard work they too put into making this day a special one

to remember.

Pyjama Day (April 2006)

What a great excuse not to have to get dressed that day! In the spirit of fundraising, children and staff dressed in their pyjamas to raise money for the starlight foundation. Children enjoyed checking out each other's PJs and showing off their own. It was a fun day, enjoyed by all!

Percussionist Visit (May 2006)

In the theme of teaching our Kinder children about music and movement, it was fantastic for them to be visited by one of the children's uncle, who brought along his drums and other percussion instruments for the children to play. The children had a ball and loved playing the loud drums and other percussion instruments.

Tap Dancing & Ballerina Show (May 2006)



Also in the theme of music and movement we had a very special visit from a professional dance and singing teacher: Nadia. Nadia presented a tap dance show for the children and ran a mini tap-dancing class demonstration. We were all surprised how easily the children picked up the complex movements and loved the loud sounds they could make with their feet. Linda (our Kindergarten teacher) who works with Nadia outside of a Smartie Pants, also gave a classical ballet demonstration. She dressed in her traditional ballerina costume, and showed children the inside of her ballet shoes and

how they help her stand up onto her toes! The children all gasped (boys too!) when Linda ended her demonstration in a full split! Since the dance shows, the topic of dance and movement has been a hot topic amongst all the children and team at the centre, particularly in our Mini-Minors and Little Geniuses rooms and we are keen to invite Nadia back to spend some more time introducing tap dance and ballet to our children.



Farm Animal Visit (June 2006)

Leigh's farmyard friends visited us with a pig, goats, sheep, a baby cow, chickens, ducks, guinea pigs and rabbits. Some of the children took a bit of time to warm up to our furry friends but by the end of the visit almost all the children were cuddling, holding or feeding of the animals. Even our babies room enjoyed walking amongst and chasing the animals! It was a very special day and we hope to do it again early in the new year.



More Up & Coming Special Events

To date our events have been a huge success with all the children benefiting from these exciting and new experiences. In our upcoming months we will be having:

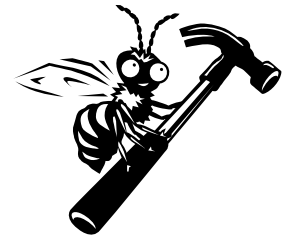
- a Fairy-tale Dress Up day (12 July 2006) where children and staff are able to dress up as their favourite fairy-tale character. Throughout the day we will be reading from some classic fairy tales and have wonderful puppet and role plays.
- Chicken hatching in the week starting 14 August 2006 where children can celebrate spring and new life by watching little chicklets hatch at the centre.
- A Footy day on 29 September 2006 for children to dress up in their favourite team colours, as well as doing ball skills games, eating party pies, having their face painted & maybe a surprise visit from some AFL players.

Also, Linda has organised a fundraising Kinder Disco night to be held in early August 2006. Stay tuned for more details on this event!

2006 Working Bees

A reminder that our next Working Bee is on 9 September 2006

Please don't forget to let us know if you have any special carpentry skills or talents!



New team members

Meet our 6 new team members: Sam (Mini Minors), Janine (Little Geniuses), Jo (Afternoon Close), Mia (Afternoon Close), Jessie (Afternoon Close), and Jackie (Afternoon Close). Check out our website (www.smartiepants.com.au) for profiles of our team members.

Policies currently under review

We are currently in the process of reviewing and revising some of our policies and procedures. If you would like to provide advice, assistance or feedback on this process, please don't hesitate to contact Natalie on 0407 882 076 or via email at natalie@smartiepants.com.au. Alternatively you can register your interest at the Parent Committee, who will also be invited to become involved in key policy and procedure development. The following procedures and policies are currently under review.

- Complaints & Feedback Policy;
- Orientation;
- Safety Management;
- Family Grouping; and
- Supervision.

Help us fill our new VEGIE GARDEN

All rooms will have a patch in our new raised veggie garden, so if you have any seeds, seedlings or plants, please help your child's room fill up their part of the veggie patch.

