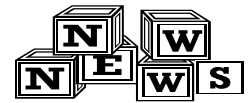


Transition to School News – August 2007



Welcome to our latest Transition to School Newsletter. Well we are now over half way through the year and it is extremely encouraging to see the progress the children in the Bush Room have made since January. It constantly amazes us how a curious child is so hungry to learn - which is why an emergent curriculum (following and extending on children's interests) is so effective.



Tiffany with Isabella, Joshua, Ophelia And MiaBella, cooperatively putting the alphabet in order at School Train.

Amanda, one of our Early Childhood Teachers, had the opportunity recently to attend a Transition to school forum run by the Department of Education for this district. Our DoCS advisor was there as well as many colleagues from local primary schools.

Some of the interesting information she found out is outlined below:

Some facts:

- ❖ 65% of children starting school in 2006 are 6 years old by February.
- ❖ About 80% of children will be accepted the first time they apply for school entry.

A discussion with a primary school teacher revealed some of what generally happens during a child's school interview:

Prior to the interview, children are asked to colour in a picture at home. During the interview process, the parents and child will meet teachers separately.

Parent interview: a teacher will ask parents about

- health issues
- any additional needs
- cultural background
- language spoken at home
- child's attendance in child-care and possible permission to speak to child care centre/teachers

Child Interview: a teacher will

- observe how readily your child separates from you.
- ask your child to draw and colour
- talk to your child throughout to gauge language and social skills.
- have your child 'talk' about their picture
- have them trace and name shapes
- have them cut something out
- ask your child to read and write numbers and answer basic number questions.

It is good to know that our Kangaroo's are all on track to be able to cope with such an interview with confidence. The children are continuing to mature daily and are more skilful at monitoring their feelings and negotiating for themselves. There are also still a number of months before these children start school, enabling them to become increasingly capable to successfully cope with the interview.

Orientation to primary school

We recommend that when orientation sessions occur at your child's future primary school, that you take the opportunity to familiarize your child with their new setting - these visits will make the move a lot smoother when the time comes.

The Kangaroos are spending a lot of time at the moment having discussions about primary schools, what will happen, what their fears are and what they are looking forward to. In the coming weeks, a local primary school teacher (Gabrielle Holloway, Atticus' mum) will be coming in to answer their questions. We have also created a 'school area' within the room which the children are loving.

One issue that was raised by Gabrielle was the need to teach children how to read the word 'boys' and 'girls' so that they are able to distinguish which bathroom to use - such a simple thing that can cause a great deal of anxiety for a child if they did not know. We will be working on this in the coming months.

We are going to continue our discussions with local schools and teachers so that we can target specific areas within our program. It is a good idea to read the day book over the coming months so that you can talk to your child about similar issues when they are at home.

MORE GOOD STUFF...

One speaker at the forum was from "Early Words" - more information is available at www.earlywords.info "Scientists have long believed that reading with children creates a context in which learning can occur. Today, however, they have evidence that reading is one of many experiences that actually influences the way young brains develop - that is, the way the brain circuitry is 'wired' "

The National Centre for Early Literacy (2004) has conducted a mega study ...involving families with children aged 0-5 years.

A summary of the key literacy practices they found to encourage early literacy are:

- Reading aloud to children
- Exposure to print
- Access to a well-stocked, comfortable, diverse book area.
- Opportunity to learn about sound sequences - through poetry, rhymes, word play.
- Dramatic play includes print material (for instance cook books in our shopping center)
- Writing/drawing table
- Development of adult's abilities to give feedback

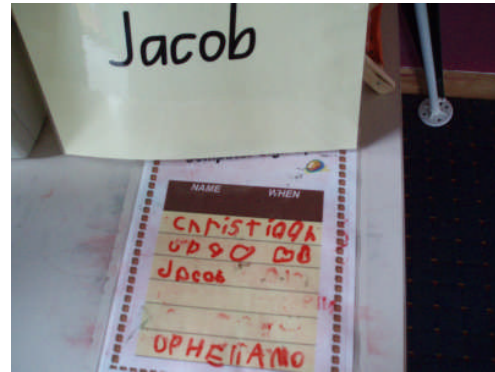


Pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-maths skills

There are many informal ways in which we extend on the above skills through our daily program and routine. Our learning centres, both indoors and outdoors are designed to offer children choice, challenge and an opportunity to explore and broaden their skills. We help to support and extend on children's pre-writing skills by exposing them to letters and words and writing down words on their 'work'. We have a **word wall** where we maintain a picture record of the children's growing vocabulary. Many of the children have shown an interest recently in writing words, as a result of this the teachers have been encouraging the children to cut out a picture of the item they want to spell and then the teachers

write the name of what is in the picture next to it. In this way the children are building their own resources to use whenever they want to write things.

The children are also exposed to a number of different literacy and numeric based computer programs that extend their knowledge of the alphabet, numbers and counting.



Jacob and others 'signing-up' to use the computer. Use of Name Cards encourages this competency.

We provide experiences that allow the children to explore the concepts of time, money, weight and measurement, all valuable skills which are developed over time.

Our every day transitions (between activities) and games also provide great opportunity to build on these skills (eg *if your name has a P in it, you may go and wash your hands*). The staff also try to incorporate these activities into the routines throughout the day - setting the table for lunch gives us an opportunity to extend their maths skills, eg 1 to 1 relations - *'there will be 6 children sitting at that table, can you put 6 plates out'*, these subtle extensions of the children's skills enable us to capitalize on every learning opportunity and help your children to become confident and interested learners.

As a final note, **please read the Day Books** everyday. They are a good source of information about the changes and additions to our Transition to School Program. We also have a number of books and leaflets in the foyer that can answer some of your questions. Our program is also documented on our **Transition to School** cupboard. (*The one with the trains on it in kangaroo room*). You will also find some great material there to aid in the Transition to School process. Please feel free to check these out.