

Top Ryde Early Learning Newsletter

May 2010



Directors note

The year is whizzing by with fun and success everywhere I turn! The centre is full on just about every day now and we are celebrating our first birthday on the 19th of May. The children are growing delicious organic winter vegetables garden and they have created some truly amazing artworks for the art and craft exhibition. The interests and programs in the class room have been enriching and exciting for everyone and as we move into the cooler months we'd like to remind you all to pack extra jumpers and socks to keep your kids warm each day.

Diary dates

14th of May – Loud shirt day, sports day and our Art and Craft exhibition

17th of May – Food allergies awareness week starts

21st of May – Fifth monthly sports day – wear your sports clothes!

24th to 28th May – **Childcare week** – we will have lots of cool things happening for the children this week including international sports and a mini Olympics at the end of the week plus visit from a local Aboriginal community member.

7th June – sixth monthly sports day – eat a nutritious breakfast

8th of June – World Ocean day and the first of three triple P seminars for Families

14th of June – Centre closed for the queens birthday public holiday.

17th of June – Police visit – they will be talking about stranger danger and how to be safe

22nd of June – second of three Triple P seminars

23rd of June – Pyjama day – everyone come dressed in your pyjamas 😊 Teachers too!

25th of June – Red nose day, supporting SIDS – we've got Red Nose products for sale here.

Staff member Spotlight on: Meera



Name: Meera Koparkar

Started at Top Ryde Early Learning: April 2010

Working in: Room leader in Lilli Pilli Room

Family: I live locally with a flatmate and all my family live in India except my big brother who lives in the US

What Meera does on the weekend: I love shopping and hanging out with friends.

Something you didn't know about Meera: I was a professional Bollywood and Jazz stage dancer in India and worked on stage for almost five years

Why are you working in Early Childhood? I am very passionate about the early childhood industry and the opportunity we have as teachers to provide education in a way that encourages children to be interested in learning.

Thank you!

This section is for the families who have contributed to our program, made donations or bought something in for the children to use. Thank you!!!

- ❖ Tyler Sentana for the new childrens books for each of the class rooms
- ❖ James and Tommy Garland for the board maker program
- ❖ Ethan Kong for the long rolls of paper and sticky tape
- ❖ Darryn Attoh for the boxes of drawing paper
- ❖ Hollie Skinner for the fabric paints
- ❖ Noah Parsons for childrens board books
- ❖ Vincent Zhu and his mum Audrey for translating our documents

National families week

Across the country groups will be gathering to celebrate and promote happy, healthy childhoods. Families Australia is encouraged by the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of community organisations and government departments to host a range of events that aim to maximise interest in happy, healthy outcomes for children, young people and their families. This year's theme is – 'the best start' supporting happy healthy childhoods. We've got some special things planned at the centre, and you can see more here: <http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/familiesweek/index.htm>

Car park

Please, please, use all of the available parking at the centre. There are many families who are driving into the carpark and not moving right to the end of the parking arch. This means that there's one less parking spot for everyone to use, which at peak times (around 9.30am) can cause a lot of dramas. The photo on the right shows a car that is not all the way to the end of the arch, there is an unused parking space in front of this car.



We've also got some spots against the building (rather than in the arch) that are available for you to park in if you're going to take some time – eg if you're going to chat with staff, or have medication to drop off etc. Please use these spots when you can.

Also remember that you cannot reverse back out of the entrance driveway – it's incredibly dangerous. You must drive in a forward direction out of the carpark and reenter the road in a forward direction. Thanks!

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program.

June 8th, 15th and 22nd here at Top Ryde Early Learning

Over three nights in June we'll be running the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program right here at the centre. This is a fantastic course for all parents – those who might be struggling as their children grow into their independence, as well as those who are already great parents and want to continue to be the best they can. You can find out more information at www.triplep.net Nicole was recently accredited as a Triple P trainer, so our families have a unique opportunity to participate in the program at the centre. The course normally costs \$50, and for our families we are able to refund the cost at the end of the course – yep, free for our families!!! Numbers are limited, so book your spot today.

Winter Flu

Winter is upon us again, and with it in 2010, an increased risk of Swine Flu. Swine flu is particularly dangerous because it has the potential to make healthy people very unwell. It is also incredibly dangerous for young children, who can get very sick very quickly. There are free flu vaccines (the 'flu shot') available at your local doctor. This year, the flu shot includes a swine flu vaccine. We **strongly recommend**, that you get yourselves and your children vaccinated against the flu this winter.

