

“YOU’RE BRAVER THAN YOU BELIEVE, AND STRONGER THAN YOU SEEM, AND SMARTER THAN YOU THINK.” — A.A. MINE

FEBRUARY
2023



ON *this* MONTH

AT HIGHLAND GROVE

Teddy Bear Picnic in the Moonbeam Room---week beginning Monday 6th of February.
Pet Collection Project in the Starlight Room
Family Photos for our ‘Family Community Boards’- all rooms. Thank you

AROUND THE COUNTRY

World Read Aloud Day -----1
World Wetlands Day ----- 2
Safer Internet Day ----- 7
Summer’s Day -----28

Each room is humming with happy, productive children, engaging educators and chatting families. We have been delighted by our start to the year. Thank you all so much.



Encouraging contact and bonds with animals, can help children build empathy (Thompson and Gullone, 2003).

Our new baby bunny, ‘Beetle’ has been a highlight as we begin the year. The children have enjoyed his visits in each of the rooms, and this week he has just begun to explore the grass . The children have also been enjoying feeding ‘Jax’, the axolotl and taking care of ‘Billy’, the budgie.

PUMPKIN PATCH:



How exciting! We have new arrivals in our ‘Pumpkin Patch’. Welcome to new baby Felicity, little sister for Sammy (in the Sunshine Room) and Charlotte. Congratulations Scott and Laura.
We are so pleased that Leo (Sunshine Room) and Harli’s little brother, Ziggy has arrived. Congratulations to Fiona and Michael.
Welcome also baby Ollie, little brother for Savannah (Sun). Congratulations Rom and Kate. Last but not least (just for now), hello to baby Elsie, little sister for Louis (Sun). Great news for Cat and Rory.



WORLD READ ALOUD DAY – FEBRUARY 1

Literacy is not a gift given just to some lucky ones, it is a foundational human right that brings joy, economic independence, gender equity and a pathway out of poverty. World Read Aloud Day has evolved into a global movement of millions of readers writers and listeners

coming together to honour **the joy and power of reading and sharing stories**, and continue expanding the definition and scope of global literacy. [Find out more here](#)

SAFER INTERNET DAY – FEBRUARY 7

Safer Internet Day is a worldwide event that raises awareness about online safety and encourages everyone to help create a better internet. Celebrated in 170 countries, Safer Internet Day is designed to bring the world together to make the internet a safer, more positive place. Find out how you can better support your family online by following the link below.

[Webinar and more eSAFETY information](#)

CHICKEN MEATBALLS WITH PESTO



PREP 20 min | COOK 10 min | SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

Chicken Meatballs:

- 1 kg chicken mince
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs, soaked in a 1/4 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup parmesan cheese, *grated*
- 1 tbs garlic, *minced*
- sea salt & pepper, *to season*

Basil Pistachio Pesto:

- 2 cups fresh basil leaves
- 1 cup baby spinach leaves
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/2 cup pistachios
- 1/2 cup parmesan, *grated*
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 3/4 cup olive oil

500 grams **spaghetti**, cooked according to packet instructions reserving 1 cup of cooking water

METHOD:

Place the mince, breadcrumbs, eggs, parmesan, garlic, salt and pepper into a large bowl and mix thoroughly to combine. **Take** 2 heaped tablespoons of mince and roll into rounds. **Heat** a little olive oil in a fry pan over medium-high heat. **Add** meatballs and cook 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally or until the meatballs are golden and cooked through. Set aside.

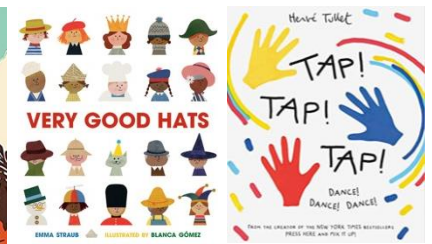
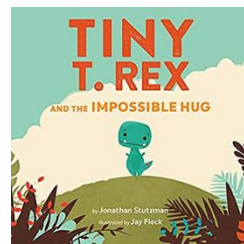
To make the Basil Pistachio Pesto: **Place** the basil, baby spinach, garlic, pistachios, parmesan, lemon juice and zest into the bowl of a food processor. Blitz for 1-2 minutes or until finely chopped. **With** the motor running, slowly add the olive oil and continue blitzing until thoroughly combined (scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary).

