

NEWSLETTER – Issue 6

A big hello and warm welcome to everyone. We would like to extend an extra warm welcome to our new families who have joined our centre AND the new additions to our families. So much has happened in the last few months and it gives us great pleasure to provide you with an update.

“Inspiring Greatness” Program

The team of Smartie Pants, believe that each child is unique and, with the optimal environment, has the capacity to achieve greatness. We know that the early years of a child’s life is the most critical for development. Our goal is to help your child reach their full potential by providing them with the correct tools. With this goal being our key focus, we set out to develop, and, we are now excited to introduce our “Inspiring Greatness” 5 Star Program. Our Inspiring Greatness program is based on 5 key areas and we look forward to working with you to develop these areas with your child.

Check out our new fact sheets for families online at www.smartiepants.com.au

Fundraising

Thank you to everyone for making our Easter raffle and chocolate fundraising a success. We raised a total of \$2400. We have put this money towards the purchase and building of 2 cubbies and a bike track in the mini golf area. You may have already noticed the cubbies in the Mini Minors outside play areas and the Mini Golf. The balance of the monies will be put towards our next fundraising effort. Stay tuned to our website and front door for pictures.

Parent Direct and Chalk toy catalogues

We have just received copies of the new catalogues and given the overwhelming demand from last year, we have requested extra copies. These catalogues have some great toys and activities for children’s Birthday and Christmas presents and, as with last year, 20% of all purchases is credited to Smartie Pants for the purchase of equipment

Donations Christmas Raffle

Our Christmas Raffle will be commencing soon. We would be incredibly grateful for any vouchers or items you are able to donate.

Recent Visits to our Centre

Animal Farm

The whole centre participated in a visit from farm animals, and got a very hands on experience in the Mini Minors playground. The animals walked around the playground freely and the children were able to pat and feed them. The younger children loved holding the rabbits whilst the older children enjoyed feeding the horse and goats. ALL the children liked chasing the chooks!

Wild Action Man

The Wild Action Reptile Show did two presentations – one for the Little Geniuses, and another for Mini Minors, Pip Squeaks and Hug-A-Bubs. The children got to meet lots of interesting animals including a turtle, a lizard, a kookaburra, a python and even a baby crocodile.

The children were also taught many interesting facts about the animals especially that even though the animals may look scary, as long as we don't scare them, they won't hurt us.

Sea Creatures

Our Little Geniuses Room enjoyed a visit from The Rock Pool Discovery Show. They got to learn about, and touch all kinds of creatures, such as starfish, sea cucumbers, crabs, seahorses and even a port Jackson shark! They learnt lots of interesting facts about the sea animals, such as where they live and what they ate.

Community Services Visits

Thank you to all our parents who so generously donated their time to teach our children about the various community services they provided. The children not only enjoyed listening but learnt so much about hairdressing, shop assistance, the navy and army, being a stay at home parent, theatre and dental nursing carpentry and cooking. Your efforts were most appreciated!

Special Recent Events

Our Special Persons Day was a great success! We had a fantastic turnout, and a delicious afternoon tea was served in all rooms. There were lots of activities provided in each room for our special guests to join in with the children. The Hug-a-Bubs, Pip Squeaks and Little Geniuses made fairy bread for their guests, and Mini Minors completed a large group collage, which is displayed in the hallway

SunSmart Policy

It's warming up! We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the SunSmart Policy. SPF30+ broadbased water resistant sunscreen needs to be applied 20 minutes before going outside; broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire's hats should be worn to protect your child's face, neck and ears; clothing should be loose and cover as much skin as possible (singlet tops do not offer enough protection and should be avoided for outside wear); sunglasses are also encouraged when outside. With the weather warming up earlier, the UV Index levels are also reaching levels which require SunSmart protection (Levels 3 or above) much earlier in the morning. To maximise your child's outdoor time, we would like to encourage parents to sunscreen their children whilst dressing them in the morning. This will ensure that they are able to go outside and play upon arrival at the Centre. If parents are unable to sunscreen in the mornings, we understand and are more than happy for your child to stay inside whilst the sunscreen takes effect. PLEASE REMEMBER TO LABEL ALL ITEMS BROUGHT TO THE CENTRE!

Smartie Pants Calendar

Check out our website for our new Calendar of Events under the parent pinboard.

Working Bees

We would like to say a very special thank you for helping us at our Working Bee on Saturday 13 October 2007. Due to the very much appreciated efforts of you and the other volunteers on the day we were able to: Weed, clip and prune the entire centre (no mean feat!); install our new pirate ship and move tan bark in the Mini Minors yard; install 3 new sheds; install and undercoat our new castle in the Little Geniuses yard; and spread tan bark and build our fairy garden in the Pip Squeaks yard.

Thank you again so much for helping us make Smartie Pants a very special place to be. *Our next*

Working Bee is scheduled for 1 March 2008. Please pencil into your diaries.

PS: Don't forget to let us know if you have any special carpentry skills or talents!