Please also remember our Illness/Exclusion policy - the basics of which are:

- sick children cannot attend the centre.
- They cannot attend if they have been given nurofen/panadol (they are sick and need bed rest, one-on-one care and attention, and most importantly - they are still spreading germs around the centre to other children when they are unwell)
- Nor if they have any symptoms of illness (fever, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, lethargy etc).

We have a duty of care to all of our children to exclude those who are unwell to prevent the further spread of illness. We ask that you respect this policy, and the other parents at the centre (who don't want to take a day off any more than you do...) and keep your sick children at home. Please don't put our staff in the terrible position of having to refuse you at the door, or calling you 20mins after you've dropped off an unwell child.

We will be discussing coughs, colds, germs and hygiene as a part of our program over the coming weeks with the children.

Again we remind you about **hand washing** - it is the simple, most effective way to prevent the spread of illness. We ask that you wash your children's hands in the bathroom when you arrive in the morning (to prevent bringing germs into the centre) and also when you leave in the afternoon (to prevent taking germs home to your family.) Make it a part of your pick-up routine - *grab bags, wash hands, off we go.*

Additionally, we have pump packs of hand sanitiser throughout the centre that you are welcome to use at any time.

We also ask that you teach your children to cough into their elbow, rather than their hand. Often young children cough into their hands, and then put those germ-covered hands onto other surfaces, or other children. Coughing into their elbow reduces this risk.

Our centre regularly cleans all surfaces, including door handles, toilets, nappy change areas etc. We also sanitise all food preparation and serving services, and the entire centre on a regular basis. However, germs are still brought to the centre by children, and we cannot prevent all germs in an environment such as this. Your help is greatly appreciated in reducing the impact that colds and flu have on our children and families this year.

News from the Kitchen

Our autumn menu is coming to an end and we are just about to roll into the Warming Winter menu. Kathy and Frances have some lovely dishes planned from hearty roasts and scrumptious soups to crunchy Taccos and delicious noodle dishes— Yum!

As always we love your input and suggestions – Thank you for the families who contributed to our last menu and emailed me some great food ideas. If you have a favourite meal at home? Have tried something new, or seen a great recipe? Would like to come in one day and do some cooking with the children (we will help you)? Please let Nicole or one of your child's teachers know. We would love to have you.



What's going on at the centre?

Waratahs

We've had some fantastic interests this month. Face painting and hairdressing have been wildly interesting for all of us, we used the opportunity to discuss different cultures – including tribal cultures who paint their faces. We worked on our social skills of taking turns when painting and doing hair, as well as communicating with each other about how we felt during the activity – were we comfortable, when did we feel it was enough. This has now grown into a new interest – that of the theatre! You can see the amazing theatre curtains we've set up in the room ready for us to begin some small performances over the coming weeks. Across the room we've also been focusing on Numeracy skills – one of the ways we've enjoyed developing our number recognition skills is through the number bingo that we've made ourselves and then played in the room. You can see all of the number games we've got going around the room as well as various number displays.

In the last couple of months we've also been out of the centre and into the broader community on excursions. We went to see Alice in Wonderland at Rhodes - catching the bus with our teachers, and having a brilliant time watching the movie. This inspired our Alice paintings for the art show! We've been on short excursions to the oval next door to play some of the sports that we don't get to play here because they need more room – this included flying kites, cricket, soccer, basket ball, long distance running races and football. As a part of our face painting and hair dressing interest we also went on excursions to Top Ryde city to work on our numeracy skills by buying face paints at the shop.

Acacias

It has been very busy over the last few weeks with many interests starting to develop in the Acacias room. Our colour interest has really taken off with many activities such as the 'light box' where children were able to make their own colours by cutting cellophane and then putting the pieces on top of each other – we were thrilled to see that Red on top of Blue made Purple! This led to a science activity called 'bubble lab' where the children were able to mix coloured paints in a test tube and watch the new colours come together before their eyes. We've got lots of great documentation around the walls of the room, when you get a chance, have a read of all of the information about the projects – your children LOVE pointing themselves out in the pictures on the walls. Also our dinosaur interest has led to a discussion about bones and how bones grow. We have taken this further with healthy eating and how we look after our bones and bodies.

Lilli Pillies

One day as we all were sitting under the tree and singing songs, we happened to see a 'little birdie' perched upon the tree. And thus began an intriguing discussion about the birds. The children were curious about where does the bird live and what it does each day. Following up on this interest, Meera displayed a 'nest' in the room with some twigs and pretend birds. All the children got a chance to feel the soft bird, and they loved stroking his back.

