

NEWSLETTER – Issue 5



We're well into the year now and we've had an amazing year so far. We would like to congratulate Bree and Chris on the birth of Scarlett; Tabitha and Peter on the birth of Iris; and Sam and Glenn on the birth of Matilda. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our families who have welcomed new additions to their families.



Easter Raffle

Easter is fast approaching and our Parent Committee is hosting an Easter Raffle. There are 20 tickets in each booklet with tickets costing \$1 each. Tickets will be on sale at our Easter Bonnet Parade with the prize being drawn at the close of the Easter Egg Hunt. Proceeds from the raffle will be used to purchase outdoor equipment. If you haven't already done so, please remember to return your books before Thursday.

Upcoming Easter Bonnet Parade and Egg Hunt

Smartie Pants will have their annual Easter Bonnet Parade and Egg Hunt on the Thursday before Easter (5 April) 3pm – 4pm. Everyone is invited! We look forward to seeing you there.

Fee Structure Review

Fee Increase

Following an annual review of our fee structure, Smartie Pants has made the decision to remove all fee discounts other than those to families with more than one child attending (for 2 or more days per week) the centre and families incurring financial hardship.

To minimise the impact of this change, for our existing customers only, this fee increase will take place over 2 stages:

Stage 1 will take effect 23 April 2007 (billing week 17). The daily fees will be as follows: 1 and 2 days per week - \$60, 3 and 4 days per week - \$58, 5 days per week - \$50, Occasional Care Bookings - \$65, Half Day Bookings - \$44 (morning) and \$40 (afternoon).

Stage 2 increase will take effect 1 July 2007 (billing week 26) whereby the daily fee will be \$60 and the weekly fee will remain at \$250.

Late Fee Payment Penalty

We would like to remind you of our late fee payment policy whereby 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.

Invoices

We would like to remind parents to keep their invoices/receipts for taxation.

Incentive for introducing new families to Smartie Pants

Smartie Pants is introducing a new incentive program for existing families who introduce to new families to Smartie Pants. For each permanent booking, Smartie Pants will be offering one day's free childcare to the family who recommended us. Conditions do apply but if you wish to find out more, please speak to either Natalie or Sharon.

Changes to drop off and pick up

We have recently undertaken a review of our Family Grouping and are now changing the way we run the mornings to ensure that we run a happy, relaxed and engaging environment. To do this we will now be implementing a more flexible approach to drop off and pick up time. This means each morning we will assess how family grouping is running and when it becomes unsettled we will split out into our respective rooms. Many factors may affect our decision to split, which include weather and the ability to go outside or the number, ages and type of children in care that morning/afternoon.

To ensure that you always know where to drop off your child, please proceed first to the Mini Minors room where you will be directed by a staff member where to go.

In the afternoon please proceed to your respective rooms where you will be directed either by a team member or on the notice board which room/yard the children are enjoying. Please note that children love variety and a small change such as moving to a new yard or room in the evenings can be reinvigorating especially for children spending a long day in the centre.

Dropping off your child in the morning

We are asking parents to assist during drop off in the morning by providing the carers in the room with your child's hat and, if necessary, a jacket/jumper for outside. Please make sure both these items are labelled (you can write on the tag using a pen). This will mean that carers can remain in the room during this critical time of the day and your child will be able to go outside promptly on arrival. If you have time in the morning, although not necessary, we would greatly appreciate if you could sunscreen your child as this would assist by freeing us to attend to unsettled children.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance of a good drop-off in the mornings and as such, ask that parents be conscious of how they proceed with their drop off.

Handy Hints for a successful drop-off:

- 1) If a carer has not approached you, locate a carer and hand your child over to her;
- 2) We now have a couple of pet mice in the room which children seem to gravitate towards – talk up our pet mice which will make it easier for our carer to help with taking your child off you or, the alternative is for your child to wave goodbye at the window which the carer will take your child to;
- 3) Try not to stay too long as this only distresses children, giving opportunity for children to work themselves up;
- 4) Where possible, try and tell your child that you are leaving only once...when we repeat our goodbyes, children may feel like something may be wrong and perhaps they should be reacting to the goodbye; and
- 5) Once you leave the room, DO NOT come back in as this confuses children and may cause distress...if you must come back in the room, try and do so without your child seeing you.

