



# Little Geniuses Newsletter

## Departures & Arrivals

As many of you may already know, Melissa McGrath has resigned her position of Kindergarten Team Leader at the centre for personal reasons. Melissa has been working part time at our centre for nearly 3 years now and we will all miss her lovely caring personality in our programs very much. Fortunately however, Melissa will still continue to do relief teaching for us, so there is a good chance we will all get to catch up with her again sometime very soon.



Obviously many parents may be concerned by this change and we wish to assure you that we are doing our very best to continue to offer the best quality care and educative programs.

Tabitha Cretchley, who job shared the leadership role with Melissa, will now move to full time. Brad will continue in his role time full time as the main Kindergarten Teacher and each day Brad will also provide a focused 2-3 hours facilitating our 'accelerated learning' program which will provide one: one reading and small group class work for our eligible Kindergarten children. Sandra and Melanie will also continue within the program. Kerry who recently joined our team and an experienced room leader working with 3-4 year olds, will

also join the room at the start of the next term. Finally, Natalie (one of the owners) who also herself is now almost a qualified Kindergarten Teacher will also continue to assist the program through the transition over the next term.

## Term One Reflections

The children are settling well as we have spent our first term focusing on settling the children into the room with its new look and reinforcing our room limits, routines and expectations.

As we have new children who have joined the group, we have been playing lots of games which help the children get to know each other and make them feel secure, happy and a part of a group.

Melissa, a seasoned teacher and play based learning advocate, developed a large part of her program by following the interests of the children both on an individual level and as a whole group. Experiences were then planned that focused on the skills observed that the children needed to develop, strengthen or extend using the children's interest areas so that the children feel in control of their learning whilst also ensuring it was always interesting and fun and engaging. Our aim is to continue this approach into next term and we hope our program will continue to assist to develop healthy, happy, confident, secure children with big self esteems.

**Yes your children have been developing their reading, writing and numeracy skills and their knowledge has been challenged and extended in preparation for school but it has been achieved in an informal, fun and interesting way that is age appropriate to the children.**

Over the last term the children enjoyed many experiences based around transport, sensory exploration and building with the big blocks. There was also a strong focus on children working in small groups to help build friendships and assist children to begin to communicate and resolve conflicts with help from teachers.

At group time we have been reading stories which encourage the children to participate and make predictions. We have been learning to take turns and respect others through group games and we have been enjoying the well loved story of, 'The Three Little Pigs'. Exploring different ways of storytelling including the children acting the story out for themselves.

The emergent curriculum allows the children to continuously add to the program on a need be basis. When the children are engaged in a positive play and need props to extend it or the children have their own idea but need some additions to implement it we provide what they require and then add it to the program rather than observing what they need and adding it to next week's program again this encourages more meaningful and purposeful play as it is unfolding.

## Term 2 Focus

After reflection and review of the last term we have discovered and concluded that:

- within our class two clear competencies/levels have emerged and it is important to take care to meet the educative and care needs of both levels;
- a continued emphasis is required, passed just term one, on building children's'

independence and 'self help' skills as a great majority of the children still need assistance with toileting, hand washing and care for their own belongings;

- A greater focus on communicating with families is required. This will help us work more effectively together about all matters.

Hence, working together to we aim to move our programs out of 'getting to know one another' more into focused educative and curriculum driven activities. The program will therefore comprise of:

- a pre-programmed curriculum of fortnightly themed activities (attached is a summary worksheet of term 2, 3 and 4 curriculum themes);
- programmed activities derived from 6-8 weekly observation cycles of each child;
- emergent/child initiated activities and programs;
- specialised small group and one: one learning for children enrolled into our accelerated Kindergarten program; and
- Homework (eg. take home reading and information gathering activity worksheets).

## What Families Can Do to Help



**Critical to the success of these programs is family involvement. You can get involved in a variety of ways:**

1. Complete all the developmental summary surveys of you child which will **now** be sent to you via email at least once each quarter;
2. Volunteer your time to visit the centre to show the children your career, special talent, animals etc.);

3. Keep us informed (preferably via email as this is a great communication team shared equally across the whole Kindergarten team): Let us know changes, problems, special events or anything else you can think about your child.

### **PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS**

Over the year we will also conduct two coordinated Parent Teacher Interviews: the first in April/May 2009; and the second in September/October 2009. We believe these dates are more conducive to a collaborative learning approach giving us time early in the year to get to know your child's learning strengths and weaknesses but not too late that we are restricted in implementing shared strategies together.

### **Please Keep Us Informed**

We always welcome your feedback both good and bad so please, if you're not sure about something or if you have any concerns or issues, please don't hesitate to talk to any of the teachers in the room. Alternatively you can email the whole team on

### **Placemats**

All the children have been busy making placemats with their own drawing and name on them. We have laminated these and the children are now using them to find their seat at lunch time.

This experience is building literacy skills as the children recognize their own placemat using pictorial or written text. It helps establish a sense of belonging in the kinder room and allows us to mix children together in different groups at tables so that children talk to a variety of children.

### **Box Construction**

You may get much box construction from your child



or you may only get a few. Please take them home and show and interest in the work your child has put into them.



Box construction builds problem solving skills, mathematical concepts and special relations as well as creativity.

### **Lost Property**



We simply cannot manage the overwhelming number of coats, shoes and other personal items that get left within the room and uncollected from Lockers. Previously we have been collecting all items, labelled or not and placing them into the lost property bins (blue bins with yellow lids) beside the front door. However, we have received a number of complaints about this from families about this and have now split the bins into one for labelled or 'uncollected' property and there other one for unlabelled or 'lost property'. We will when time facilitates try to help children collect their uncollected items but we strongly encourage all families to assist us in this process.