This discussion gradually led to talking about different types of textures. To develop their understanding of textures, we made a small 'texture table' in the room. This table displayed different textures that we come across in our daily lives – the children are enthralled by the different sensations. We talked about how they 'feel'; is it soft or rough? hard or smooth? In addition the children are also exploring textures through a variety of art material like drawing on the sand paper, painting with sponge brushes, cotton buds and shaving brushes. And of course, we LOVE painting with our fingers!

Similarly, the children's interest in animals continue. We are now talking about the different sizes, shapes and colours of animals – and we've started developing the children's early science skills by including a range of sorting and categorizing activities.



Mother's day Morning Tea

Thank you to all of the mums who came along to our morning tea last week. It was a fantastic success, with so many of you coming, and your kids had a brilliant time showing off what they do here at the centre. The Waratahs played numbers bingo with their mums, working on number recognition and turn taking skills. Acacias did wonderful mother's day collages with their mums, and the Lilli Pillies loved showing off the sandpit! All of kids gave their mums some specially made morning tea biscuits and cake. We also had a great time playing games in the garden, with energetic lotto games and musical instruments!

Children from all three rooms did face painting with their mums including painting mummy's face 😊

Don't forget that all of the children are super-excited at any time when their family come in for the day – so drop by at any time that you've got a moment to read a story or join in some artwork!

The label company that we recently gave you a brochure from has created some great charts that may be helpful in the mornings for getting ready to come to Top Ryde Early Learning. The charts are free and are a good way to encourage self help and independence skills. Visit <http://www.iamberry.com.au/checklist.aspx> to see the charts.

Plastic bags

When children at the centre wet their clothes (eg through water play or accidents) we put their wet clothes into a plastic bag, and then put this, tied to their school bag into the bathroom. To this end, we go through a large amount of plastic bags 😊. Rather than buying new ones, we'd like to contribute to waste reduction by offering for you to bring in your plastic bags and recycle them this way. We know you are all using your canvas shopping bags to reduce waste yourself (! 😊 !) but sometimes you might 'accidentally' pick up a plastic shopping bag. If that's the case, bring them into the centre, and pop them into the Lilli Pillies change room!

Changes of clothes

With winter upon us, your children will need an extra pair of spare clothes packed each day. This means that most children will need 2 changes of clothes, and toilet trainers around 5. This is due to the fact that if children wet themselves with water (eg when enthusiastically washing their hands in the bathroom, or a particularly messy lunch experience) we will not leave them in the wet clothes in cold weather. We will change them into spare clothes. Unfortunately we have depleted our supply of spare clothes at the centre – as people are taking spare clothes home (clearly marked "Top Ryde Early Learning Spare") and not returning them 😊. So, if you have any clothes at home that your child has grown out of, please consider donating them to the centre 'spare' supply - we particularly need long pants! Also if there are no spare clothes in your child's bag, and no spare clothes available at the centre, we will have to purchase some clothes on your behalf. We picked up some cheap track-pants from BigW this week for \$6 each. If we need to use them, your account will be charged \$6. We'd rather avoid this, so pack plenty of clothes each day!

Art and Craft Exhibition

To kick off Child Care Week, we held an Art and Craft Exhibition last Friday night. This was another fantastic success with so many parents dropping in to take a look at the amazing artworks on display – we had close to 200 of you come by on Friday night! Your children were all so excited to have the opportunity to show their creations professionally displayed.



Art is a wonderful way for children to communicate – as it is cross cultural and multilingual. It was amazing to see the sense of accomplishment on even the youngest face as we moved their creations onto the walls and displayed them with care. We had so many grandparents, friends and family drop by and join in the jumping castle and face painting fun!

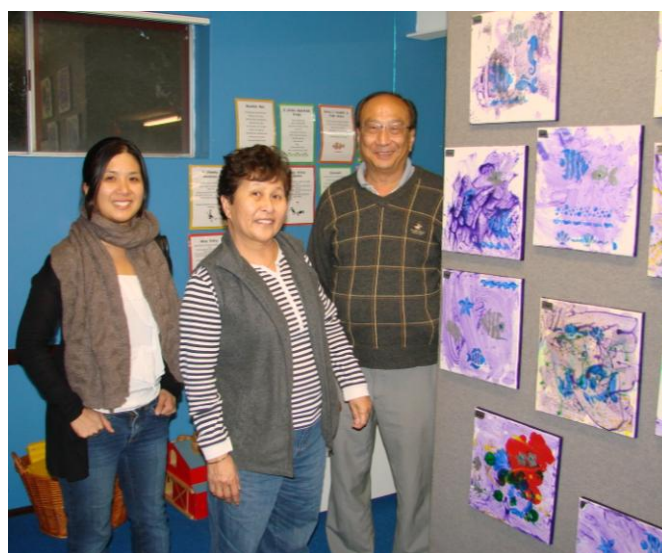


It was also wonderful to spend some relaxed time chatting with our families on Friday night, and we got great feedback from so many of you about the night, and the opportunity to talk to staff.

