



ON *this* MONTH

AT HIGHLAND GROVE

'Twilight Christmas Evenings' -----Mon.9th & Wed. 11th
Week of Chn's Christmas Party Lunches--16th until 20th
Final day of HGP for 2024 -----Fri.20th Dec
First day Back for 2025 ----- Wed 16th Jan

AROUND THE COUNTRY

International Day of People with Disabilities ----- 3
Human Rights Day ----- 10
Christmas Day ----- 25
New Years Day ----- 31

Please help us celebrate Christmas by joining in our annual 'Giving Tree'. This year we are giving to the Salvation Army. Simply leave a gift in a gift bag under our tree in the foyer by Tuesday 10th of December. Thank you for helping us support families a little less fortunate.

Final Newsletter for 2024

Thank you to our preschool community for a rich and rewarding 2024 with your family. We'd like to wish all our HGP families a Safe and Happy Christmas and a Wonderful New Year.

For the families returning in 2025, we look forward to re-newing relationships and building on your child's early learning experiences. For families leaving HGP, we wish you much joy. All the very best for our lovely Moonbeamers who are taking on the next adventure of 'Big School'.



During the final week of preschool, families only need to send morning tea and a water bottle. Each day the children will have a party lunch. The cost of \$8.80 will be charged to family's accounts each day their child attends that week.

We will also be loving water play this entire week. Children are encouraged to arrive in their swimmers and to bring a hat and towel. Please be sure to LABEL everything! Send also clothes for your child to change into. It will be fun!





HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – DECEMBER 10

Human Rights Day is a global observance dedicated to promoting and celebrating the fundamental rights and freedoms that all individuals are entitled to, regardless of their nationality, gender, race, religion, or background.

It serves as a reminder of the importance of upholding human rights and addressing issues related to social justice and equality. [Learn more here](#)

KMART WISHING TREE APPEAL – DECEMBER

For 37 years, The Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal has helped assist families and people in need in our communities at Christmas and beyond. Kmart and their long-standing partner The Salvation Army, are working together to create positive change. You can help by giving a gift in store or donating money. [Find out more here.](#)

SPELT GINGERBREAD



PREP 10 min | REST 30-45 min | COOK 8-10min

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups white spelt flour
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp cinnamon and nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp bicarb soda
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 125g unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/2 cup coconut or rapadura sugar
- 1 egg

Preheat oven to 180 C. **Combine** dry ingredients in a medium sized bowl and set aside.

Heat a saucepan to medium heat and melt the butter. Once melted, **stir** in the maple syrup and coconut sugar until combined and the sugar has dissolved.

Whisk the egg in a separate bowl and add to the dry ingredients followed by the wet mixture.

Stir to combine then place on a pastry mat or floured surface and knead until a smooth dough forms.

Place in the fridge for 30-45 mins to chill. Use a rolling pin to **roll** dough out until 5mm thick.

Cut into cookies or use a template for a gingerbread house. Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes and cool completely on a wire rack before icing. Use a royal icing recipe to make some fun designs.

Jo Kate is a realistic nutritionist offering simple & effective ideas, tips and recipes to inspire healthy living. Find more delicious recipes at jokatenutrition.com

Podcast Reviews

Summer holidays often means road trips!
Add these to your family podcast line up.



Tumble Science | Science podcast for kids

Tumble is a science podcast for kids, to be enjoyed by the entire family. Listen to stories about science discoveries, with the help of scientists! Join Lindsay and Marshall as they ask questions, uncover mysteries, and share what science is all about.



Dirt Girl's Nature Detective Academy | Dirtgirl

dirtgirl's Nature Detective Academy is an invitation for kids to switch on their senses. From seeds to trees, butterflies to chickens, clouds to rainbows – dirtgirl wants to share the little things that make a big difference to our planet. Each episode is full of fun things to do; poems, tips, amazing facts, and real-life nature sounds to connect you with the outside.



HEALTH AND SAFETY: Have a water safe summer

In Australia we have access to a wonderful variety of water environments for our recreational activities. These environments, however, can be dangerous to children. Tragically, children represent the most vulnerable group in relation to drowning, particularly those under 5 years of age.

Whether at home, visiting family and friends or on holiday, it is always important to keep safety in mind when children are in or near water. Drowning can occur quickly and quietly, without any warning noises. Sadly, on average, one child dies each week in Australia because of preventable drowning.

Most children who drown in home pools fall in by accident. Children drown quickly and silently, often without making any noise or splashing. Young children are naturally curious and attracted to water but do not yet understand the concept of danger, while parents can become complacent about safety around a familiar home environment.

