

Director News



Welcome to another wonderful year families and friends. We have achieved so much and we are only half way through the year!

It is my pleasure to announce and congratulate Sophie on her appointment as Assistant Director.

In addition to her role as Lead Educator in the Jnr Kindy Room, Sophie will also be providing wider support to the staff, parents and myself as the new Assistant Director.

For team and children, it will mean that I am able to spend more time across all the rooms mentoring educators and engaging directly with the children, ensuring that everyone, particularly the children, are getting the best out of the program, fulfilling my role as Educational Leader.

For parents this means that I will be here Monday to Friday while still having my nine day fortnight. Where possible my day in lieu will be taken on a Friday. Sally is here Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and Sophie will be in the office on a Friday. This means families have the opportunity to have any queries about centre operations answered either via phone, email or in person.

The biggest day to day change most parents might notice is on a Friday when Sophie's role as Lead Educator in the Jnr Kindy Room is filled by Jo.

Jo is well known to the children and the team, having done 2 practicums at Kurilpa

and is now in her final year of studying her Bachelor of Education Early Childhood at QUT.

With Jo working closely with Anthony, and knowing that Sophie or I are available to assist if required, I am sure the Junior Kindy Room will continue to provide the best for the children there.

Reading the articles that each room have written you wouldn't be wrong to assume that each and every educator at Kurilpa views children as capable and competent beings. We as educators take the role of empowering and supporting children throughout their journey of learning. Providing secure, safe and challenging environments that promote play interactions and learning. When young children are viewed as experts in their own lives it makes sense to involve them as much as they are able in the planning (What should we do), directing (what should we do next) and reporting (what have we just done).

When a child is really engaged in learning, they show concentration, persistence, and eagerness in their enquiry. For us to expect children to be engaged in learning, we ourselves as educators have to be active in our own learning. This is why Kurilpa has a commitment to professional development and training, we encourage staff to develop their qualifications and activity seeks out training and further knowledge. The team critically reflect daily on their practices and pedagogy, talking part in professional conversations and shared programming and professional development time, with not only their room co-educators but across the service. 'Effective educators engage in processes of inquiry, constantly questioning practices, and assumptions and

investigating the impact of their teaching practices on the children and families.’ (Mac Naughton 2005)

When reflecting myself on the team and the children at Kurilpa I often ask myself what does it mean to be a successful learner in the 21st century, and how can we support children in the journey of learning? Through my 13 years in the education sector the knowledge and expectation on the child has shifted we are continually reviewing contemporary and past theorist and practices in the realm of education. There are a variety of different expectation and demands put on children that were not always there. for example the prep program is not as it once was, beginning as play based preschool 2.5 days per week to the structured formal 5 days per week learning environment it is today.

There are a variety of dispositions that a child can learn and that can prepare them for the complex and rapidly changing world (flexibility, curiosity and problem-solving) . These dispositions are linked to our attitudes and feelings about ourselves and our views about the different identities of our selves we can become (Carr, 2001).

Studies of effective lifelong learning indicate that successful learning for both children and adults involves-

Curiosity- interest in the world and the capacity to analyse and see things from different perspectives

Meaning making- creating new meanings by connecting new experiences and learning to what we already know

Creativity- imagination, playfulness, trying and evaluating ideas

Metacognitive awareness – being aware of ones own learning strategies and feelings (this helps us to reflect on our own learning and transfer from one context to another)

Learning relationships- being connected to a community of learners and learning from relationships and interactions

Resilience- the capacity to persist at a task, to see failure and an opportunity to learn and cope with changing circumstances and conditions

Growth orientation – an understanding that learning takes time.

Problem solving - viewing situations from a range of different perspectives, posing problems as well as searching for answers

Children also engage in a variety of learning process, at the service and at home with families; such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, researching and investigating. Children are interested in investigating as from the time they are speaking they will often ask why or how questions often (sometimes it can be seem like every word they utter!). We are creating these little critical thinkers when we explore the how and why- for example we talk about turning of the lights when they are not in use. To build depth in their understanding and knowledge we also discuss the why, when, who and how. We can also promote problem solving skills by answering with open ended questions and investigative approach (why do you think we turn off the lights?). Building on children’s prior learning and experience is one of the many ways to confident and

engaged play. The knowledge children bring from home and the experiences and routines they engage with family are important and worthwhile. Here the children are transferring and adapting what they have learned from one context to another- for example the children in the sandpit making a flat white, or speaking on their shovel phone. These are all experiences the children have been a part of life in other context and they are making the connection to real life experience in play. We provide authentic and meaningful experiences through our emergent curriculum that connect to the children's family and community experiences as well as strengths and interest or 'funds of knowledge'. The team provide open-ended materials that challenge and interest children, in an environment where learning is promoted as children use independence and autonomy to make decisions and take on challenges.

