

NEWSLETTER – Issue 4



Welcome Back!

Happy New Year and welcome back! On behalf of the Smartie Pants team, we would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our new families. We look forward to another fulfilling year sharing and building memories with your family.

Christmas Raffle

Thank you to all our parents and local businesses who supported us in providing goodies for our Christmas Raffle. Thank you to the fantastic efforts of our families in selling the raffle tickets which raised funds close to \$700. The winners have been notified by phone and a listing provided on the front door. The money raised helped us to finalise our purchase of extra large wooden blocks with the balance going towards additional equipment...specifically an outdoor cubby.

Friends of Smartie Pants Directory

We have published a "Friends of Smartie Pants Directory". The directory provides services of businesses who are involved with Smartie Pants, including those who contributed to our Christmas Raffle. Please contact Sharon if you provide a service which you wish to include in the directory. The Directory will be released on a quarterly basis with the first edition attached.

Qualified Kinder Teacher

Have you met Linda, our qualified kinder teacher? Linda, together with her 2 assistants, Sandra (qualified and assistant with 20+ years experience teaching kinder programs) and Elissa (qualified assistant who has been with our Centre from the beginning), run a highly educational and free spirited program. Please feel free to speak to Linda to find out more information about our program and philosophies!

Changes and Improvements in Communicating your Child's Day

In consultation with our Parent Committee to improve communication between our families, we have amended our attendance sheets to incorporate your child/s' daily information such as how they slept, what they ate and their toileting routines.

Furthermore, we are now introducing smaller 'communication books which will replace our previous system where information about your child's day was recorded in their folder. While it is always desirable to communicate face to face, busy drop off and pick up times do not always make this easy. Therefore, as these books are quite small, they easily fit into a child's bag and we hope it will make it easier for you to communicate with us when you have time in the evenings (after the children are in bed most likely!). These books will be used to communicate any specific issues between our team and yourself. Detailed instructions on how to use these books are provided on the inside cover of your books or you can ask any team member at the centre.

Your child's folder will continue to be used to store and compile special artwork, photos and comments from carers throughout the year which will be presented to you chronologically at Christmas time again in the form of a year book/folio.

Changes to Payment of Fees

Late Fee Payment Penalty

As recently communicated on the foyer noticeboard, to address the ongoing issues of unpaid fees, Smartie Pants will be implementing a late fee payment policy. Effective 5 February 2007, a weekly fee of \$2.50 will be charged for outstanding fees. Please ensure your outstanding balance is paid by the end the week's usage to avoid this fee.

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, Megan or Tabitha – please make sure to obtain a receipt). If you require assistance in making a payment, please speak to the aforementioned.

Parent Committee Report

Mid last year a Parent Committee was formed with a membership comprising volunteering parents (currently 9 parents), including a Committee elected Parent Liaison, and members of the Smartie Pants team. The Committee's role is to provide the voice of the parents of children attending Smartie Pants and provide input to the Smartie Pants team as well as raise and deal with non-administrative issues. The committee so far has assisted in the revision of the communication policy and the "green nose policy", provided input into fundraising and helped to organise the Christmas party.

Our first 2007 Parent Committee meeting took place on Saturday 20 January with future meetings scheduled for the last Saturday of each month 9.00am – 10.30am. Meeting minutes can be obtained from the Parent Pinboard on the Smartie Pants website. If you wish to join the Committee, please complete the attached "Getting Involved" form and place under the door of the Smartie Pants Office.

Meet our Parent Liaison

Hi to all the Smartie Pants Parents. My name is Teha; my daughter Tamika attends Smartie Pants in the kinder room.

As you may be aware, Smartie Pants directors, Sharon and Natalie are passionate about their commitment to the parents of Smartie Pants as well as the children. In line with this, they have developed a Parent Committee where parents can have a real influence in the running of the centre. Early on, the Parent Committee decided that it would be important to have successful communication with the parents of children who attend Smartie Pants to ensure we represent the opinions and wishes of the parent group as a whole. As such, we decided that a Parent Liaison representative would be a useful way of carrying important information in to the Parent Committee and also back to you guys.

My role as Parent Liaison means that if there are any issues you would like brought to the Parent Committee for discussion, you can contact me and I can raise them on your behalf. I can also provide information to you about discussions that have occurred in our meetings.

While the role of the Parent Liaison obviously does not replace the staff and directors at the centre as the first point of contact if any issues arise, I am available to support parents if they feel uncomfortable raising issues or to assist in facilitation if a resolution cannot be reached.

You can contact me by phone, e-mail, or by leaving a message with a team member, and I can call you back. My contact details are as follows-

Phone: 0412 217 190

E-mail: parentliaison@smartiepants.com.au

I look forward to working closely with you to ensure that Smartie Pants remains a child care centre of excellence!