Programs

Family Grouping Programs (Promoting Positive Group Experiences)

Thank you for your feedback and assistance in helping us to improve and enhance our family grouping time. Improvements to date include:

- The introduction of a progressive morning tea where children can sit down at the morning tea table in small groups when they feel hungry. We were finding that, as all children have different wake up times in the morning and have breakfast at different times, some children do not want fruit at our previously scheduled time of 9:30am. A progressive morning tea, allows children to choose the time they feel hungry to eat while we can also monitor more closely what all children are eating – making the experience of morning tea a more personal and inviting experience.
- We have also been holding large group art activities, including lots of painting, pasting and drawing. You can see evidence of these masterpieces along our corridor walls.
- We have also been including special outdoor activities such as ball skills, obstacle courses and nature walks.

Daily Room Programs

Have you checked out your child's developmental program? Our programs inform you what we are doing each day to enhance and stimulate your child's play and learning in each of the key developmental areas.

Observations of your child are routinely taken and included in the program to help our qualified carers design a program to meet the individual needs of children in their room.

There is also room on our program for feedback and program suggestions from parents and guardians. For example if you and your child visit the zoo on the weekend, you might want to let our carers know so they can extend on your child's experience by providing zoo animals, zoo pictures, zoo stories etc. Similarly another example could be a new song or poem your child has learnt at home and enjoys. We could include the song or poem into the rooms group/mat time experiences.

More Parent Teacher Nights

In March 2006 we conducted our first round of Parent Teacher interviews for the Hug-a-bubs and Pips Squeaks rooms. Parents and carers had the opportunity to sit down one on one and discuss key developmental milestones, achievements and children's development programs and interests.

Commencing 3 July 2006 we will be conducting further interviews for our families in the Mini Minors rooms. Booking sheets are located adjacent to the sign in sheets. Commencing 10 July 2006, Little Geniuses will then also be conducting their parent teacher interviews.

Sipper Cups & Drink Bottles

We remind families to bring in drinking cups.

Have you seen our 'Dressed for Success' poster?

Don't forget to provide us with plenty of warm clothing, spare shoes, socks, beanies, gloves and scarves so we can ensure your child can still enjoy the lovely fresh outdoors!



Tooth brushing

Tooth-brushing has been a great hit with the children. It's fantastic to be encouraging them to brush well and regularly at a young age. Unfortunately a number of families have yet to provide us with their child's toothbrush. If you are one of these families, we would really appreciate it if you could provide us with a brush for your child.

Fund-raising

Thank you to all the parents who have been busy at work and with family and friends selling our chocolates. To date we have sold nearly 100 boxes and have raised just over \$1000. How to best spend the fund-raising money was discussed at our first Parent Committee Meeting held on the 27 June 2006 and it was decided that the fund-raising would contribute towards the purchase a Fun World series of 10 piece non-fixed play equipment. The equipment costs approximately \$2000 and Smartie Pants has agreed to pay the balance of the costs after all fund-raising is accounted for.

Other fundraising activities we have also started include:

- 'Stuck on You' where you can purchase a variety of labels for clothing, cups, shoes etc. which are dishwasher and washing machine safe.
- IGA where 1% of your grocery bill is donated to the centre. We have key tags and cards which we can give out to you at your request. We encourage you give these out to your family and friends. The card also offers you special in store discounts, and IGA price match all alcohol specials – just bring in your catalogue. Once our families and friends spend more than \$1000 in any one month we satisfy their spending criteria. At this time, we will publish all donation cheques on our noticeboards and at our monthly parent committee meetings.

Do you have a special Skill or Talent you could share with us?

Are you a doctor, dentist, fire-fighter, nurse, singer, dancer etc ? Is there something special you could show our children?

We are currently seeking volunteers to visit our centre to meet with the children and share a special experience with them. Please register your interest in the attached form.

Help us help you better

We're always looking at new and better ways to serve our families better. Attached to this newsletter is a feedback survey and we ask that you provide to us honest feedback about our service. We also ask that if you have any ideas or comments on how we could run things better that you feel free to provide these to us either directly to a team member or in writing via our feedback box, located in the foyer of the centre.

Parent Committee

Our first Parent Committee met on June 27, 2006. Minutes of this meeting are located in the foyer of the centre. Please note that our next Parent Committee meeting is due to be held at 9am on Saturday 29 July 2006. If you are still interested in getting involved in our Parent Committee, please register your interest with Bree, Tabitha, Sharon or Natalie.

