



GET EXCITED  
IT'S  
DATE NIGHT!!!

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>  
November



Fortnightly Newsletter. Vol. 10

## Important Dates

**School  
Uniform/Lunchbox  
Week**

5<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup>  
Nov

**Date Night**

8<sup>th</sup>  
Nov

**STEPS eyesight  
screening**

22<sup>nd</sup>  
Nov

## Administrative News...

- **Christmas Holidays**

Please let us know if you are planning to be away during the Christmas period. We would love to approve as much leave as possible for our hard-working educators

- **Date Night**

Date night is next Thursday! Please RSVP before COB Monday 5<sup>th</sup> if you would like your child to attend. If this is your first time experiencing our date night, please feel free to give us a call/email for more details.

- **Lunchbox/Uniform week**

Preschool 2 school leavers, you will receive a message on StoryPark from Miss Narges shortly to give you details about our lunchbox/uniform week. What an exciting time! Not long now!

## Sun Safety...

It's warming up! We have various policies in place to deal with the heat, but we need your support too. Please ensure your child has a layer of sunscreen on when they arrive in the morning. We will then reapply twice during the day (minimum). We also need your child to have a hat and drink bottle everyday.

We will continue to encourage children to enjoy outside play, but rest assured, we do come inside at various times according to the SunSmart recommendations from the Cancer Council. To support these recommendations we will be installing an additional shade sail over the Nursery/Toddler sandpit area.

## Fees...

'The board', (Anna, Chloe and hubbies!) held a meeting to discuss the fee structure at My Story. The financial year and calendar year are the typical times childcare centres reflect on the fees vs expense inflation ratio. Although expenses continue to rise, after careful consideration we have decided **not** to raise fees in January 2019.

We are proud of our commitment to providing quality Early Childhood Education and Care at a reasonable cost.

# From the Directors

Anna Tran  
Chloe Chant

## How do you celebrate the holidays?...

We are very excited to celebrate Christmas with our families on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December. Please pop it in your diaries – Details to come!

Santa Claus, Christmas Trees, Fairy lights, Reindeer, Stockings etc. are all very special aspects of this time of year for many children at My Story, and I imagine there will be much learning, project work and craft influenced by these concepts in the weeks ahead.

Do you celebrate Christmas and the New Year differently? We would LOVE to hear from you if you have other traditions and festivals between now and the end of the year. We encourage you to send information to your child's educators, bring something in for news, or even come into the Centre to share something that makes the festive season special to you and your family.

## About our Educators...

...a little insight into the lives of your children's teachers to stimulate a chat and encourage communication...

Welcome back from your trip back home to India Samiti! The children and your colleagues are so happy to have you back at My Story.

Miss Jess (White) is at Parramatta Court today!

We understand how important it is to support our court system, but we are quietly hoping she isn't selected for Jury Duty!

Miss Chloe is back at uni! She will slowly but surely work through the remaining 16 units to gain a 4-year Bachelor of Education qualification.

Miss Anna is looking forward to a well-deserved long weekend away with her Soccer friends (yes, she is a woman of many talents!)  
Enjoy!

## Sustainability and Reconciliation



We are currently in discussions with some members of the local Aboriginal community in an effort to commission an interesting, culturally appropriate mural in the 'big' yard.

Our vision is to have all of our children contribute to an artwork that reflects and honors the synergy of the Dharug people and the unique landscape in which our beautiful Centre sits.



After careful consideration, we have decided to add some new turf to the 'big yard'. The older children's skin seems to cope well with the real grass and there were some opportunities to discuss sustainability with the older group...

- Carbon capturing.
- Oxygen production
- Supporting bio-diversity.

By Monday, all things going well we will have a refreshed section of grass. Wish us luck wheel-barrowing topsoil in the sun!

## **Play-Based Curriculum...**

*It is an established fact in the Early Childhood Sector that a play-based philosophy fosters the best outcomes for children across all domains – social, cognitive, physical, communication and emotional. Sometimes the sector finds it difficult to articulate this to families. A play-based philosophy not only supports learning, but it also supports the Convention on the Rights of the Child...*

## **Children's right to play**

'No-one is born a good citizen' said Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary-General. But children are born with rights. In Children's Week this blog explores children's rights and how they are identified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children's rights to rest, leisure, recreation and play appropriate to their age, are recognised under Article 31 in the UNCRC (1989). The same Article also recognises their right to be active participants in the cultural and artistic life of their community. Article 31 provides strong support for using play-based approaches to learning in education and care settings.

Children's right to play and leisure time is sometimes threatened by:

- less time for children to play because of a focus on a 'push down' curriculum
- less time to play because of a focus on getting ready for 'tests'
- a focus on commercial toys and products that may not provide open-ended play opportunities
- less time to play and explore outdoors because of educators or parents being worried about safety.

Adults who are committed to children's right to play think seriously about these issues. They ask questions such as: 'Is this a space for children as citizens where they have some control and can take risks, think, wonder, be amazed, have fun and learn with other children and with adults?' A place, as Dahlberg calls it, of 'collective adventure' (as cited in Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 111).

The term 'collective adventure' could be interpreted in a less serious way than was intended. A space or environment for collective adventures is a place where children and adults learn and have fun together; where the time allocation for play is not always ruled by fixed routines or adult agendas and where there is a balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning that has both parties learning in new ways and learning new things together.

*We should not trivialize the use of play and play materials by early intervention specialists. It is endemic to their work with young children and families (Nwokah, Hui-Chin & Gulker, 2013, p. 211).*

The UNCRC's protection and promotion of children's right to play has influenced current policies and practices in early intervention and inclusion for children with disabilities and developmental delay. Previously, the focus for early intervention practices was often on therapeutic interventions to meet goals for children set by professionals. Meeting these goals often required removing a child with special needs from a group and their peers while the child practised a specific skill to achieve a goal.

A United Kingdom study involving parents of children with Down syndrome identified that non play-based interventions not only didn't achieve good outcomes for their children, but they also left them with a strong sense of guilt and failure (Rix, Paige-Smith & Jones, 2008). The parents were clear about why highly adult-directed and structured activities failed to meet their children's right to learn through play-based experiences:

- children didn't feel they were in control of the activity
- the activities didn't provide the children with choices
- children did not always enjoy the activities
- the activities often ignored the children's abilities, strengths and interests
- the rigid way the activities were to be implemented generated conflict between the parent and their child.

The highly structured activities described by the parents focused on what the children couldn't do, for example, not being able to use a feeding tool such as a spoon independently. The early intervention goals for the children could have been better promoted through using play-based approaches that recognised the children's interests and strengths. Learning skills like eating or dressing independently can be gained through participating in routine activities at home and through play-based learning in the home corner, or in dress-up play with friends.

Families and childhood professionals show respect for children's right to play by their interest, support and involvement. They understand the need to balance child-led and initiated play with adult-guided play and support. Being aware of not taking over children's play and allowing them space, time and resources to engage in play of their choosing is important for meeting the intent of the UNCRC's Article 31 on children's right to play (Lester & Russell, 2010).

*This article was adapted from the Everyday Learning Series title—Children's rights: Every day and everywhere.*

<http://thespoke.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/childrens-right-play/>