

Newsletter April 2011



Directors Notes

What a fantastic month we have had. I can't tell you how proud we are to have achieved a **100% perfect score for accreditation**. The team here work so hard every day and have shown that what they do is high quality in every area. When the results come we will display them in the foyer for you to all see.

The family BBQ was another fantastic highlight for February and we had a great turn out of families. Thanks again to the families who contributed to the night, you make it lots of fun for all of us.

Moving on into April we have some great events planned so keep an eye on the calendar and as always if you would like to come and join any of our events or activities please let your child's teacher or Nicole know.

Dates for your Diary

- Saturday 26th March - Earth Hour 830 to 930, light a candle and turn off your lights
- Monday 28th March - Waratah and Acacia sports day – eat a good breaky and put on your sunscreen!
- Tuesday 29th March - Lilli Pilli sports day – eat a good breaky and put your sports clothes on!
- Wednesday 6th April - Top Ryde Early Learning Art and Craft Exhibition 4-8pm
- Thursday 7th April - World Health day
- Monday 11th April - Hatch and Grow Eggs arrive today, come and take a look
- Tuesday 19th April - Dentist Visit, we will find out all about what Dentists do
- Wednesday 20th April - Waratah and Acacia Sports day, eat a nutritious breakfast
- Thursday 21st April - Lilli Pilli Sports day, wear your sports clothes and sunscreen
- Friday 29th April - International Dance Day – wear your dancing shoes and bring in your favourite dancing music

Please Note - Friday 22nd, Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th Top Ryde Early Learning is closed for Public Holidays

Reminder – with the cooler weather upon us please remember to pack some warm clothes in your child's bag each day.

Safety in the car park and gate security

The car park is a dangerous place for children especially with the amount of traffic that moves through it at peak times during the day.

Road safety is a skill that children can learn and here we teach some groovy songs about putting on seatbelts, wearing helmets and staying safe on the road, however it is not enough. The best way to keep them safe is to hold their hand until they are 8yrs old and should be closely supervised on the roads until they are 10yrs old. Children simply do not have the skills or ability to estimate distance and speed of travelling cars and are easily distracted. Click on this link and go to the fact sheets for some great information on road safety for young children <http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au/>

Check Your Rebate Please

This information below came from the president of Child Care NSW – she is strongly encouraging you to check your rebates and claim the money you are entitled to. Social security and welfare will this year chew up an incredible \$115 billion of Australia's estimated spend of \$355 billion. It is the biggest single item in the Budget. It has been revealed today that 100,000 families are using child care, but not claiming the rebate. Some families might be making a statement of principle, but Childcare Minister Kate Ellis believes most are just not aware of their entitlements. This is amazing, given that child care has been a critical issue in recent political campaigns. However, the fact remains many people are missing out on entitlements that could ease the pressure on household budgets and make life so much more fulfilling for so many parents, mainly women. Families owe it to themselves - and their children - to at **least check on their entitlement** and then make an informed decision to either use it or lose it.

Child Nutrition

We're often asked questions about children's nutrition, so we thought we'd give you some links to recognised authorities on health and nutrition.

-The Australian Breastfeeding Association

<http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au>

-National Health and Medical Research Council Dietary Guidelines for all Australians

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/dietsyn.htm>

-The Healthy Kids Website is a great place for information

<http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/topics/2015.html>

-As always, the Childrens, Youth and Women's Health Website is a source of practical help

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicCategories.aspx>

-The NSW food authority has some Food Safety tips

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>

-Nutrition Australia has some handy advice

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org>

Art and Craft Exhibition - Wednesday 6th April – 4pm

Our Annual art and Craft exhibition is fast approaching and we are all excited about having the opportunity to professionally mount your children's art works. Children's art is often undervalued - yet it is one of the most important ways to help your child express themselves. This is your chance to see how creative your little ones are and for your child to experience a great sense of pride while you view their works professionally mounted. Each child will create their own canvas and then will be involved in a group project. Their individual canvas will be on sale for \$10 and the group work will go into a silent auction that you may bid on to complement the individual canvas from your child's class.