You can take the artworks home for \$10 – some have already paid, and everyone else will have the \$10 charged to their account, unless they get in contact with us before the end of the week.

We've also got the group artworks in the hallway at the moment, with the silent auction details pinned up – you've got until Friday to make your final bid to take home one of the amazing large masterpieces.

Our raffle raised money to purchase new resources for the children, and the winner was Nicole Hanna! Congratulations!

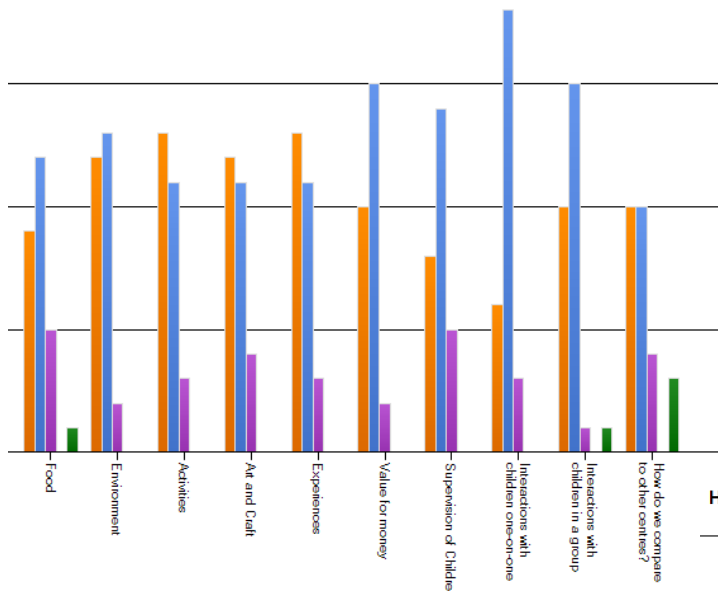


Results of parent survey

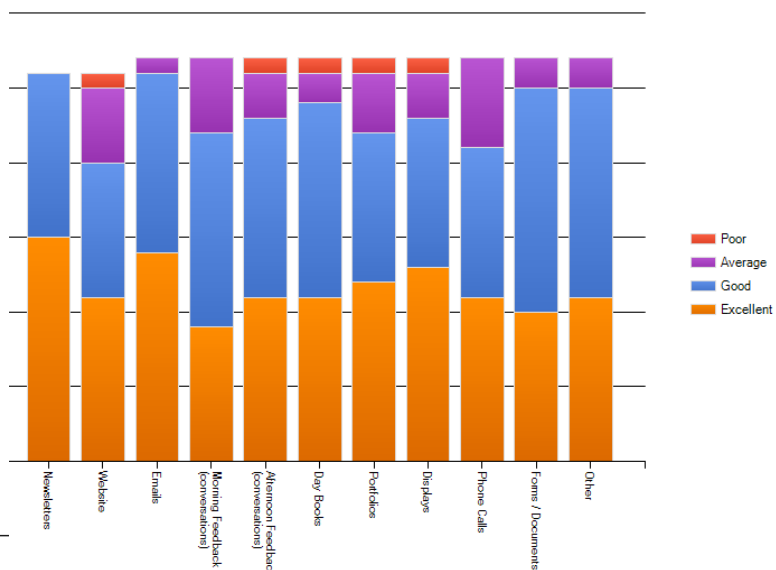
Thank you to all of those parents who provided feedback in our parent survey.

It's great to report that your feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Thanks also to those who provided some positive constructive criticism – we have developed some action plans to address your concerns.