### **Child Sign In Table**

From the first day of the new term we will set up a 'child sign in table' in which all children will be required to sign into the room upon arrival to the program each day. This process is very important as it helps children develop a sense of belonging and responsibility as well as providing us an invaluable tool for observing the progress and development of a child's writing and name recognition skills. Please help us by taking the time to help your child sign in. The table will be set up each night adjacent to the Kinder room door.

## Travelling Bears



There has been a heap of excitement and build up to our travelling bears. The children have named the bears discussed what they would like in their back packs and taken photo's of the bears in a variety of outfits. The bears are called, **“Butterfly” and “Phooky”**.

As previously advised children will take home our travelling bears and record their experience in a shared journal which will go home with each bear. We encourage you to help make this a very special experience by helping your child record his/her experience using a camera. We would especially love digital images and an electronic log.

At the end of the year, the diary of the bears travels will form part of the treasure package your child will keep forever of their Kindergarten experience.

## Show and Tell

Sharing experiences and special things is such a fundamental part of preschool life and in term 2 we will be inviting children to bring their special things into the centre to share together. A letter inviting you to bring in an item will be provided at least one week before, to give you and your child time to think about what special things they want to share with the group. As a rule, we encourage your child to bring a maximum number of 3 items per time. Please bring items in a bag and hand them over to a teacher who will ensure they are properly cared for throughout the day.

## Nature Display

Every year we invite you and your child to collect special natural treasures from the garden and parks and we will put them on

display within the room. Bark, leaves, nuts, insects (in a container), abandoned nests etc. will help us create an amazing display of natural materials children can touch, feel, smell and explore.

## Reflections Book

You will notice a folder on a stand next to the sign in book in our room labelled Reflections Book. Please flick through this book when you get a chance as it will continue to be added to each week and provide you with a quick glimpse of what is happening in our room.

## Small Group Story Telling

Brad has been working with many of the children to build up their appreciation of story telling and reading through the process of group story telling. Using books, pictures and discussion Brad facilitates the writing of a story and records each child's contribution. The stories are absolutely amazing and a clear reflection of the experiences and interests of each of the children. Some examples have been put on display next to our reflections book. We encourage you to check them out. We promise they'll make you smile.

## Please Bring Each Day!

**All items to be clearly labelled with your child's Name**

- 1 Library bag (for take home readers and special books);
- 1 Library bag (for take home art works) – please note a pillow case also works very well.
- 2 Large Scrap Books (children will use these to record a diary of their year through pictures, words and stories);
- Foolscap display book (for display of learning stories);

- 3 Ring Binder with plastic sheets for collection of worksheets and artwork;
- Sunsmart Hat (legionnaires or broad brim to cover face and neck adequately);
- Water bottle;
- at least one (two if toileting) full sets of spare clothes including underwear and

socks and that all items are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Please note that parents can nominate to pay a \$6 fee and the centre will purchase the stationary on their behalf. Please order through your uniform sheet in the attached form.

## Building Our Family Community

We believe that working together as a community and creating and fostering strong friendships is vital to creating the best possible learning outcomes. Part of this involves fostering friendships outside of the centre. If you would like your contact information made available to other families on a parent contact sheet, please fill out the following and return to the centre. A full list will be published at the end of this month.

Your Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your contact phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Email: \_\_\_\_\_

We also encourage you to use the information compiled to send invitations, as it is sometimes very difficult for carers to organise the pass on of this information.

## Please tell us the school your child will attend in 2010 or 2011.

Last year we requested this information and received only a few responses, we thought that it might be helpful to ask many parents again for this information. We also plan to collate a summary of this information on the parent community form that will be issued at the end of the month.

School your child will be enrolled in 2010 \_\_\_\_\_ OR 2011 \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know have your teachers name and/or school contact details so we can discuss your child's progress in term 4 with them? \_\_\_\_\_



## Uniform/School Items Order Form

(High quality garments come screen printed with centre logo)

### Bucket Hat (\$12)

One size fits all (47-57cm)

**Colours**

Royal Blue, Red, Emerald, Yellow, Navy,  
Maroon, Bottle Green, Sky, Orange, Lime, Hot  
Pink, Purple, Electric Blue, Black

**Sizes**

A. 47-51cm B. 51-55cm C. 53-57cm D. 55-59cm

### Draw Cord Bag (\$10)

**Colours**

Royal Blue, Red, Emerald, Yellow, Navy,  
Maroon, Bottle Green, Lime, Hot Pink, Purple,  
Electric Blue

**Sizes**

A. 42 x 35cm B. 50 x 40 cm

### Legionnaire Cap (\$10)

**Colours**

Royal Blue, Red, Emerald, Yellow, Navy,  
Maroon, Bottle Green, Sky, Orange, Lime, Hot  
Pink, Purple, Electric Blue, Black

**Sizes**

One size fits all (47-57cm)

### T-Shirts (\$16)

**Colours**

Royal Blue, Red, Emerald, Yellow, Navy,  
Maroon, Bottle Green, Sky, Orange, Lime, Hot  
Pink, Purple, Electric Blue, Black, Mid Blue, Jade,  
Light Yellow, Pink, Lilac, Light Aqua and White.

**Sizes**

0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 & 12

### Kindergarten Stationary Pack (\$6)

Includes 2 scrap books, display book for prepared learning stories, 1 folder for collecting special artwork and worksheets plus plastic sheets

**Sizes**

Your Child's Full

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Colour	Qty.	Unit Price	Subtotal
<b>Total</b>				

Please attach details if insufficient space provided.

Please tick payment method

Cash Cheque Eftpos Charge to my account

Your Name and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return form by Friday 24 April 2009.**