Pour the pesto over the cooked spaghetti with a splash of the reserved pasta water and toss to combine. **Top** spaghetti with cooked meatballs, fresh basil leaves and a grating of parmesan cheese. Enjoy x

Recipe and image from mylovelylittlelunchbox.com

Book reviews

Have you read these? Fun books to light up your day!



TINY T. REX AND THE IMPOSSIBLE HUG | JONATHAN STUTZMAN

Tiny T. Rex has a HUGE problem. His friend Pointy needs cheering up, and only a hug will do. But with his short stature and teeny T. Rex arms, is a hug impossible? Not if Tiny has anything to say about it! Join this plucky little dino in his very first adventure – a warm and funny tale that proves the best hugs come from the biggest hearts.

VERY GOOD HATS | EMMA STRAUB

The first picture book by bestselling novelist Emma Straub, author of This Time Tomorrow. This is a joyous, inventive, adorably illustrated read-aloud that will inspire kids to see ordinary objects in a whole new way. Some people think hats are fancy things you can buy at a dressy store, but that’s just the tip of the iceberg. In this book, acorns and raspberries are snug hats for your fingers, and an empty pudding cup is a good hat for a stuffed bear. Pyjama pants make dangly hats, books can be dramatic hats, and bubbles make very fine hats as well (if temporary). Readers will be delighted to discover that *anything* can be a hat if you believe it is. Hats are everywhere you look!

TAP! TAP! TAP! DANCE! DANCE! | HERVE TULLET

Read, play, and DANCE on the pages of this interactive and definitely out-of-the box picture book from the creator of Press Here! Starting with a gentle glide, growing in complexity and animation, finally building to a crescendo of colour, action, and movement--here's a book perfect for kids bursting with energy. A celebration not only of releasing emotion but also of carefully controlling motion and dexterity.



FOCUS: Household chores for children

Children can learn a lot from doing household chores. Doing chores helps children learn about what they need to do to care for themselves, a home and a family. They learn skills they can use in their adult lives, like preparing meals, cleaning, organising and keeping a garden. Being involved in chores also gives children experience of relationship skills like communicating clearly, negotiating, cooperating and working as a team.

Household chores: good for children, good for your family

When children contribute to family life, it helps them feel competent and responsible. Even if they don't enjoy the chore, when they keep going they get the feeling of satisfaction that comes with finishing a task. And sharing housework can also help families work better and reduce family stress. When children help out, chores get done sooner, and parents have less to do. This frees up time for the family to do fun things together.

How to get children involved in chores

It's best to start by choosing chores that work for children's ages and abilities. Chores that are too hard can be frustrating – or even dangerous – and chores that are too easy might be boring. Even young children can help with chores if you choose activities that are right for their age. You can start with simple jobs like packing up toys. Chores like this send the message that your child's contribution is important.

It's also important to think about **chores or tasks that get your child involved in caring for the family** as a whole. A simple one is getting your child to help with setting or clearing the table. Jobs like these are likely to give your child a sense of responsibility and participation. If your child is old enough, you can **have a family discussion about chores**. This can reinforce the idea that the whole family contributes to how the household runs. Children over six years old can help decide which chores they'd prefer.

You can **motivate your child to get involved in chores** by:

- doing the chore together until your child can do it on their own
- being clear about each person's chores for the day or week – write them down so they're easy to remember
- talking about why it's great that a particular job has been done
- showing an interest in how your child has done the job
- praising positive behaviour
- using a reward chart to track completed chores and give small rewards like choosing a TV program or family meal.



Pocket money for children's chores

Some children are motivated to do chores for pocket money. But some families believe all family members have a responsibility to help and don't give out pocket money for chores. If you decide to pay pocket money for chores, **explain chores clearly** so there's no confusion or bargaining about what needs to be done and when. Some families don't link chores to pocket money but might pay extra pocket money for extra chores.