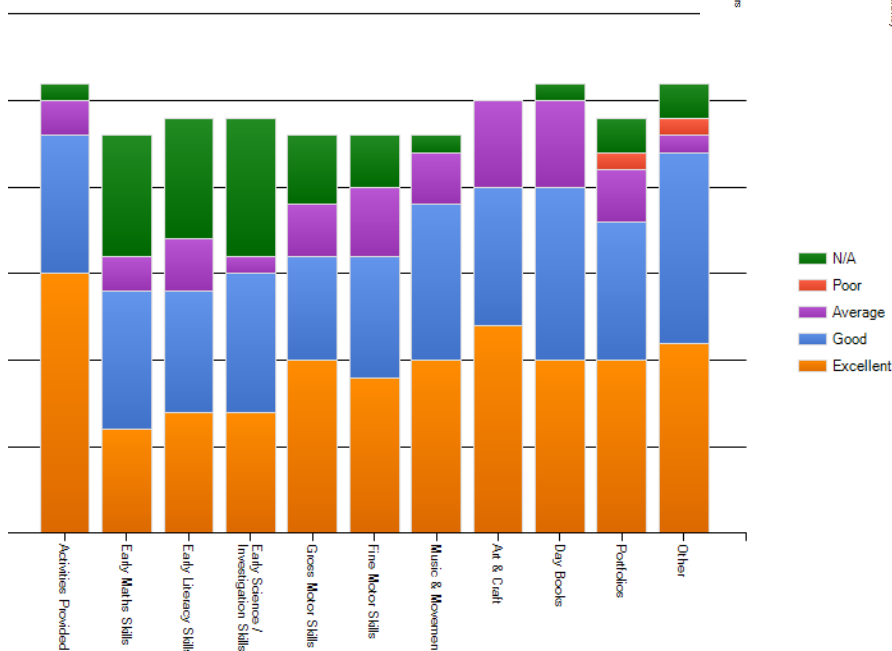
We've passed on your compliments to all of our staff, in particular Dalia, Amy and Kirsty. Summaries of the results are graphed below, and we can provide more details if you'd like to see them.



How would you rate the quality of communication with the centre?



How would you rate the various aspects of the programmed activities



Immunisation

Another way to keep your child safe from disease and illness is to immunize them. Please remember to bring your child's blue book in for us to copy each time they get their shots so that we can update our records. Your child may be excluded in the case of an outbreak if our records are not up to date. If you want further information on the Australian Immunisation Schedule, this website may be able to answer your questions, otherwise, speak with your doctor
<http://immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/nips2>

SIBLINGS

Becoming a sibling can make a child feel threatened and jealous. While many kids are lucky enough to become the best of friends with their siblings, it's common for brothers and sisters to fight. Spending positive time with your sibling is something we aim for at Norwest. At Norwest siblings have a chance to play with each other during morning and afternoon shared play and often during the day if the children need each other, requesting to play with one another.

For information on working through sibling rivalry take a look at these links

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Sibling_rivalry

http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/sibling_rivalry.html

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/sibling_rivalry_-_cyh.html?highlight=sibling



CHILD SAFETY

Kidsafe NSW has a number of resources related to home and community safety. Kidsafe is a fantastic service available to families help inform you about how you can protect your children in the home, playground and around roads. They also govern us about how some things are designed, for example how far our equipment needs to be from the edge of soft fall and more! Through the Kidsafe NSW website you can look through completing a Home Safety Checklist where you assess your own home safety. The checklist can be found at:
[http://www.kidsafensw.org/docs/factsheets/Home%20Safety/Home%20Safety%20Checklist%20May%202009%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.kidsafensw.org/docs/factsheets/Home%20Safety/Home%20Safety%20Checklist%20May%202009%20(2).pdf)

And the general safety resources for the home can be found on the following Kidsafe NSW link:

http://www.kidsafensw.org/homesafety/fact%20sheets_safety_resources.htm

Staff Training

As always, our team have been busy with their ongoing professional development.

- **Amy, Dalia, Kylie and Kirsty** went to Pedagogy and Documentation training at Macquarie University
- **Nicole** did a fantastic Time Management Course in May
- **Kirsty and Sandy** renewed their First Aid training
- **All staff** did a workshop at the centre on the new Early Years Learning Framework, rolling out across all early childhood settings this year
- **Nesha** is about to complete (4 wks to go!!) her Post Grad Cert in Special Education Inclusive Support.
- **Dalia** has completed her Certificate III in Children's Services (yay!)
- **Natalie** is about to sign up to start her Certificate III in Children's Services

Policy Changes – There were no policy changes this month ☺

Staff Movements

As we're now 100% full, we're finally getting our full compliment of staff settled in.

Welcome to **Natalie Estasy** who has started a traineeship in Children's Services at the centre. She is working full time in the Lilli Pillies room.

Junko Sakato, who has a Diploma in Teaching and a Bachelor's degree in Asian Studies has joined us on a part time / casual basis.

Matthew Hochstetter, who has several years of experience in early childhood, and a gorgeous 10 month old son, is studying PDHPE full time and working with us part time.

Kirsty is nearly ready to have her baby, she is due at the end of June, and will be working part time until then – in the meanwhile, we're searching for the perfect teacher to take her place. All of our new staff will introduce themselves if they haven't met you before, and feel free to walk up and say 'hi' ☺