We hope this information helps you during this drop off period and would be more than happy to discuss any concerns or tailor a drop off to suit you should you wish.

Forms

To assist parents, the following forms can now be found on the parent pinboard section of our website: Medication Administration; Food Receipt; and Addendum to Enrolment. When required, these forms can now be downloaded, completed at home and handed to a carer when dropping your child off in the morning. If there are any other forms you would like placed on the website, please email sharon@smartiepants.com.au.

Dressed for Success

The weather is now changing on a daily basis and we are experiencing some cooler weather in the mornings. We would like to remind you to ensure your child has appropriate clothing for both weather types (ie jumpers and t-shirts)

Lost Property

Our lost property area is filling up again and needs to be cleared! Please check for your child's clothing. Any clothing not collected by Friday 13 April will be transferred to the Smartie Pants 'spare clothing' drawers for general use in emergencies or donated to a charity organisation. You can find lost property opposite our reception desk.

Parent Teacher Nights

Parent Teacher interviews have taken place for our Hug-a-Bubs, Pip Squeaks and Mini Minors Room with Little Geniuses room scheduled for the week commencing 23 April. If you missed the interviews for your room, please speak to your room leader to organise an alternative date and time.

Parent Committee Report

It is my pleasure to provide you with an update from the parents committee.

The Parents Committee has been meeting monthly now since June of last year and has been proactive in tackling various issues and providing assistance to the staff and management of Smarty Pants. Recent initiatives include organization of the Christmas Party, reviewing various policies and procedures including the communication policy. We have formed sub committees for fundraising and safety. Our Fundraising committee members are Emma, Sonia, Sharon and Sarah who have already come up with some wonderful ideas, look out for the Easter raffle! Meetings continue to run on the last Saturday morning of every month. Please contact our parent Liaison Teha Smart for any contributions you would like to make.

Cassandra Eastham, Chairman

Special Events & Activities Held

Hey Dee Ho

Hey Dee Ho continues to be a success. The program takes place fortnightly on a Thursday and everyone is invited to attend. Sessions are \$3 per session. Please let Sharon, Megan or Natalie know if you wish to attend.

Shrove Tuesday

Our children thoroughly enjoyed Shrove Tuesday. The pancakes just kept on flipping as our children kept downing them.

More Up & Coming Special Events

- Centre Photographer
- Kinder Room Reunion
- Wild Action Man (Kinder room only due to age constraints)
- Farmyard animal day

Parent Feedback

We are constantly seeking feedback regarding the operation of our centre so as to provide you with an improved service. If you would like to organise a meeting with Sharon/Natalie to discuss any concerns you may have, please let us know or drop us an email at enquiries@smartiepants.com.au. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with you to improve the services we provide.

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.

2007 Working Bees

Unfortunately the February Working Bee had to be cancelled due to extreme heat but we would like to thank all the parents who volunteered for it. We are looking forward to our next working bee as we are hoping to be putting together some outside play equipment (ie cubby) we purchased with the proceeds from the raffle.

Date	Proposed Agenda
12 May 2007	Installation of outdoor equipment Garden Maintenance Mini Golf Painting and Maintenance Painting of ramp railings
1 September 2007	Installation of a new Bike tracks Mini Golf 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, Beanies and Drink Bottles

Please remember to bring these items in for your child to ensure they are prepared for all weather conditions.

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.

Changes to Smartie Pants Team

Farewell

We would like to wish Carol and Jackie good luck as they leave our Smartie Pants family to go on to other pursuits. We would also like to farewell Linda from our Little Geniuses room. Linda is moving on to pursue other career options and we wish her well for her new adventures.

Welcome

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to Amy (room assistant and relief team) Sarah (room assistant and relief team), Melissa S (Qualified) and Melissa (Qualified Kindergarten Teacher).

Room Changes

Hug-a-Bubs – Emma is now the Acting Room Leader and Kira will join Emma in the room as an assistant.

Mini Minors – Natalie will be the new Room Leader with Elissa and Jennifer joining Belinda as room assistants

Pip Squeaks – Erin will join Eleanor and Jenna in the room as an assistant

Little Geniuses – Megan will be the new 4 year old kinder programmer with Sandra continuing as the 3 year old kinder teacher and Amy is now the room assistant. Melissa will also be joining the room as a Qualified Kindergarten Teacher and Melissa S will be substitute for Sandra on Thursday (Sandra's day off).