Chores for children of different ages

Here are some ideas for chores for children of different ages.

Toddlers (2-3 years)

- Pick up toys and books.
- Put clothes on clothes hooks.
- Set placemats on the dinner table.

Pre-schoolers (4-5 years)

- Set the table for meals.
- Help with preparing meals, under supervision.
- Help put clean clothes into piles for each family member, ready to fold.
- Help with grocery shopping and putting away groceries.

Source: raisingchildren.net.au (2020). Household chores for children. Retrieved from <https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/family-life/routines-rituals/chores-for-children>



PHONICS BASKET

Set up a fun phonics activity for pre-schoolers and school aged children with this sorting objects into baskets game!

Use three or four baskets and label them with one letter each. Find small toys, items, and pictures that begin with the letter on each of the baskets, and have your children sort the items into each basket. This game will help children learn 12 letters as well as determine beginning sounds. **FIND OUT MORE HERE**



HEALTH & SAFETY: Home safety hazards

Being aware of hazards within your home is the first step to preventing them. Some of the most common hazards at home include fire, poisoning and allergies. There may also be risks posed by your home's contents, such as falls, choking, cuts and burns. This is not an exhaustive list, so you may find it useful to do your own research and conduct a risk assessment of your home.

Fire - Fires at home can be highly dangerous, not only to your property but also to you and the people you live with. Be sure to have working smoke alarms in the house tested regularly, and a fire plan with safety protocols in place. To reduce the risk of home fire, it's important to:

- reduce flammable clutter, such as old boxes or paper
- never leave cooking unattended
- maintain any fireplaces and chimneys, with regular inspections from a professional, and
- assess electrical systems, and seek the assistance of an electrician if you notice frayed or loose wires.

Poisoning - Several household items present poisoning risks, such as cleaning and maintenance supplies, medications and petrol. Keeping these things locked away and out of reach of children can reduce the chance of them being accidentally ingested. And when storing these items, try not to keep chemicals or petrol in bottles that could be mistaken for something that's drinkable, like a soft drink bottle. Another hazard to be aware of is carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide poisoning can occur in homes with appliances that use fossil fuels, like gas. It's very difficult to detect carbon monoxide, but you can reduce your risk of exposure by installing a carbon monoxide detector. Regular maintenance of appliances that might cause a leak, such as heaters and ovens, is also important.

Allergies - Mould grows when water condenses onto surfaces, like walls and window frames, and is directly related to humidity within your home. If you have an allergy to mould, symptoms can include sneezing, itchy eyes and headaches. To keep mould at bay, remove condensation from surfaces in your home, especially in damp areas like your bathroom and kitchen, and keep air vents clear. You may also benefit from using an air purifier.

Water - Water safety depends on 100% active adult supervision whenever your child is around water. This includes around baths, pools, ponds, dams, rivers, creeks, baths and buckets with water. If you have a pool, by law you must have a pool fence and self-locking gate that meets Australian Standard AS:1926. Regularly check and maintain

the pool fence and gate to make sure it's in proper working order. Never leave the gate propped open.

For bath safety, always supervise and give your full attention to babies and children under five years in the bath. Never leave children alone in the bath or bathroom. Never leave older children or siblings to supervise.

Falls - are the most common cause of injuries and visits to hospital in every age group. You can help to keep your child safe by watching the new skills they're learning, and the new places they can reach – and then adjusting your home. For example: When your child starts climbing, lock windows – particularly upper-storey windows – restrict window openings, or shield them with firmly attached window guards. This will stop your child climbing out and falling. Leave a hall light on at night, or use sensor lights to make it easier for older children to get to the toilet without tripping

Choking - Choking and strangulation risks are a common hazard at home. Food that isn't prepared well may present a risk. Consider your child's age when presenting them with food. In addition to food, there are objects in your home, such as cords and small toys, that could be dangerous. Consider doing a sweep around your home where children might be present, to ensure choking and strangulation hazards are out of the way. For more information about choking read the **information linked here**.

