

“THERE IS NOTHING EITHER GOOD OR BAD BUT THINKING
MAKES IT SO” — WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



JUNE
2022

ON *this* MONTH

AT KATOOMBA LEURA PRESCHOOL

Reconciliation Week.....	26 May – 3 June
Mabo Day	3 June
World Environment Day.....	5 June
World Oceans Day	8 June
Queen’s birthday long weekend.....	13 June
Global Wind Day	15 June
National Refugee Week	19 – 25 June



Playing outdoor, whatever the weather!
There's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing.
- Alfred Wainwright

There are so many benefits of getting outdoors, even when it’s cold and rainy. We all know that regular physical activity and time outdoors has significant health benefits for children. Time spent running, climbing, and even jumping in puddles builds children’s gross motor skills and strengthens growing bones and muscles. Fresh air and time in nature is equally important for children’s mental, social and emotional health.

Children also learn best through hands-on, active learning; something that the natural environment offers in spades. Rocks, sticks, sand, mud and water are open-ended, enticing children to engage in creative and infinite ways. Wet weather does not change this; in fact outdoor play spaces in the rain offer new and interesting perspectives and challenges in children’s play.

A common myth is that children will become sick if they play outside in Winter, however colds are caused by viruses, not the weather. The reason colds and flu are more common in winter is that we tend to spend more time inside, in closed environments, where it is easier for viruses to spread
(<https://www.yourhealth.net.au/articles/mythbusting/does-being-cold-actually-give-you-a-cold/>)

At Katoomba Leura Preschool we have spare gumboots, raincoats and pants for the children who may have forgotten them, or who don’t have any. Please also remember to pack spare clothes for your child so that we can help them change into warm, dry clothes once inside.

<http://thespoke.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/the-values-we-lay-in-outdoor-play/>





WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY – JUNE 5

2022 is a historic milestone for the global environmental community. It marks 50 years since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, widely seen as the first

international meeting on the environment. The 2022 World Environment Day campaign #OnlyOneEarth calls for collective, transformative action on a global scale to celebrate, protect and restore our planet. **Find out more here:** <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/10-ways-you-can-help-fight-climate-crisis>

NATIONAL REFUGEE WEEK – JUNE 19-25

Refugee Week promotes harmony and togetherness.

The 2022 Refugee Week theme is Healing. Australia and the rest of the world have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hit the reset button on how we behave towards one another. **Find out how you can get involved here:** <https://share-a-meal.raisely.com/overview>

PARMESAN CRUSTED ZUCCHINI CHIPS



PREP 10 min | BAKE 20-25 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2 zucchini, sliced into thin rounds
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup parmesan, grated
- 2 egg whites
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 200 degrees Celsius. Place the panko breadcrumbs and parmesan in a shallow bowl and mix to combine. In a separate bowl place the egg whites along with a tablespoon of water and whisk to combine. Dunk each zucchini round into the egg white, letting excess run off before pressing them into the panko parmesan mixture. Line an oven tray with baking paper and drizzle with a little olive oil. Arrange the crusted zucchini rounds on the oven tray in a single layer.

Pop into the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes, flipping halfway. The zucchini parmesan chips are done when they are golden and crisp. Enjoy X.

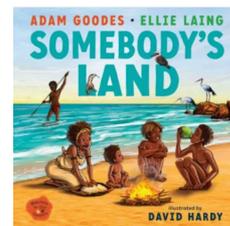
Recipe and image from mylovelittlelunchbox.com



BOOKS WE ARE ENJOYING AT PRESCHOOL

Somebody's Land

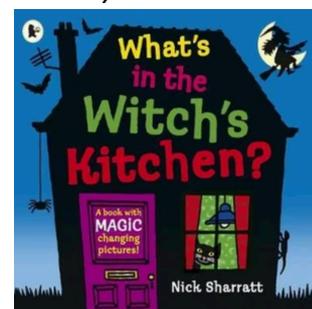
Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing, Illustrated by David Hardy



This engaging picture book explores the importance of Country and the rich cultures of traditional custodians of the lands where we live. With vibrant illustrations and simple, repetitive text this book is a great conversation starter for young children around why we say acknowledgement and what it means, past injustices and the ancient sovereignty of First Nations people. This is a perfect addition to any library in time for Reconciliation Week.

What's in the Witch's Kitchen?

By Nick Sharratt



The witch has hidden a trick and a treat in her magical kitchen cupboards! Which one you find depends on how you open the doors. Whether it's frogspawn or popcorn, lollipops or rabbit plops, there are lots of hilarious rhymes to discover inside. This book has been a staple favourite at KLPS for a while now. If you ever want to see an entire preschool class shrieking with laughter, just watch Beanie read this story aloud.



FOCUS: Technology Overuse and the Fear of "Digital Dementia"

Can't bear to put down your smartphone? Electronic devices have made themselves indispensable, but experts say they have a considerable effect on our cognitive function.