In cases of child drowning in home pools, designated supervisors were often distracted by everyday tasks, such as a conversation with another person, answering the door or attending to another child, all of which give a young child time to wander away unnoticed.

It's important to remember though that children can drown in all sorts of water.

Children can drown in shallow water: swimming pools, spas, bathtubs, rivers, creeks and oceans, dams and lakes

Children also drown in less obvious locations: nappy buckets, toilets, water tanks, water features, fish ponds, pets' water bowls.

Keeping children safe around water constitutes following the four key actions of **Royal Life Saving's Keep Watch Campaign**:

- **Supervise.** Actively supervise children around water
- **Restrict.** Restrict children's access to water
- **Teach.** Teach children water safety skills
- **Respond.** Learn how to respond in the case of an emergency

Children must be supervised by an adult when in, on or around water. Active supervision means focusing all of your attention on your child, all of the time. You must be within arms' reach,

interacting with your child and be ready to enter the water in case of an emergency.

Restrict access to water by correctly installing and regularly maintaining a pool fence with a gate that self-closes and self-latches. Remember to never prop the gate open.

Buckets, **bathtubs**, eskies (coolers), water fountains and features, fishponds, drains, **inflatable pools**, water tanks and even pet bowls all pose a significant drowning risk especially to younger children. It is crucial that these are emptied, covered, put away and not left where they can fill up with water. Inflatable pools should be emptied after use and stored securely out of reach of children.

Teaching children water safety skills is an important step in ensuring they grow up to become confident around water. Familiarise children with water by enrolling them in water awareness classes, spending time with them in the water and establishing basic water safety rules.

All parents are encouraged to learn **cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)**. Knowing how to respond in an emergency could mean the difference between life and death.

Free online CPR training

The NSW Health Training for Parents program is a free online program developed in partnership with clinicians from the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network to teach the steps involved in Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for a babies (aged less than 12 months) and children (aged over one year). The steps can also be used on an adult. Follow the link below to access these modules. Additional courses for Automated External Defibrillators (AED) use and choking can also be found here.



Access CPR training via the QR code.

Source: NSW Health & Sydney Children's Hospitals Network. (June, 2024). **CPR training modules**
Retrieved <https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/cpr-training-modules>

Source: <https://www.kidsafensw.org/safety/home-community/water-safety/>
<https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/stay-safe-active/locations/water-safety-at-home>

READING AND BOOK-BASED ACTIVITIES

Getting hands-on with preschool math games and counting with cubes is a great way to get a "feel" for math. Give your child a pair of dice and blocks, LEGO bricks, or Unifix Cubes. Roll one die and build a tower with that number of blocks or cubes.

They then roll the second die and add that number to the tower. Now count how many cubes or bricks in the tower. Make another tower and compare towers. Ask questions like, Which is tallest? How many cubes is it? Which is shortest? How many cubes in that one? Take towers apart and begin again. Source: <https://www.weareteachers.com/preschool-math-games/>



FOCUS ARTICLE: Make your New Year's resolutions a family affair

It's that time of year again, when many of us make New Year's resolutions that we have the best intentions of keeping. But despite our initial efforts, we often don't follow through. A lot of us fail because we either make unrealistic goals or we lack a support system that will help keep us honest. If you want to keep this year's resolutions, make a realistic goal. Your goal should be specific, measurable, and doable within a reasonable period of time. Being supported and held accountable by others will further help you reach your goal, so consider making resolutions as a family.

Families Who Make Goals Together Keep Goals Together

While making a family resolution may seem as sensible as herding cats, it's worth the effort. But setting family resolutions will only work if each member of the family feels invested. And for everyone to feel invested, shared goals need to be recognized and treated equally within the family. If everyone feels they have a stake, then you have created the foundation for achieving your shared goals. Making goals as a family has a distinct advantage over making a personal goal as an individual. For example, if you go running every day with a friend, you're more likely to continue making progress because you will feel supported. Making goals public to your family and working together to achieve them provides the outside encouragement we all need to keep resolutions.

Alone You Will Struggle; Together You Will Thrive

Many of our routines are built around work and family, but your autonomy and ability to make personal changes to your life can be undermined by your greater responsibilities. So if you want to exercise more or eat healthier, you are more likely to do so if your other family members exercise with you and eat the same things you do. But if you are the only one in your family that is actively working towards a goal, constantly removing yourself from your other family members' habits (e.g. eating a salad during family pizza night) will eventually erode your desire to keep your resolutions. You might stick with eating salads for a while, but that pepperoni pizza will be



more tempting when everyone else is enjoying it but you. You shouldn't force your family to do what you're doing, especially if they don't want or need to, but you can easily find ways for you and your family to work together and achieve a common goal.