We look forward to an even more action packed last 5 months of the year, and can't wait to celebrate Kurilpa's 70th birthday in October. I am privileged to be a part of such a rich and authentic history and can't wait to see where the future takes us!

Thanks again Marisa

Events

Kindergarten offer 2015 acceptance due 1st August 2014

Fete planning night Thursday 7th August 6:00-7:00pm

Please make sure you have returned your enrolment form and immunisation update.

Book week August 16th - 22nd 2014

Ling plant fundraiser during August

Re enrolment letters for 2015 will be sent out September 5th 2014

Garage sale Saturday 13th September

70th Birthday celebrations Sunday 26th October

Kurilpa will be closed over the Christmas new years from Friday 19th December to Monday 5th January 2015

Public holidays are – Wednesday 13th August, Monday 6th October, and Friday 14th November.

Fundraising News

So far this year we have hosted a successful Teddy Bears' Picnic/BBQ (which was also a great opportunity for parents to meet and mix), held a Seaworld raffle, and a bake sale at the Pushies Galore Event (pushes bike show and swap). The pie drive is currently underway and we have some great ideas planned for the rest of the year including a seedlings sale in time for Spring and a garage sale in mid-September (so please start putting away clothes, books, and toys to donate).

In preparation for the Centre's 70th anniversary celebrations, we are planning a whole-of-centre commemorative tea towel involving all of the children and staff members. This tea towel will be a wonderful memento of this important occasion.

A number of other fundraisers, like the mango drive and toy catalogues in December, are also on the horizon.

Now all this good fund raising effort means that we can revamp the outdoor play spaces with more gross motor activities and outdoor resources, replace the bark in the 3-5 yards, as well as looking to replace the lights in the centre

to LED lighting and increasing our solar panels. (Which we just submitted a grant application for!)

We appreciate ideas and offers of help from all parents (a number of the ideas have already come from our parents!) and are really appreciative of your assistance thus far – thank you!

Katy White

Committee News

70 Years Young

I can't believe that it is already July. The first half of the year has gone smoothly and fast. Earlier this year we had a strategic review meeting in which many people participated in, we will release a strategic plan document for everyone to look at in the near future. We have had a few fundraising events already including the very successful bake stall at Pushies Galore- thank you to everyone who helped out and the Humble Pie drive currently underway. We have been successful in receiving an 'Artist in Residence' grant from the Queensland Government for our Kindergarten program and we look forward to Imaginary Theatre starting later in the year to work with the kids. Very exciting stuff!

The rest of the year will be all about the 70th anniversary. We will hold a family fun day in October for families and the community; I encourage you to be a part of that day as all events require many hands to make them run smoothly.

Our expert cook, Lizzie will also be re-releasing her cookbook as part of the 70th

year celebrations, and it is true that much like a home the kitchen is the heart of Kurilpa. We will have these cookbooks available for sale later in the year.

Please look out for opportunities to be involved with celebrations.

Regards Sarah Warner

Kitchen News

I am working on a new Kurilpa cookbook which will include all of the current menu items. We are hopeful that the book will be available for purchase at the 70th birthday celebrations in October. The Westender Magazine is publishing one recipe per month until October to promote the book. The lentil "sausage" rolls and spinach and feta slice have already been included in the magazine. Stay tuned.

Please be aware we have children at the centre with food allergies. To keep these children safe we ask that you do not bring food into the centre unless it is a celebratory item that has an ingredient list and is left in the kitchen. This includes not allowing your children to arrive still eating breakfast or putting food into your child's bag. While at Kurilpa, we do not allow the children to walk around while eating as this presents a choking risk. They need to be seated. As you can no doubt appreciate, a table for sixty children each day requires these boundaries to be consistently applied during every meal time. The team and myself work very hard to prepare special meals for the children with food allergies and to consistently reinforce boundaries at

meal times to keep all children safe. Please help by following centre policy.

Favourite meals from home are most welcome on the Kurilpa menu. If you would like to see something included, simply give me a recipe and I will see what I can do. This can be a favourite main or snack food. Suggestions and feedback can also be written in the kitchen communication book on the kitchen bench.