The advent of technology has undoubtedly changed the landscape of modern society. Although there was once a time when electronic devices were scarce, it now feels impossible to get through a day without reaching for them. Rapid digital innovation made possible tech-centric routines that have progressed into altogether tech-reliant lifestyles. While these devices have certainly made life easier, more efficient and more convenient in a myriad of ways, digital technology overuse may be causing more harm than good. In fact, our dependence on internet-enabled devices could lead to "digital" dementia — a term coined by German neuroscientist Manfred Spitzer to describe a decline in cognitive abilities more commonly linked with brain injuries. Spitzer argues that relying on digital media is significantly detrimental to our brain health and its impacts severe enough to interfere with our daily lives. Is there reason to believe that digital dementia is real?

Outsourcing Memory According to Spitzer, technology has allowed people to outsource mental activity by storing endless amounts of information such as phone numbers and schedules. "People choose not to memorise information because it is so easily accessible on their devices," says David Copeland, an associate professor of psychology and director of the Reasoning and Memory Lab at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "Because we are using these devices instead of memorising, then our memorisation skills might diminish." Technology has markedly changed how we seek, store and recall information. According to a 2011 study, the cognitive consequence of having easily accessible data on the internet is knowing where to find information rather than recalling information itself. And a 2016 study concluded that having available data online may remove the need to commit information to memory. Therefore, because information can be retrieved without consulting the memory, using technology as an external memory source (even unintentionally) can lead to reduced learning efforts.

Additionally, multitasking practices fostered by technology use can impair the ability to detect and selectively respond to a given stimulus. "In most circumstances, people were not built to multitask," Copeland says, "and when we try to do it, we are typically just rapidly switching from one task to the other instead of focusing on the most important one. This can possibly lead to us not doing either task very well."

Nowadays, many of us make a habit out of media multitasking — the consumption of multiple streams of media simultaneously. Mindlessly scrolling through social media while half-heartedly watching television is common, since neither type of media is very demanding. However, recent studies show that media multitasking is associated with decreased attentional control and increased mind-wandering and distractibility. And a longitudinal survey of teenagers aged 15 and 16 found that using digital media more often can increase the likelihood of exhibiting symptoms like inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity, further demonstrating the impact of technology on concentration.

Gauging the Good and the Bad Increased screen time is shown to cause poorer language acquisition, executive functioning, and cognitive and brain development in children, while excessive internet use is often linked with technology addiction and social isolation in young adults. As a whole, it appears that technology use does have plenty of negative impacts on our cognitive abilities. However, more research is needed to understand whether these impacts are only temporary or if they're causing a long-term, steady deterioration that warrants the label of "dementia."

"The relationships between brain function and behaviours related to [technology] use is still developing," says Marc Potenza, a professor of psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine. "Larger studies, longitudinal studies, are going to be very helpful in understanding more specifics regarding how specific types and patterns of internet use may be influencing people and influencing them at a brain-behaviour relationship."

When studying the harmful effects of technology, it's equally important to acknowledge its potential benefits to understand how each person's digital behaviour plays a role. For instance, technology may be beneficial when it comes to stimulating the brain and improving reaction time, but ultimately, more studies are needed to understand both positive and negative impacts and the situations in which they occur.

"I think it's clear that people are using digital technologies for different purposes, and different types and patterns of technology use may have different impacts on people," Potenza says. Users and clinicians alike must understand how various types and patterns of screen time can have different effects, which may help lessen the gravity of potential harm.

Digital Detox Interventions To avoid the negative impacts of technology, many choose to reassess their relationship with it and gradually reduce the time they spend using electronic devices. This awareness of living tech-dependent lifestyles and intention for better tech-life balances encourage people to undergo a "digital detox," the voluntary and intentional abstinence from technology use

"If people are concerned with the effects of technology on their cognitive abilities, they can take breaks from it," Copeland says. "However, benefits might be affected by what you choose to do instead." For instance, reducing smartphone use to meditate or read books can potentially improve memory and attention or prevent cognitive decline, but doing another mindless activity might not be as beneficial, he adds. There's no hard and fast rule when it comes to digital detoxing because it can be modified depending on a person's needs. Whether you give up technology for seven straight days, go device free once every week or restrict a single app or device, a digital detox has the potential to mitigate the harmful effects of technology on cognitive function and overall wellbeing. And it has the potential to benefit anyone. Abstaining from social media completely or even limiting its use is also beneficial — these things can enhance mental wellbeing and social connectedness, reduce the risk of compulsive smartphone use, and improve mood, sleep and anxiety. Addressing the negative impacts of technology is still an ongoing area of investigation, and in some ways, the limited information on prevention and treatment approaches has yet to catch up with the rapid development of digital technologies, the way they are used and the problems that arise from them, Potenza says.