*Wash wash wash your hands,
Wash them after play,
Round and round and up and
down,
Wash the germs away,
Wash wash wash your hands,
wash before you eat,
If you sneeze and after the loo,
then dry them nice and neat.*

Information on safe food handling

Food handling is a big part of any teacher's role here, as we serve up to five meals each day for the children. All staff underwent a thorough food handling course late last year and the main thing we were reminded of is that hand washing is the most effective way of preventing food contamination. At every meal time we help children wash their hands so they are ready for their meal and to support that process there are two songs we sing, the first song is to the tune of 'Row your boat' and the second is to '1,2,3,4,5'. Maybe you could sing them at home to!

If you would like any additional information on safe food handling please go to this link

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/food-business-issues/health-and-hygiene-for-food-handlers/>

*1,2,3 4 5 wash my hands they feel alive,
6,7, 8 9 10 then I wash them once again,
Why do we wash them so?
Because we want the germs to go,
Which germs could that be?
All the germs that bother me!*

Details of policy changes

Cleaning and Nappy Change Policies changed to include the new neutral detergent called 'Multi Purpose Cleaner'. We changed our Dummies Policy to state that all dummies must be in containers if they have to be brought to the centre (for rest times only). We also reviewed Vacation Care, Sun Safety, Drop off times and Management of the centre and none of these policies have been changed. You are welcome to make suggestions or comments on the policies displayed in the foyer or feel free to write a note or send Nicole and email about a suggested change you would like to see. We can't always make your suggested change, however we do value all the feedback you give us.



Hatch and Grow

We will have some eggs arriving at the centre shortly in an incubator that will hatch into ducklings. Each child will spend lots of time learning the process of hatching and how animals change and grow. It is fascinating to observe and a wonderful opportunity for your child to learn about life cycles and caring for animals. The ducks will be with us for a couple of weeks so you will all have lots of time to see them. There will be no additional charges for the ducklings as there has been in the past, we will be covering the full cost involved.

Easter hat Parade - Thursday 21st April



At Easter we like to get into the spirit of the chocolate eating season with something a little creative. We will be holding a hat parade for the children to participate in. So, you can get your creative hats on and help your child make a fabulous hat for the parade. We'll also be having an easter egg hunt and a bunch of other exciting activities that week.



Mondays

We currently have vacancies in some rooms on a Monday for existing children. We can offer these on a temporary basis until the positions are filled permanently. So if you're feeling a bit snowed under and want to book your child in for an extra Monday, please email Nicole. Or if you'd like to attend permanently on a Monday, email as well.

Public holiday closures

Easter is just around the corner and we will be closed on the Public holidays. Our closing dates will be Friday the 22nd, Monday the 25th and then Anzac day is Tuesday the 26th of April. It gives you all a lovely long weekend and we will all be back at Top Ryde Early Learning on Wednesday the 27th of April. You continue to pay for public holidays (make up days are available) and you receive them as allowable absences for all those families who claim back their 50% rebate.

The Doctor Visit



Dr Bodhil from the 'Tree of Life Medical Practice' next door came in to talk to the children about what doctors do and showed the children some of the tools she uses. She had a couple of puppets and a nurse with her and she talked to the children about the importance of immunisations and showed them how she uses her doctor tools.



Thank yous

Ethan Kong paper, lanyards and card board, Gianni Trimboli for sausages at our BBQ, Tayla George jewellery box for the raffle and cupcakes for the BBQ, Zoe Varga for the tablet for the raffle, Elyssa Hanna for large sheets of paper, Luca Ghattas rolls of paper, Harry Waugh for rolls of paper. If I have forgotten anyone, Thank you too.

With the school holidays so close now we thought we would add a couple of ideas that you could do with the children in the local area.

Bookings Essential 9952 8222

Bugs in the Field of Mars For children in the school holidays. Enjoy a guided bush walk through the Field of Mars then grab a net to fish for macro invertebrates and test the water in the creek!