Relief Team - our relief team now includes Natalie, Sharon Megan, Sarah, Janine and Jo.

Accreditation Update

Thank you to all our parents who completed and returned the validation surveys in February. In late January we were visited by a validator and we now eagerly await our response from the National Child Care Accreditation Council.

Policy Revisions

Amended Policies:

- Fee Structure Policy

Policies under review:

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

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 Amy (Qualified Assistant and Qualified in Training)

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

3 Year Old Program

Welcome to my first report. Firstly, Linda and I have been working very closely to implement the highest quality program for all the children in Little Geniuses. To promote self-esteem, we have introduced a "Special Helper" board. One child from the 3 year old group and one child from the 4 year old group will assist the carers to prepare lunch and every child will have an opportunity to assist.

Programming

I will be responsible for the 3 year olds with the exception of those children who attend solely on Thursdays, who Melissa S will observe, as I am absent on Thursdays.

Kind Regards...Sandra

4 Year Old Program

Firstly, there are just a few things we thought need mentioning: We ask that each child is provided with a hat, which is now stored in name pockets near the lockers. We encourage comfort toys only from home, as other toys can and may distract from our educational program. Please keep your child's toys at home. Thank you for all your assistance, we look forward to a very productive, enjoyable and exciting year with your children.

We aim to continually improve the Kindergarten program and one of the recent changes is dividing the program into 3 year olds and 4 years olds, with separate programs.

Some of the wonderful things we have already been learning about include name recognition, Australia and Australian animals. We have been working on building friendships as we have a lot of new children coming into the Kindergarten room and several Mini Minors moving up. If anyone has any enquiries feel free to ask myself, Sandra or Amy.

As I will be finishing my time at Smartie Pants next week, I will be handing the 4 year old program over to Megan. If you have any concerns or questions, feel free to speak to Megan.

Thank you...Linda

Hug-a-bub Room (Babies)

Team Members: Emma (Acting Room Leader, Qualified Assistant and Qualified in Training) & Kira (Qualified Assistant in training)

I have just taken over the Room Leadership role and I look forward to our continued working together. As you may know, our programs are tailored to suit your child's individual needs and the feedback you provide on their development at home is invaluable. Your continued efforts and any ideas you may have for future programs are most appreciated. On behalf of the children in the room, we would like to welcome back Kira! Our family continues to grow with our new arrivals, Hugo, Charlotte, Charlize, Leith and Teagan. Welcome!

Check out the cool art done by the babies recently. New sensory experiences are always fun.

We wish Anastasia and Oakley all the best as they move up to Pipsqueaks. We will miss them heaps.

Pip Squeaks Room (Early Toddlers)

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

The Pip Squeaks room would like to wish all of you a very happy and safe Easter. At the moment we are preparing for our Easter hours which should be lots of fun. If you haven't already done so, we would appreciate if you could return the completed forms to help us better prepare for the day. As winter is fast approaching and days are becoming colder, would you please ensure that your child has adequate clothing to keep them warm in the cool weather and cool on the days where the sun is shining brightly. All of the Pip Squeaks children seem to enjoy being outdoors and if they have the right clothing, we can spend more time outside.

Mini Minors Room (Pre Kinder Group)

Team Members: Natalie (Qualified & Mini Minors Room Leader), Belinda (Qualified Assistant and Qualified in training) & Jennifer (Qualified Assistant)

Hello again from the Mini Minors room! A very big welcome to Natalie (Room Leader), Jennifer and Elissa who have joined our Mini Minor team!

We are really aiming to implement some very special changes to our room, these include:

- more shelves to allow children access to more choice in what they want to play with;
- more artwork on display; and
- producing themed areas including a rainforest area behind the fence, a nature table and a multicultural area.

Please note that for any Parent teacher interviews that were postponed you can now reschedule any night between 9 April 2007 – 13 April 2007, so if you would like to have a meeting please let us know so that we can organise a date to do this.

The children have had a lot of fun in the room doing things like stain glass windows, playing with play dough and butterfly paintings. They also enjoy a sleeping bunnies song that we sing at group time where they get to jump around and get crazy!

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.

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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).

12 May 2007

1 September 2007

24 November 2007

Parent Feedback

Would you like for us to contact you to organise an appointment to discuss any issues you may have.

Yes No

Your Name: _____

Contact Number: _____