Burns and scalds prevention - To prevent burns, keep your child away from fire and hot surfaces. Keep a close eye on your child whenever they're near things that can burn – especially around stoves, ovens, microwaves, heaters and other appliances. Hot food and drinks and too-hot baths are a major cause of scalds for babies and children. Here are some simple safety precautions to avoid these risks: Keep hot food and drinks away from and out of reach of children, avoid holding your child if you're having hot food and drinks. Always test bath water temperature before bathing children – the safest bath temperature is 37-38°C.

Cuts - Knowing about items that present a potential risk of cuts and scrapes can help you avoid them. From a tin lid in an open recycling bin to sharp outdoor tools, it's useful to be aware of the risk so you can mitigate it. This might mean: ensuring bins have a lid, keeping kitchen tools, like sharp knives, stored safely, pointing sharp items such as forks and knives down if you use a dishwasher, installing a lock on your bathroom cupboard so items like razors can't be accessed easily, and putting tools away.

Source: raisingchildren.net.au (2021). Child Safety at Home Retrieved from <https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/safety/home-pets/home-safety>

GIO (2021). What are the most common home safety hazards? Retrieved from <https://www.gio.com.au/know-more/improving-your-home/most-common-home-safety-hazards.html>



MAKE YOUR OWN CLEANING PRODUCTS

Turn cleaning day into a science experiment and mix up some non-toxic sprays and solutions to use around the house with your child. Combine baking soda with warm water to create a deodorizer or simple kitchen cleaner, and use it to wipe down the inside of your microwave or refrigerator. Or, mix dish soap with warm water to clean the countertops. When you make your own cleaners you save money, reduce your toxic load and reuse bottles you would have usually thrown out! You can find a large range of recipes **here**





NATURE WALK

Going on a nature walk and deliberately noticing things encourages children to observe with all their senses. Children can learn to focus their attention and take in the details of things around them. It can be a peaceful, reflective experience for you and your children.

All you need is somewhere to walk – You can simply venture out your front door, walk around your local area, a local park or nature reserve. You could also plan a longer excursion and head to a beach or national park.

Remove barriers – A nature walk can happen in all weather, just be prepared! Always wear appropriate shoes for your environment. If it's sunny remember hats, sun smart clothing, sunscreen and bug spray. If it's raining bring raincoats and chuck a towel in the car just in case there is puddle splashing along the way.

Don't over plan – Don't rush. Try to let your children lead you where it is safe to do so. Watch them discover and show you things.

Noticing nature walk - Encourage your child to pay attention to the environment with all their senses. You can do this by asking questions as you go. For example:

- **Seeing questions:** what can you see? Look all around you, up at the sky and down at the ground.
- **Smelling questions:** what can you smell? Can you describe the smell? Leafy? Like mud?
- **Hearing questions:** what can you hear? Birds? The wind? Other people?
- **Feeling and touching questions:** what can you feel? Is the sun warm? Is the ground rough or smooth?

Raisingchildrennetwork.com (2022). *Noticing nature walk: activity for children 3-6 years* Retrieved from <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/activity-guides/sensory-play/noticing-nature-walk-activity-for-children-3-6-years>

STAFFING:

Welcome to Bella! Bella is our most recent trainee; she is completing her Certificate 3 in Education and Care over the coming 18 months. Bella is currently working as part of the Sunshine Room Team.



Karen, our Office Manager is away for a week to celebrate a special Wedding Anniversary. Any emails will be kept for her return. Karen usually works Mondays through to Thursdays.

Ella will be away for a week later in February. She will be replaced by familiar educators in the Moonbeam Room.

Did You Know:

- Emma fills an Inclusion Support Role in the Moonbeam Room on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. This is an additional educator position and increases our child to staff ratio.
- Zoe is an additional educator this year and will 'float' into all 3 rooms where required. Keep an eye out for her smiling face!
- If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.



THE BODY COACH

Short simple activities to get some active minutes in the day.

We love the Body Coach, he is on a mission to show the world that fitness can be fun for the whole family. Jump online and do one of his 5 min workouts together, try this one!

Joe is coming to Australia in February, if you live near Sydney or Melbourne jump on and grab a ticket and workout with him. Find out more here

Feedback 
is always welcome