To reduce the risk of cognitive impairment, as well as possible psychological or physical harm, it helps to use electronic devices with more intention and purpose. "As with most things, if you are at all concerned about the effects of technology, then it is probably best to use tech in moderation," Copeland says. By becoming more mindful of the use of technology, adverse and long-term effects may be avoided.

Source: Delgado, Carla. (2021, September 20). Technology Overuse and the Fear of "Digital Dementia": What You Need to Know Retrieved from <https://www.discovermagazine.com/health/technology-overuse-and-the-fear-of-digital-dementia-what-you-need-to-know>



THE RHYMING GAME

Children love the rhyming combinations of popular authors like Dr. Seuss. Build on that by having children think of as many rhyming words as possible on your next car ride. Start with easy words like cat. Another fun rhyming game is to have the passengers in the vehicle talk in rhyme until you get to your destination. For example, if your child asks you “Are we there yet?” You answer, “No, are you upset?”

Source: www.newfolks.com/activities/literacy-games-kids/

HEALTH & SAFETY: Benefits of Family Dinners

Our belief in the “magic” of family dinners is grounded in research on the physical, mental and emotional benefits of regular family meals.

Over three decades of research have shown that regular family meals offer a wide variety of physical, social-emotional and academic benefits. While some of these benefits can be gained through other activities, eating together is the only single activity that is known to provide all of them at the same time.

We recommend combining food, fun and conversation at mealtimes because those three ingredients are the recipe for a warm, positive family dinner — the type of environment that makes these scientifically proven benefits possible.

Some of the specific benefits of family dinners are:

- Better academic performance
- Higher self-esteem
- Greater sense of resilience
- Lower risk of substance abuse
- Lower risk of teen pregnancy
- Lower risk of depression
- Lower likelihood of developing eating disorders
- Lower rates of obesity
- Better cardiovascular health in teens
- Bigger vocabulary in pre-schoolers
- Healthier eating patterns in young adults

There are also benefits for adults, including:

- Better nutrition, more fruits and vegetables and less fast food
- Less dieting
- Increased self-esteem
- Lower risk of depression

Researchers found that for young children, dinnertime conversation boosts vocabulary even more than being read aloud to. The researchers counted the number of rare words – those not found on a list of 3,000 most common words – that the families used during dinner conversation. Young children learned 1,000 rare words at the dinner table, compared to only 143 from parents reading storybooks aloud. Children who have a large vocabulary read earlier and more easily.

Older children also reap intellectual benefits from family dinners. For school-age youngsters, regular mealtime is an even more powerful predictor of high achievement scores than time spent in school, doing homework, playing sports or doing art.

Other researchers reported a consistent association between family dinner frequency and teen academic performance. Adolescents who ate family meals 5 to 7 times a week were twice as likely to get A’s in school as those who ate dinner with their families fewer than two times a week.

You can read about all the additional benefits at <https://theconversation.com/science-says-eat-with-your-kids-34573> but, of course, the real power of dinners lies in their interpersonal quality. If family members sit in stony silence, if parents yell at each other, or scold their kids, family dinner won’t confer positive benefits. Sharing a roast chicken won’t magically transform parent-child relationships. But dinner may be the one time of the day when a parent and child can share a positive experience – a well-cooked meal, a joke, or a story – and these small moments can gain momentum to create stronger connections away from the table.

The Family Dinner Project. (May 22, 2022). Science says: eat with your kids. Retrieved from thefamilydinnerproject.org/about-us/benefits-of-family-dinners/

Ketchell, Misha. (May 22, 2022). Benefits of Family Dinners. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/science-says-eat-with-your-kids-34573>

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY SCAVENGER HUNT

One of the best ways to celebrate ‘World Environment Day’ is to get outside and experience nature. While exploring complete a scavenger hunt. Below is an example. Customise your list for your own local environment. Write the items you’re looking for on a piece of paper with bug check boxes to tick off when you find or do each item.

Scavenger hunt list:

1. Draw a picture of 3 different flowers or plants.
2. Spot a pelican or seagull.
3. Spot a bee.
4. Take a photo of an animal you see.
5. Safely collect any rubbish you see.
6. Hug a tree.



7. Find a smooth rock
8. Find something rough.

Remember to only observe, do not disturb or take things out of the environment.

What's happening in each Nest?

Bilby Nest

Last term we spent time thinking about and designing enclosures for our chickens, who are in sore need of a new home. The heavy rain experienced through March and April prompted the children to consider the needs of the chickens in a new light; namely a strong, waterproof roof to keep them warm and dry. Debates around the properties of different materials were had, with some children arguing to 'make it out of wood', 'it needs to be made out of bricks' and 'steel is the strongest'.