2007 Christmas Party

This Christmas Party has been scheduled for Sunday 9 December, 10am – 1pm. The party will be held at Bundoora Park in the Party Barn. We will be putting on a sausage sizzle for brunch so make sure you come hungry! We will need to provide the venue with a list of attendees so confirmation of attendance is essential. Admission prices for adults are \$7.50 and children (2-15) are \$5.00. Tickets purchased in groups of 15 receive a discounted rate of \$5.00 per adult. Smartie Pants will be happy to facilitate group purchases. We hope you can attend!

Christmas Holiday Notice

Could any parents wishing to take holidays and/or pay half fees over the Christmas period for their leave, please notify us as soon as possible so we can organise approval for annual leave for some of our team members.

Kindergarten Information Evening was a great success!

Smartie Pants hosted an information evening on Tuesday 16 October, 7.00pm-8.30, and all parents were invited to attend. The Kindergarten teachers set up activities and displays, as well as provided a fantastic presentation and introduction to early learning. Finally we were also very lucky to meet two very passionate primary school teachers from Glen Catherine who also gave a presentation about the importance of early learning and the value of play in their curriculum.

If you missed out and are interested in attending our next session, drop us an email at enquiries@smartiepants.com.au, check out our website for an overview of the night or stay tuned to the noticeboard for information on our next information night which we expect to hold sometime in the coming months.

Fees

Fee Review

Following a process review our services, Smartie Pants will be restructuring its fee review to take place bi-annually. These fee reviews will take place in January and July of each year at are to meet the rising cost of employee pay rate increases which occur at this time.

Fee Increase

To accommodate the July pay rate increase, we have increased our daily fee to \$64 and weekly fee to \$260. This increase will take place week commencing Monday 1 October 2007 (billing week 40). If you are experiencing financial hardship, please speak to a director as there may be a number of ways in which we are able to assist you.

Late Fee Payment Penalty

As our recent late fee payment penalty has not deterred families from paying fees late and due to a real financial need to have fees paid at the time of invoices being issued, we will be introducing a new fee policy as follows:

1 Week Overdue:	\$5.00
2 Weeks Overdue:	\$15.00
3 Weeks Overdue:	\$25.00
4 Weeks Overdue:	\$35.00
5 Weeks Overdue:	\$40.00
6 Weeks Overdue:	Additional fines and a warning notice will be issued followed by suspension of services if not rectified within the week if notification.

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.

Day Swaps

With the exception of illness supported by a medical certificate day swaps will attract a \$10 administration fee and are subject to availability.

Taxation

We would like to remind parents to keep their invoices/receipts for taxation. Smartie Pants will be charging \$10 a fee for reissuing of invoices/statements.

Centre Close

We would like to remind parents that the Centre closes at 7pm sharp and parents who are late collecting their child will incur a fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes or part thereof that their child is at the centre. Please note that this fee also extends to families who have not left the building by 7.05pm.

Christmas Holiday Notice

If you know you will be absent over the Christmas period, we encourage you to book your holidays now. This helps us organise your HALF FEE rate and approval Christmas leave for our team.

Art Smocks

We are asking families to supply an old shirt of Dad's for their child to use as an art smock. These smocks should be labelled and left in your child's bag for ready access

Dress Ups

We are always looking for dress ups for our children. If you have any old adult clothes, hats, scarves, beads, etc that you do not use anymore, it would most appreciated if you could donate them for our children's pleasure.

Lost Property

Our lost property is out of control! Lost property will be placed in your child's room with a disposal date. All clothing not collected will be transferred to the Smartie Pants 'spare clothing' drawers for use in emergencies or donated to a charity organisation.

Lost Property Register: To try and curb this ongoing problem, we will be introducing a lost property register. If your child's clothing has been lost, please complete the register. This will assist us locate the owners of clothing before putting it into the lost property bins.

Photographs

The photographer has been and we have some very beautiful photos of your children. Your child's photos can be viewed by appointment with either Sharon or Nat). Prices of individual photos and packages are located on the front door. These would make beautiful Christmas Pressies!

Would you like to receive email reminders and newsletters like this one!

Please register your room and email address on our parent pinboard at www.smartiepants.com.au. Your room leaders and or management will send you reminders and updates. Please note that your privacy is important to us and we will not share your email address.

Parent Committee Report

The Parents Committee continue to meet now on a bi-monthly basis. We would like to encourage and welcome other parents to become involved and join the Parents Committee. We meet on the last Saturday of every Second month. I feel we have made some great contributions to the continuous improvement of Smartie Pants. Committee members have had direct involvement in review of most policies and procedures and have also made some great suggestions in enhancing processes within the centre. The Parents committee is a great way to have a direct contribution to the centre and either Sharon and Natalie are always present to listen to our feedback. At our last meeting the committee was asked to evaluate the programs and medication policy for the centre. We also made some great progress in establishing the Christmas subcommittee and later agreeing and securing a fabulous spot for our Christmas party which I'm sure you will all enjoy!!! Our next meeting will be held on Saturday 24 November @ 9.30am.