I've included the vegetable pancake recipe because it is quick and easy to make and includes ingredients that you already have in your pantry.

Vegetable Pancakes

2 cups diced mixed vegies of your choice (I use onion, celery, carrot, zucchini, silverbeet, red capsicum, frozen peas and corn)

½ cup SR flour

¼ cup milk

2 eggs

½ cup grated cheese

salt and pepper

Saute diced vegies in a little olive oil until starting to soften. Put into a bowl and set aside to cool slightly. Mix remaining ingredients into vegie mix to form a batter. Cook pancakes in a greased frypan until golden on both sides.

Finally, thank you to everyone who cooked goodies helped out on the bake stall or came along to support on the day at

the Pushies Galore Bicycle Meet. The range of treats we had was fantastic and we had a great day.

Lizzie

Kindergarten News

As we progress quickly into the second half of the year many families in our room are in the middle of conversations, considerations and questions about schools for next year. The Transition Statements we write as well as the parent/teacher interviews we offer provide opportunities for looking at your child's educational requirements in detail. We thought it is also useful though, to look at some of the theories and research that highlight the



importance of a child's physical development in their preparation for the social, emotional and academic challenges they will face as they transition into a school environment.

In a review of current literature on the importance of play carried out by Dr David Whitebread from the University of Cambridge, he describes play as a human adaptation that has enabled the learning and problem-solving skills which have made us so successful as a species. The research he cites has been carried out across a number of disciplines and identifies five broad types of play,

including the physical play we associate with the development of gross motor skills. It is not surprising that the running, jumping, climbing and swinging this involves is important in building strength and endurance. What is not as evident perhaps is the extent to which this strength and endurance is a necessary stepping stone to some of the fine motor skills we regard as essential for school readiness.



Muscle development takes place naturally from the biggest to the smallest, from the top to the bottom and from the inside out – large muscles are controlled first from the head down to the toes and from the torso out to the limbs. The fingers and toes get a good workout throughout the very early months and years of our lives but the complex and precise movements that our fingers need (to be able to perfect handwriting for example) only develop properly in the context of large muscle organisation.

So, if we use handwriting as an example again to show what we mean:

- The upper body supports us upright (*core strength activities*)
- Shoulder muscles controls the weight of the arm and rotates to change position freely (*developed by climbing and rope swinging*)
- Upper arm holds weight of lower arm and hand above the page (*climbing*)

- The lower arm is the fulcrum on which the wrist rotates (*pushing heavy objects, digging etc*)
- The wrist steadies the hand and rotates position (*lifting heavy objects like buckets of sand, messy play*)
- The fingers fold and are supported by the thumb (*painting, using tongs, manipulating clay etc*)
- All five fingers work together to control angle, pressure and position as well as movement (*sewing, construction, paper-folding, cutting*)

All muscles in this process need to be functioning correctly for writing to happen effectively.

(From: Moving Smart: “M” is for Monkeybars: Getting Ready for Writing by Gill Connell
<http://movingsmartblogspot.com.au/2011/05/m-is-for-monkeybars-getting-ready-for-writing>)



Our learning environments at Kindergarten take this research into account and we support as much ‘big body’ play as we can (look out for the trapezes, swiss ball and balance equipment we’re incorporating). Of course there are many varied opportunities for this outside of the center program and we’d love to hear your stories and especially share photos of some of the amazing physical goals the children are setting themselves as they prepare for the

changes ahead. Next time your child climbs a tree to swing on a branch and balance themselves as they drop you'll know their bodies are getting ready to write, the right way ☺

Thank you
Marion, Tess and Lisa

Junior Kindy News

One of the main focuses for the year was to emphasis on the idea of risk taking. Although the term 'risk-taking' often can sound more dangerous than it actually is as risk taking is essentially about involving children in managing their risk in a safe and challenging environment. The reality is that the willingness to engage in some risky activities provides opportunities to learn new skills, test new behaviours and ultimately reach our potentials. A natural part of children's physical play involves engaging in play that is challenging, a bit scary and somewhat risky. The risks and challenges of being outdoors provide rich opportunities for learning, problem-solving and developing social competence; children need the freedom to take risks in play because it allows them to continually test the limits of their physical, intellectual and emotional development. Such risk



taking is also promoted in both the national Quality Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework.

So what exactly is risky play? Risky play is defined as thrilling and challenging forms of play that involves a risk of physical injury. What is the difference between risky and hazards? A risk is something that is possible to negotiate and may be appropriate for particular situations and children, such as a woodwork table. A hazard is something that is inherently dangerous and needs to be remedied, such a climbing structure with sharp edges or loose boards that could seriously injure children if they play on it.