When: Friday the 15 April 10.00 – 12 noon

Meet at: 9.45am Field of Mars Visitor's Centre

Meet the Wildlife at Putney Park

Children are invited to bring their families along to Putney Park to discover the wildlife in the Reserve and meet Blossom the Possum, Joanna the Goanna and Princess the Python in an interactive wildlife display.

When: Tuesday 12 April, 10.30am – 12.30pm

Meet at: 10.15am at the climbing frame in Putney Park

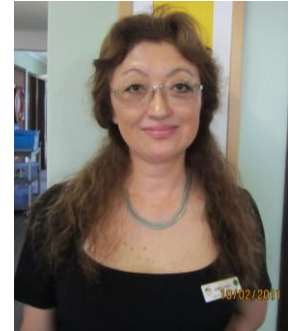
Paper Please

We have hit an all time low for paper for the children to draw and paint on. If you have any paper, printed on one side, or scrap paper that is being recycled at your office please bring it in. We don't mind what size or colour it is!

Staff training and movements

As always we're encouraging our team to continue their professional development. Our teachers have been to some great training over the last month. Amy and Mikhala went on "Implementing road safety through music" workshop where they learned lots of great songs to teach the children about being safe. In January the whole team completed a 'Music in early childhood settings workshop' and came back singing their hearts out! Nicole Nesha and Lorna are all off to a big course on the "Early Years learning Framework". Tasha, Nesha and Nicole are doing a 'Qikkids webinar' which is the accounts program we use here. The whole team attended the STaR training in March on "Positive environments for children" and we are in the process of arranging a great visual arts with children course for the whole team.

We sadly farewelled Michelle who has been with us for over 2 years as she needs some time to work on her family life and welcome Kumiko to do casual internal relief for us. Kumi speaks fluent Japanese and started here as a bicultural support teacher. We all liked her so much we asked her to stay and she agreed. (hooray!)



Spotlight on.....Amy



NAME: Amy Stibbard

ROLE AT TOP RYDE: Preschool (Waratahs) Teacher

LIVES: I live in Eastwood with my family and partner Mark

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: I have a Bachelor of Teaching in Early Childhood

ABOUT AMY: On the weekends I enjoy hanging out with the family and travelling up the coast to our beach house in Terrigal. I love travelling and my favourite place to visit while we were in Europe in 2009 was Turkey because culturally it was an adventurous and colourful place to see.

SOMETHING YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME: I can sew teddy bears and I am planning a wedding in my garden at home.

Staff member of the month for April Mikhala

Based on your responses from our family survey, our staff member of the month is Mikhala! Some of your positive comments included:

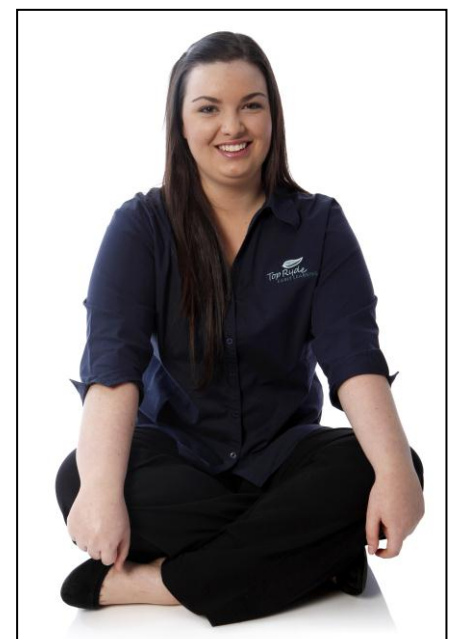
She is dedicated in her work to helping children learn in their early years

She is warm and welcoming to the kids and parents

Mikhala looks out for my child always smiles and gives him cuddles every day

She is very friendly and always easy to talk to about anything.

She always takes time and effort for my child and is nurturing and caring every day.