Review of the introduction of Playschool TV to morning drop off time (between 7:00 – 8:00am).

A few of our parents have requested that we use television as part of our early morning program (eg. Between 7-8am). They feel that this will help their children settle into the centre by reducing the need to direct their children into activities so soon after which many of them have just awoken. We are reviewing a trial of this using only developmentally appropriate programs and would like to know how other families feel about this. Please feel free to provide feedback to any of our team members and note that we will raise this as a key discussion point for our parent committee.

Reminder to all families to keep us up to date on Emergency Contact & Allergy Details!

For some of our families, it's been almost a year since you provided to us your emergency contact details and other enrolment forms. Has your circumstances changed? If so, could you please complete a new enrolment form and Emergency Card and pass to any of our team members.

Seeking Testimonials

Are you and your family enjoying your experience at Smartie Pants? If so, would you be interested in writing a testimonial of your experience for our website? You can email your testimonials to natalie@smartiepants.com.au or pass them onto Sharon, Tabitha or Bree.

Room Reports

Little Geniuses Room (Kinders)

Team Members: Linda (Qualified Kindergarten Teacher), Elissa (Qualified Assistant), Janine (Assistant)

Normal Hours of Operation: (9.30am-4.30pm)

Can you believe that we are halfway through the year? We have been learning a lot of interesting things in the kinder room. We have been learning about music and movement. We also had one of our children's uncle, a professional percussionist who volunteered to introduce the children to different instruments. We also had Nadia Carrafa, a professional tap teacher come out and do some movement with the children.

We have been learning about the alphabet, recognising letters and our own names. To prepare for school in 6 months time, we have been doing some pre-writing practice skills. Just recently, we had the mobile farm come out – the children loved it and enjoyed feeding the animals.

The children have been getting ready for a concert/disco night which I hope to organise very soon. Over the next couple of months I also hope to organise a library for children to borrow books which will tie into our fairytale theme. I also will be talking about winter, space and more pre-school preparation.

For any questions, suggestions, advice or queries, feel free to talk to me.

Thanks, Linda

Hug-a-bub Room (Babies)

Team Members: Kira (Qualified Assistant in Training), Carol (Qualified & Room Leader) & Emma (Qualified Assistant and Qualified in Training),
Normal Hours of Operation: 9am-4.30pm

We have welcomed several new children to Hug-a-bubs room and celebrated lots of milestones – 6 birthdays in April, many children taking their first steps, and our first farewells. It is with sadness that we wish Max and Xira all the best, as they move away.

Check out Hug-a-bubs own newsletter for more specific room information.

Carol, Kira and Emma

P.S. We were very excited to meet Tryphena's new daughter Mikayla Ruth. Congratulations to Tim and Tryphena.

Pip Squeaks Room (Early Toddlers)

Team Members: Belinda (Qualified Assistant in training), Jackie (Qualified & Pip Squeak's Room Leader)
Normal Hours of Operation: 9:30am – 4.30pm

Welcome to the Pipsqueaks room for another busy month. We have been looking at colours and learning about all of the colours of the rainbow. The children also all enjoyed the farm animals that came to the centre, as they chased them around the yard.

We had a few birthdays this month – Happy Birthday Cassidy and Evelyn. The Pipsqueaks give a big welcome to Beau who has just started at the centre.

Some housekeeping notes

- could parents make sure when they bring in clothing to make sure they are clearly labelled, so these items don't go missing.
- Also please ensure that any medication that your child may have while at the centre is either put into the fridge or given to a staff member, as it is a hazard to leave it in your child's bag.

See you all next newsletter!

Mini Minors Room (Family Grouping & Late Toddlers & Pre Kinder Group)

Team Members: Michelle (Qualified), Eleanor (Qualified Room Leader), Elissa (Qualified Assistant), Jenna (Qualified Assistant in training), Sam (Qualified Assistant in training),

Normal Hours of Operation:

7am – 9.30am Family Grouping

9.30am – 4.30pm LateToddlers & Pre Kinder Group

4.30pm-7pm Family Grouping

Dear Parents and Family members,

The Mini Minors have been busy with lots of art activities to decorate our room. We did Aboriginal Dot painting, large paintings on art easels, and pasting with cellophane to name a few, however the favourite activity among the group has been decorating and painting butterfly masks and learning about the life-cycle of a butterfly. On the door you can look at photos of us with 'Sherman' the Caterpillar who entertained our room at group time for a couple of weeks.