The most recent risk taking experience we are exploring with the children are sticks, I bet your probably thinking something along the lines of "who in their right mind would let a bunch of three year olds run around with sticks?" However it's not just a matter of letting them run around, we worked with the children to decide on limitations, rules, safety issues and the benefits for their play when the idea aroused and the children began taking a strong interest in sticks. We had children collecting sticks from home, on their walks to Kurilpa and finding them in the playground, we didn't want to discourage this strong interest as it can be seen as 'risky' so we thought we would focus and extend on the interest by talking and brain storming with the children at group times to allow them to research and discover the potential hazards that may arise when they are playing with sticks. If a problem arises during their play, we ask the children to stop and revisit the rules we implemented as a team. Along with the children's suggestions and ideas we as educator's role model appropriate behaviours and

work in conjunction with the children to support their risk taking experiences.

Here are a few fantastic examples of what some of the children came up with in regards to the rules of 'stick play' in the yard.

"We will use them to not touch each other"
– Elliott

"If they are too pointy, we will need to find a different one" - Grace

"We can't run with sticks, only walk" – Emil

"If we touch each other with them, we have to miss out for 5 minutes and then try again" – Edith

An ideal environment for developing and testing these skills in a safe and engaging play environment gives us the opportunity to provide children to learn the following skills;

- Develop skills in negotiating the environment (including risks)
- Will learn how to use equipment safety and for it's designed purpose
- Will develop coordination and orientation skills
- Will take acceptable risks and learn consequences (both positive and negative) of risk taking
- Develop problem solving skills as they test and experiment with their ideas and limitations



In the coming weeks we are going to be incorporating a rock garden (40-60cm rocks) into both the yard and the Junior Kindy courtyard, together as a team we have been accessing and exploring the hazards and risks of implementing a rock garden, we heard suggestions of two major risks, throwing of the rocks and rocks landing on children's feet that we could foresee occurring. No play space is ever completely safe and there are always risks we need to consider. If a child is to be seen as capable they need to be provided with challenging materials and the learning will be enhanced. The team at Kurilpa prepare Risk Management Plans for such environments and behaviours that can be seen as a risky as a way we as a team look to manage the risk. We weigh up the possible occurrence of risk against the overall benefits and learning that can be had. Along with the risk management plan we work with the children to talk about their ideas and knowledge in relation to rock play, they again made some genuine assessment on the ideas and came up with another set of rules, limitations and ideas in relation to our new environment to come.

If you have a chance, feel free to come and join us in our new rock garden to experience the many learning opportunities we get to explore and discover.

Sophie & Anthony

Toddler News

What a whirlwind first half of 2014 it has been!

We've engaged our learning in so many, MANY ways and we've had an absolute blast picking up and enhancing new skills!

Our visits with the Junior Kindy group in the “BIG PLAYGROUND” have become a source of endless learning for both the Toddler and Junior Kindy communities!

We’ve had some excellent challenges with the larger obstacle course and fort, we’ve built relationships with our Junior Kindy friends and teachers and we’ve started exploring engaging socially with a range of age groups. We visit every Tuesday and Thursday morning (as much as possible!) from 10 – 10:30 and we really believe it’s strengthened our bonds within the rooms, as well as made transitioning from the Toddler room to the Junior Kindy room a lot less stressful for those of us who’ve moved up this year. The growth of our eye hand and eye foot coordination as well as our self-confidence to “give it a go” has been amazing to watch!



Our major focus over the last month has become SELF HELP. With a lot of new friends joining us from the Nursery and interest growing in our Toddler room – Toilet Training and learning to look after our belongings has become an important part of our Toddlers routine! When it comes to toilet training, our Toddlers really do put the E into Effort! It’s a hard thing, figuring out when you need to go to

the toilet – and just how much longer you can play at the play dough table before it becomes too late to get to the toilet in time! Persistence and routine are key, with all the Toddlers having set times where we *all* go to the toilet together (It’s Toilet Party Time!) and having teachers that constantly remind and offer toileting times that coincide with our friends helps, too.

We make toileting time fun, with the “Pirate Poo Book” to read while we sit and wait or singing songs at the toilet, discussing how sometimes we need to just “see” if our bodies are ready to go or not. It can be a frustrating time for families – and children – but it’s also one of those life skills that your child really does need to have an interest in before you and the more encouragement and praise they receive for their efforts, the better time *all* will have!