What we have been up to in the class rooms



Waratahs

The Waratahs have written and illustrated a story about alphabet characters and are in the process of putting it together at the moment. It has been an ongoing project that involved, writing, using imagination and team work, then a little photography before beginning to compile their work. We are all looking forward to seeing the finished product. We have had so much fun exploring many types of art and sensory play from a week of indigenous artworks to scientific experiments creating bubbles and extending on bubble play to create bubble artworks.

We have been extending our drawing skills and numeracy through looking at and making clocks as well as drawing insects and discussing how many legs, eyes and body parts the insects have.

Mrs Honeys hat has been the focus of the last week and we have started to explore hat decorating and making. This also incorporated a board game which we have been teaching the children – Our first board game of the year was loved by everyone! During rest time the children have loved going on adventures to castles, volcanoes and even on safari in their creative visualisations with their teachers.



Reminders from the Waratah room – Please do not let your children bring toys in to Top Ryde Early Learning they will get lost or broken, your child will feel sad and you will feel angry with us - Thanks

Acacias



This is a super creative group and Tom has been loving working with the children on an ongoing art project where children are discovering different tools to use for painting and extending creativity, imagination and motor skills as they do. They are loving anything active and have been right into the bear hunt song and story that they have recreated in the classroom with Matt. Walking around doing the actions for it and making scenes to display on the walls. Mikhala started a sensory project last month that began with dance painting and has continued on with making goop and play dough. The whole class has settled really well and the teachers are looking forward to all the interests that will continue to emerge over the coming months.



Reminders from the Acacia room – If you have not done an orientation please pop in and talk to Matt in the next week or two.

Our calendar

In each of our classrooms there is a calendar that you may add your name to if there is anything you would like to join in with. You may like to read a story or sit and help with a craft activity or share some of your culture with a small group of children. If you would like to come along to any of our events or any other day please let your child's teacher know.

Lilli Pillies



It's all about cars, trucks and boats in the Lilli Pilli room at the moment. They have been drawing road maps, driving cars, making trains out of cardboard boxes and making cars to drive around the class in. They have told stories about transport and learnt several songs about transport and road safety. There has also been a lovely bubbly interest and lots of exploration on how to create bubbles that flowed on from the sensory play with play dough, goop and slime. The children are all really enjoying painting, collage and music and Dalia is about to start teaching them the *Macarena* and they have loved learning the *Hokey Pokey*. The basil they began growing at the beginning of January is almost big enough to start harvesting, which is exciting and many of the children have enjoyed the process of learning how plants grow from seed and what is required for them to thrive. They have just begun learning some songs in other languages and while Kumi is in the class on Thursday and Friday she has been teaching the children about the shapes you find in pictures at group times and the children are learning in English and Japanese.



Reminders from the Lilli Pilli room– we strongly discourage the use of dummies here but if you must bring them please make sure they come in a small container and both dummy and container are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Survey Results

Thank you to all the families who completed our family survey this year. The survey gives us a really good idea what we can do, moving forward, to improve our programs and how we do things. It tells us lots about what you want more of/ less of and anything you would like to see us change.

42% of our families read the day book which is great as it gives you lots of ideas about what your child has been learning through the day. Many of you asked if we could email the day book to you and it is something we will be looking into as we also like the idea. Almost 10% of families contribute to our program regularly in many different ways from sharing their culture. The large majority of families who responded, said that most of what we do is excellent.

Many of you commented that you were not sure how we were providing opportunities for children to learn early maths and science skills. Over the next few months we will give you more information on what we do and how we do and will put some more displays up around the centre, specifically relating to maths and science activities.

Overall the majority of responses rated us as 'excellent' in all of the areas we were getting feedback on, which is fantastic news. The most important thing to most of that families who responded was that you want your child to be *'Happy and Safe'* while here. After that you want your children to *'have fun'* and then for them to *'learn in a positive environment'*.

Your favourite teachers here are **Mikhala** and **Matthew** and all of the feedback was given straight to the teachers – Thanks.