Amendments to Enrolment Forms

We now have a formal process for advising Smartie Pants of any changes to your child's details, especially allergies or changes to family details such as addresses. Please complete an Enrolment Addendum Form which is located in the foyer if you need to amend any details and place under the Office door.

Family Profiles

We know that some of our families have welcomed new members since commencing at our Centre. We will be sending home a "Family Profile" form shortly which we ask you to update with your new details. These details will assist us in programming for your child.

Photographs

Keep an eye out for the "Smartie Pant Photo Album" which will soon to be placed in the foyer of our centre. Parents can order photos of their child and make a \$2 donation for each photo. Please note that families who have indicated that they do not wish to have their child's photos placed around the centre or in media, we will not be placing your photos in this album).

Special Events & Activities Held

Hey Dee Ho

Given the success of the Hey Dee Ho last year, we have decided to run the program again this year. The program will take place fortnightly on a Thursday commencing **8 February** at a cost of \$3 per session. As a special bonus, the first term sessions will occur on a weekly basis and charged at the same fortnightly fee. If you attend the centre on a Thursday, we will invoice you automatically. If you do not wish to participate please tell us and we will remove the service fee. For children who do not attend the Centre on Thursdays, we encourage parents to bring their children in for this delightful activity.

Grandparents Day

Our Grandparents day was a great success with children and grandparents alike enjoying a lovely relaxing afternoon. Our children were thrilled to be able to show their grandparents around their room and the centre. Keep an eye out for our Calendar of events for the next Grandparents' Day.

Christmas Party

Our Christmas Party was a big hit. The children thoroughly enjoyed decorating their rooms with decorations they had made. The Christmas concert was very special as the children proudly sung the Christmas songs they had worked hard to learn whilst parents and carers watched on with pride. Of course no Christmas Party would be complete without a visit from Santa and, more importantly, the lolly bags he gave to all the "nice" children. On behalf of all the families and team of Smartie Pants, we would like to say a special thank you to the Parent Committee who helped organise the party.

More Up & Coming Special Events

- Hey-Dee-Ho
- Kinder graduation night (Early February 2007)
- Chinese New Year (February 15 2007);
- Tap dancing with Nadia

Parent Feedback

Children's clothing

Smartie Pants is considering introducing an elective uniform. Would you be interested in purchasing a uniform for your child if available? Please provide your response in the attached "Getting Involved" Form.

Rating our Service

Smartie Pants is committed to continuous improvement and as such, we are always seeking parent feedback to services we offer. We would very much appreciate if you could take the time to complete the attached brief survey by indicating how your would rate our centre and why?

Parent Teacher Nights

We will be conducting Parent Teacher interviews for all our rooms in the coming months. These interviews give parents and carers the opportunity to sit down one on one and discuss key developmental milestones, achievements and children's development programs and interests.

Below is a schedule of dates for the interviews. As your child's room interview dates approach, you will find an interview booking sheet located adjacent to the sign in sheets. Please nominate your time on these sheets.

Room	Scheduled Dates
Little Geniuses (school starters only)	22-26 January (Monday – Friday)
Hug-a-Bubs	29 January – 2 February (Monday – Friday)
Pip Squeaks	19-23 February (Monday – Friday)
Mini Minors	26-30 March (Monday – Friday)
Little Geniuses	23-27 April (Monday – Friday)

The above timetable is a guide to assist us gather and coordinate developmental summaries and new learning strategies to discuss with families. **Please note that any family can request time to meet with any of our carers at any time to discuss their child's progress.**

2007 Working Bees

The working bee dates for this year have been scheduled.

Date	Proposed Agenda
24 February 2007	Refilling Sand Pits Garden Maintenance Mini Golf Painting and Maintenance Painting of ramp railings
12 May 2007	Garden Maintenance Mini Golf Painting and Maintenance Installation of a new Bike tracks
1 September 2007	Installation of outdoor equipment Garden Maintenance Mini Golf Painting and Maintenance
24 November 2007	Installation of outdoor equipment Garden Maintenance Mini Golf Painting and Maintenance

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

Reminders

Smartie Pants Contact Details

Smartie Pants new contact phone numbers are as follows:

Administration - 03 9438 3877

Direct to Rooms - 03 9017 4014 (You will be prompted to choose the room you require)

Team Leader – 03 9017 6832

Please note that should you have any issues or problems with our new system, please let us know so we can quickly fix it and continuously improve this new resource.

Sipper Cups, Sunhats and Drink Bottles

The weather is heating up so don't forget to bring these in!

'Dressed for Success'

Remember your child's hat and clothing to ensure your child is protected from the sun. The warmer weather means our children will spend even more time outside. Also don't forget to dress your little ones in clothing you're not too worried about, in case they get dirty or stained during play. The warmer weather will see more water play.