The farm animals visiting the centre was lots of fun, the Mini Minors that were lucky enough to be in on that day were very excited when they woke up as they got to watch through the window as the animals walked off

the truck and up the ramp! Over the next few weeks we will be learning more about farm animals through reading books and group discussion, and also painting and pasting cardboard farm animals to go on each of our doors.

If you have any suggestions, ideas or questions for or about our room, please feel free to talk to us. As of Friday 16th new lockers with corresponding numbered hooks have been allocated. Please hang the children's coats and beanies on the hooks which are located under the bathroom window.

Last but not least, we would like to sincerely thank you all for letting us spend this special time with your children. They are all very precious to us.

Eleanor, Erin, Sam and Jenna.



Getting Involved!

Below is a list of activities, already discussed in our attached newsletter, which you can get involved in at our centre. Please tick the areas that are of interest to you.

Please note that we very much appreciate any involvement families are able to offer, but also understand that our working families are very busy and with family time being so precious and may find it difficult to participate in many or all of these activities.

Yes I _____ (your name) would like to participate and be a member of the Parent Committee

Yes I _____ (your name) would like to receive updates on the Parent Committee agenda, minutes and actions so I can be involved in issues that interest me within the centre.

Yes I _____ (your name) have a special talent or skill I would like happy to share with children at the centre. My talent or skill is _____ (your skill). I would be available to visit or assist the centre with my talent or skill on _____ (a day & time of the week or a specific date).

Yes I _____ (your name) would like to be involved in the following working bee dates (please tick the dates you wish to attend).

9 September 2006

Yes I _____ (your name) am happy to help the centre in fundraising for its new outdoor equipment.

Yes I _____ (your name) have a recipe I recommend for the centre.

Recipe: _____

Serves: _____
(Don't worry we'll work out how to make a larger number of serves!)

Ingredients: _____

Instructions: _____



Parent Feedback Survey

Your Name _____

We are always seeking to improve our services and meet your needs. To assist us to do this better we have attached a feedback survey consisting of 10 key questions. Please feel free to give us your honest answer as this will greatly assist us to improve our services.

1. How well do you think we performed in assisting you and your child to orient into our centre?

Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 1.	Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 2.	Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> 3.	Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4.	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5.	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 6.
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2. How well have we established and maintained positive and loving relationships with you and your child?

Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 1.	Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 2.	Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> 3.	Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4.	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5.	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 6.
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3. How welcome do we make you feel? Do you feel our centre is inviting to your family?

Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 1.	Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 2.	Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> 3.	Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4.	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5.	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 6.
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4. How well do we meet your needs with providing you information about your child's day and routine activities?

Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 1.	Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 2.	Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> 3.	Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4.	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5.	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 6.
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Do you use our daily information folders?

Do members of our team discuss your child day with you?

5. Are you satisfied with the programs and resources that we provide for your child.

Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 1.	Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 2.	Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> 3.	Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4.	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5.	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 6.
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6. Do you feel your child is safe at our centre?

Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 1.	Poor <input type="checkbox"/> 2.	Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> 3.	Good <input type="checkbox"/> 4.	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> 5.	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 6.
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Do you have any safety concerns regarding our centre?

7. Do you feel we are meeting the nutritional needs of your child?

Very Poor
1.

Poor
2.

Satisfactory
3.

Good
4.

Very Good
5.

Excellent
6.

Are you happy with our menu?

8. Do we meet your expectations with regards to supporting toileting, your nappy change routines etc.?

Very Poor
1.

Poor
2.

Satisfactory
3.

Good
4.

Very Good
5.

Excellent
6.

9. How well do our team members perform when it comes to dealing with issues and problems that arise from time to time.

Very Poor
1.

Poor
2.

Satisfactory
3.

Good
4.

Very Good
5.

Excellent
6.

10. How well do you feel management supports you as a customer of our centre? Do you feel they are approachable?

Very Poor
1.

Poor
2.

Satisfactory
3.

Good
4.

Very Good
5.

Excellent
6.

Is there any other feedback you would like to give us?

Thank you very much for your time.