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.

Reminders

Sipper Cups, 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.

Incentive for introducing new families to Smartie Pants

We would like to remind families of our new incentive program for existing families who introduce 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.

Policy Revisions

Policies under review:

- 1 Emergency Planning (We are currently reviewing our emergency evacuation systems)
- 2 Sunsmart (Fine tuning some new revisions made and registering Smartie Pants as a Sunsmart Centre)
- 3 Safe Sleeping (SIDS released new information about safe sleeping temperatures this month and we are currently reviewing and updating our policy to incorporate this information)
- 4 Medication Policy (some fine tuning underway to manage ongoing medication administration)
- 5 Immunisation (We are updating our staff immunisation policy).
- 6 Cleaning (We are changing our mopping practices to alternate between our chemical free enj mops and our normal mops to ensure thorough cleaning of our rooms.

The policies under review have been 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.

Team Changes

We would like to welcome Maree, Benadette, Lauren, Catherine to Smartie Pants and welcome back Bree, Tabitha and Belinda.

Room Reports

Little Geniuses Room (Kinder)

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

Normal Hours of Operation: (9.00am-4.00pm)

Well, by now I think I have had the opportunity to meet most of you and can even say I finally know all your children's faces and names. It has been a busy few months in the Kinder Room as we have all got to know each other. Here is a quick run down of the recent programs – the Australian Animal Zoo visit was a fairly amazing session as children got to see, touch and smell a variety of animals. We have made a Zoo story book using photos of the children interacting with the animals. If you would like to see it

please ask. Next we moved on to extend children's interest and knowledge in dinosaurs –we hope you have all had a chance to see Elissa's wonderful display in the passage way. The next program was winter and then community involvement. Over the last month children have been learning about spring and insects.

They have helped to sow seeds, re-pot seedlings and plants and have seen how plants grow; and made some wonderful spring posters that are now displayed in the hallway. Children have learnt about spring weather and the animals that are born in spring. We have discussed a little about conservation and how they can care for their environment.

They have found and studied caterpillars, spiders and other insects; recreating some of these in their artwork.

Throughout these experiences children have been developing working theories and respect for their natural environment, as they gain knowledge about how to care for it.

Hug-a-bub Room (Babies)

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

The year has gone so fast and the Hug a Bubs are growing up even faster. There is a lot of activity around the room as our crawlers now walk and the walkers are now climbing up everything. Our young babies are getting stronger, sitting and even starting to move around the floor. Over the past 6 months so much has happened. We welcomed Janine and Tahlee to our growing room along with all the new children. Every one has settled in fantastically to be a part of the Hug-a-Bubs team. Most children are now self feeding and are doing a wonderful job of holding their spoons and getting their food in their mouths. We are sure to be the room with the biggest eaters. There is so much exciting art being created by our little artists. Be sure to check out their masterpieces in our room and in the hall. We are currently exploring paint with natural items such as sand. The children are also enjoying our musical play with lots of dancing, noise making and laughs as the carers put on a show for the children. We congratulate Emma for completing the Diploma and Kira for completing the Certificate III in children's services. The room is building lots of friendships and enjoying more interactive play as the children get older.

As sad as it is we have to say goodbye and good luck to Hugo, Teagan, Kate and Jak as they move up to Pip Squeaks and make new friends.

Pip Squeaks Room (Early Toddlers)

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

It has been an exciting couple of months in the Pip Squeaks Room. Megan and Bree took over the Room Leadership role in May, and have enjoyed this role immensely.

We had Special Person's Day in August, which was a great success. You can see our photos from this day displayed in the hallway.

We have welcomed Luca to our room, as well Teagan, Kate and Hugo, who have moved up from the Hug-A-Bubs room. These children are all settling in very nicely.

Finally, we would like to congratulate Kate, Alex and Madeline, on the birth of baby Darcy. We are sure he will bring you plenty of joy.

That's all from us for now. Until next time,
Megan, Bree and Jenna
The Pip Squeaks Team.

Mini Minors Room

Team Members: Sharon (Qualified & Mini Minors Room Leader), Jennifer (Qualified Assistant), Erin (Qualified Assistant and Qualified in training), Sarah (Qualified Assistant in training), Maree (Qualified Assistant)

Hello again from the Mini Minors room! Our room has gone through some recent changes both in appearance and with our team. With Belinda having been on extended leave and Jenna going to the Pip Squeaks room, our core team will now be Sarah, Jennifer, Erin and Maree.

Over the last couples of months our children have been busy doing some great activities. We have displayed some beautiful artwork around the room and in the corridor for your viewing pleasure. We have been cooking anzac biscuits and chocolate crackles which we have enjoyed eating for afternoon tea. We have been reading some great books and singing some fabulous songs.

We would love it if you took the time to look at our program so you can talk to your child about their day and Smartie Pants.