This term we have delved deeper into the children's theories by experimenting with wood to gain a better understanding of the material; where it comes from, why some wood is harder/softer than others and how it can be used in building and construction. The children also identified the need for the chickens to have entertainment and have been constructing toys using tools; "I'm making games for the chickens. The floor is lava and hopscotch."

Lots of discussions about the tools themselves have also emerged through these experiences. "If you have a screw then you need a screwdriver", "I have a drill at home" and "If you need to take a nail out of the wood you use this side of the hammer [pointing to the claw]."



Bowerbird Room June Newsletter

The children in the Bowerbird room have been busy investigating the concept of flood. Particularly the floods that occurred in northern NSW and how the local preschools were affected.

It has been a difficult concept for the children to grasp. We have been investigating emotions, how the flood water rose so high and what that means to us.

We have explored floods through the arts, sensory tubs and various stories relating to the floods. We also have investigated the art effect from the book FLOOD by Jackie French.



Through these experiences the children are learning constantly; about the world they live in, fine motor, early maths and literacy, cooperative learning, Australians First People's Country and developing our empathy for others.

Car Racing Videos

We have recently been extending on the one of the Lilli Pilli's favourite activities - Mobilo car creations and racing. The children requested to take videos of their car racing, eagerly watching the recordings after every race. We also experimented with recording in slo-mo, which soon became the preferred recording method. We have extended on this by discussing their different car racing designs and how to make different jump ramps



Lilli Pilli Nest

Key Word Sign

Key Word Sign's (KWS) are a way of communicating that uses hand signs to represent the main or key words in a sentence at the same time as the words are spoken. We are starting to incorporate KSW into our daily practice when communicating with children. Children respond and process information in different ways and KWS will support language development, support understanding and help communicate information.



PLAY WITH PURPOSE

Much of your child's day at our service revolves around playing fun games with educators and peers. While you may think these games your child is playing are just a way for them to enjoy their time away from home with their friends, many of those games are actually teaching them very important skills.

For most of us, our life consists of schedules and structure and running from one commitment to another. Between work and extracurricular activities, there often isn't a lot of time left for play or free time. Play becomes even more important for children in a pre-school setting because they may not have a lot of time for play otherwise.

Children are constantly asked to follow rules and adhere to schedules, so being able to play games with friends at pre-school allows them the opportunity to express themselves differently. Whether they are making up the game or expressing themselves and their emotions through games like role-playing, dress-up, or puppets, games help children learn how to solve problems and get creative. Playing games also helps children develop social skills as well as their language and counting skills without feeling like work. You may think a rousing game of *duck, duck, goose* or *musical chairs* is just a way for children to burn off some energy, and you're not wrong. However, these games are also teaching children some pretty great life skills. These games can teach children strategic skills, how to win and lose gracefully, how to practice self-control, and the importance of patience and taking turns. Games like *Simon Says* help children learn how to be leaders, while games like *hide-and-seek* teach children about problem-solving and critical thinking. Even though these games are a lot of fun for the children to participate in, they're also requiring your children to practice different skills and techniques as they play that they may not learn otherwise.

Playing games also helps your child with their memory, speech, and language abilities, as well as recognising words and letters.

Playing games like hide-and-seek, hopscotch, red light, green light and more at home can help your child build on these essential skills.

Catana, Kelli. (2022). *Those silly day care games kids play are secretly getting them ready for school*. Retrieved from www.newfolks.com/activities/day-care-games/

Congratulations Amberlene for completing your qualifications, well done!



New to the Mountains? New to parenting/caring?



Or, if you just want to know:

- What fun things you can do with your kids indoors, and outdoors?
- How can you find the support you are looking for?
- How to connect with other parents and young kids?

Go to: bmcc.nsw.gov.au/community/children-families

Additionally hard copies of Blue Mountains City Council Guide to Services and Activities for Families are available from Customer Services - 4780 5000.



Celebrating Families Week 15-21 May

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library provides books to eligible families

Eligible parents across the state are encouraged to sign their newborn children up to receive a free, brand new, age-appropriate book every month, until they turn five from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Families with children born from 1 January 2022 in 25 local government areas across NSW can reach out to their local library contact to take part.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is part of the NSW Government's [Brighter Beginnings initiative](#).

What to do next

Please share this opportunity with your families and networks.

For more information

Visit the [NSW Government's Brighter Beginnings website](#) to find your local library contact.

KATOOMBA LEURA PRESCHOOL FLOOD FUNDRAISING FUNATHON

A big thank you to our families who participated in the Funathon last week and helped support The Northern Rivers Preschools devastated by the recent floods.

We are so proud to let everyone know that our families have pledged a total amount of \$1002 so far!

If you have not returned your sponsorship form, please do so as soon as possible, we would love to reach \$2000 this week.



Feedback 
is always welcome

Katoomba Leura Preschool

Email: Dianne.katoombaleurapreschool@gmail.com
Phone number: 02 4782 1639