Lost Property

Remember to check our lost property for your child's clothing. Any clothing not collected after 3 months will be donated to Smartie Pants spare clothing or to a charity. **Labelling all clothing** will assist us to find the owner of lost items. "Stuck on You" order forms are available in the foyer. These labels are dishwasher and washing machine safe.

Please note that all clothing registered as lost before **30 October 2006** will be transferred to the Smartie Pants 'spare clothing' drawers for general use in emergencies or donated to the Salvation Army. We encourage you to check our lost property list, located immediately adjacent to the EFTPOS machine, to ensure you do not have any missing clothes in our baskets.

Donations (Toys, clothing, etc)

The centre is always grateful for recycled toys and emergency clothing which we can use within our centre. All items which we are unable to use are passed on to charity organisations.

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 a member of our team.

Changes to Smartie Pants Team

Good Luck

We would like to wish Bree, Tabitha and Sam good luck as they leave a few months to have babies. We look forward to welcoming them back in the near future.

Welcome

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to Jennifer. Jennifer will be working at Smartie Pants on a part time basis.

Accreditation Update

Our 'self study' report was submitted in December. Overall we believe we have performed quite well with some areas of ongoing improvement identified and currently being addressed: namely improving our communication with families. Over the next month we expect to have a reply from the National Child Care Accreditation Council giving us a compilation of surveys to send out to families and a range of dates when a validator will come out and independently assess how we are tracking. If you would like to be part of the review process we encourage you to let us know by speaking to any member of our team.

Policy Revisions

Amended Policies:

- Fee Payment Policy

Policies under review:

- Accident and Injury Policy
- New Family Orientation
- Use of Child Folders

These policies are displayed outside the office or copies of the Policy Manual are available for viewing in each room. Alternatively you can request access to it or parts of it electronically. 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. Otherwise you can register your interest at the Parent Committee, who are also involved in key policy and procedure development.

Room Reports

Little Geniuses Room (Kinders)

Team Members: Linda (Qualified Kindergarten Teacher), Sandra (Qualified & 3 year old Kindergarten Leader) and Elissa (Qualified Assistant and Qualified in Training)

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

Well, can you believe it's the start of a new year! We had a wonderful fourth term in Little Genius Room. Our Christmas concert was a success and all the parents really enjoyed watching their children perform. We are getting ready to send our older children off to school, we wish them all luck. However, the absence of the children going to school hasn't left the Little Genius Room small. We would like to welcome all the new Mini Minors into our family. We are all starting to get settled into our routines and we hope to have a lot of fun times with the children in 2007.

Hug-a-bub Room (Babies)

Team Members: Carol (Qualified & Room Leader) & Emma (Qualified Assistant and Qualified in Training),

Welcome back to another year at Smartie Pants. Welcome to Kate, Seth, Lachlan, Liam, Tyler, Blake and Joshua, who have joined us over the last few months. We look forward to an exciting year of growth and development – and lots of fun whilst we watch your child grow and change.

Please make full use of your child's communication book. We would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have. Our care of your child will only be enhanced by any added information you can give us.

Happy New Year!

Pip Squeaks Room (Early Toddlers)

Team Members: Eleanor (Qualified & Pip Squeak's Room Leader), Kira (Qualified Assistant in training) and Jenna (Qualified Assistant in training),

Welcome to 2007, from the Pip Squeaks Room! We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and wish you all a fantastic New Year!

At the moment we are settling back into the routine and helping the new children and the Hug-A-Bubs graduates settle into our room. We have been concentrating on lots of artwork and have kick started our scrapbooks.

Just a friendly reminder to ask parents to give \$3 toward your child's folder, if you have not done so already. Please give this money to Eleanor, Jenna or Kira.

Mini Minors Room (Pre Kinder Group)

Team Members: Jackie (Qualified & Mini Minors Room Leader), Sam (Qualified Assistant in training), Belinda (Qualified Assistant and Qualified in training) and Erin (Qualified Assistant in training)

Hello from the Mini Minors Room. First up, we have some new friends that have just joined us, so hello to Mia, Molly and Benjamin!

We have been playing with lots of water lately, as it has been so hot. You've probably noticed a bit of saturated clothing coming home in their bags. We've also had a few birthdays this month, Indiana and Hamish are now big 3 year old boys! HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

In the next few weeks we will be doing a zoo theme in the room so don't be surprised if your children come home singing songs to do with zoo animals.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding our program, please feel free to speak to Jackie, Belinda, Sam or Erin.



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) 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).

- 24 February 2007
- 12 May 2007
- 1 September 2007
- 24 November 2007

Parent Feedback

Are you interested in purchasing any Smartie Pants Uniform clothing for your child (eg. Sun-hat, polio shirt or T shirt, shorts, pants, jacket item)?

- Yes No

If yes which items would you like to purchase? _____