Another big achievement in the Toddler room over the past month has been taking care of our belongings. With the weather getting colder, we’ve all got a few extra layers of clothing and footwear on which can be a bit of a hassle come rest time! The children have done so well with putting their socks *inside* their shoes, packing away their sheets into their sheet bags after rest and taking on and off jumpers/jackets with those fiddly buttons and zips! We’re



really proud of their achievements so far!

Children have a drive to be independent and do things on their own. This is a healthy part of normal child development. As children grow, they learn to do more and more tasks. We can help young children become independent by allowing and encouraging them to take responsibility for themselves whenever possible. It can be faster and less messy to do things for children, but they learn so much from doing things for themselves. When children practice self-help skills such as feeding and dressing themselves, they practice their large and small motor skills, gain confidence in their ability to try new things and build their self-esteem and pride in their independence.

Sayonara, from Cass, Rachael and the Toddlers

Nursery News

Here we are mid-year in the Nursery. This is a time when a few children are transitioning to toddler room, and we get to welcome new children. It is a testament to the level of comfort and the sense of security the children have here in the nursery when such young children can move confidently into their new room, ready for new challenges.

We said goodbye to Nick as he has moved to the beach for a more relaxed lifestyle and we wish him all the best for his big move. In his absence we have gained Melisa who is contributing her ideas and enthusiasm for working with young

children. It has been such a smooth transition losing Nick and gaining Melisa because of the foundation of security that is in place for the children both here at Kurilpa and in the home environment.

For young children attachment is more than just a feeling; it's a critical part of healthy development. "Attachment is a reciprocal relationship formed between a child and a care giver," You may notice that all of the nursery children have built a strong attachment to one or many off the educators here at Kurilpa (a room team member or a float). When thinking about attachment, the nursery staff especially refers to the circle of security. The main four points are the foundation of all our interactions with children.



1. Watch over me (to see that I'm safe)
2. Delight in me (So I can look into your face and see what I look like to you, and find that you are happy)
3. Help Me! (Just enough so I can try myself)
4. Enjoy with me (Join in with my interests)

With these four points in mind the interactions we have with the children helps strengthen their sense of security. Promoting in the children the confidence



to be curious and actively explore their world with the support they need. Feelings of attachment influence later social development and relationships. It also lays the foundation for the development of self-concept and self-regulation. Babies have a natural ability to engage adults to fall in love with them. This is important because babies are born totally dependent on adult care. The way an adult responds to a child allows the child to develop feelings of trust and compassion. “When an adult responds to a baby’s coos, the child learns that he is important and lovable,”

Currently we are enjoying some slight changes in sleeping routines. We understand for babies six to twelve months they are discovering that they are increasing their abilities and being awake to experience that is so much more exciting than sleeping. We understand a healthy balance of rest and play can be one – four naps a day ranging between 30 minutes to two hours long.

By 6 months of age, babies can get 5 – 8 hours of sleep at night. However 25-50% of 6 month olds still wake up at night. There are things that can be done to counteract this including ensuring that they learn to go to sleep in

their cot by themselves at the start of the night. Then they are more able to self-soothe themselves back to

sleep after waking up during the night.

From 2 months to 12 months, the number of daytime naps goes down from 3 - 4 naps to two naps. Morning naps usually stop between 12 and 18 months of age.

Always give a chance for an afternoon nap after lunch and before 4pm. Daytime naps become less common from about 2 or 3 years onwards.

As we do have a variety of children and needs in the nursery we encourage you to continue to communicate your child’s sleeping routine at home and what their sleep was like the night before. We continue to work with families to best understand the children and their needs.

Remember, as early childhood educators we choose to share each child’s journey with you and we are here for support through the calm, and the storm.



Whilst on holidays

Melisa has brought back some lovely wooden toys, a push cart and a couple of hobby horses, these were made by a community craft group in Caringbah, NSW. Sadly, one of the horses needs mending but happily, Melisa has searched for a similar crafty community group in QLD that could help us out. A woodworking community group search put us in contact with the Woodturners Society of QLD in greenslopes, they have a Toy Making Group. This Society makes and donates toys to Saint Vincent de Paul for their annual Christmas Party, where each member donates at least one toy. We look forward to meeting up with this group for wooden toy repairs in the near future.

Resource: Raising Children Network, *Baby Sleep 2-12months*, <http://raisingchildren.net.au>

www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au

Thank you,
Melissa and Alex