8 Resolutions That Are Easier Kept as a Family

Some habits are truly personal and require individual accountability, but many common resolutions can be adopted by the entire family with a little planning and coordination. Maybe you're the only one who needs to lose weight or create a better diet, but there are other ways to encourage your whole family to work together.

1. Eat Meals Together
2. Go to Bed at the Same Time
3. Unplug Devices
4. Create Reading Time
5. Exercise as a Family
6. Work Toward a Financial Goal
7. Switch Out the Soda
8. Go Meatless One Day a Week



This is just a quick read of this article. Read the in full via the QR code.

Down, Kelsy. (March, 2024). Make Your New Year's Resolutions a Family Affair Retrieved from <https://www.gottman.com/blog/make-new-years-resolutions-family-affair/>



REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLING CHRISTMAS

This year don't buy wrapping paper or Christmas cards make your own or better yet use art already created.

Collect your kids drawings and paintings – After your child's art has spent its time on the fridge, tuck it away ready to be used as wrapping paper or as part of a Christmas card. Family friends and family will love receiving gifts and cards created with love.

If you do have to buy cards or wrapping paper – Choose cards and paper not wrapped in plastic. Check that items you are buying are made of recycled materials. You could even try sending e-cards this year.

D-eco-rations – Many of us reuse our decorations year after year already but if you are planning on buying new ones this year why not try making some instead. Turn off your lights at night and try to use LED ones instead.

Presents – Take a look around your home. How many things do you already have? Do you really need more stuff? Maybe instead of buying more things this year, you could try an 'experience' Christmas. Like, a **trip out to a theme park** with a friend. Or a **surfing lesson**! You can also ask your family to get all their gifts at **online eco-stores** this year!

We can all play a part in helping the earth this Christmas.

Source: <https://www.natgeokids.com/au/kids-club/cool-kids/general-kids-club/eco-friendly-christmas/>





MUSIC AND DANCE

If you've ever witnessed pre-schoolers grooving to music, you can't help but smile. They obviously love the feeling of moving to the tunes we play for them. But music and dance are much more than just fun activities for children. In fact, it's very beneficial for pre-schoolers to participate in these "performing arts". Here's why:

Music and dance engages the brain: Children learn new things, like sounds, words and patterns through music. And with dance, they can explore and control their body movements. These activities are great for development and stimulate connections in the growing brain.

It helps cultivate communication skills: Bringing together kids with songs, rhymes and actions lets them discover how to interact and connect with others. They develop listening and social skills that will give them self-confidence and better prepare them for school.

Music and Dance allows kids to express themselves Happy, nervous, tired? Engaging in creative activities lets kids release their emotions and express their feelings. It's a fantastic opportunity for children who aren't yet able to put their thoughts into words.

It helps foster physical skills: Young musicians and dancers learn skills like balance, control and coordination. Singing and movement is also good aerobic exercise- linked to stress reduction, physical fitness and overall good health.

Music and dance contribute to creativity and imagination: With children spending more time in front of screens rather than physically playing, music and dance encourages them to be curious and imaginative. This creative outlet can also give them opportunities to learn about other cultures through the arts.

Source: <https://www.nvrc.ca/notices-events-blog/active-living-blog/5-benefits-music-and-dancing-preschoolers>

National Quality Framework | Quality Area 1:
Element 1.1 – *Program*. The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STAFFING:

A reminder that our much-loved teacher, Michelle is retiring from teaching at the end of this year.

Michelle has been fundamental to the culture of kindness, relationships and quality early learning at HGP, and we will miss her. I know that you join us in wishing her all the best.

Mia will complete her Certificate 3 at the end of 2024 and remain at HGP in a fulltime role. (Well done, Mia!). Cath W has completed her Cert 3 and takes up a 3 day per week role permanently. (They are both in the Sunshine Room in 2025). Aline continues to work hard towards this same qualification. Bella is returning to the starlight Room, after having her baby Evie. She will be working on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

We are so proud of Ali, Ebony & Jade who have all achieved new qualifications at the end of 2024. Ali has worked so hard to complete her Bachelor of Teaching (E/C). Jade and Ebony will start 2025 as Diploma Educators. We are very proud of these determined and passionate educators.

There will also be a new trainee as part of the team in 2025 who will 'float' between all 3 rooms.



The after dinner walk

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

Maybe a little more than 5 minutes however, very worthwhile. After dinner is finished for the night take a walk, down your street, to a local park. It doesn't have to be a long walk but getting out into the fresh air while the days are long can be a great way to get some extra movement into your day.

Walking after meals improves overall well-being, help digestion, and reduce blood sugar levels. Doing an activity as a family post meal can also give you a chance to unplug and connect. Why not wait until dark and check out your local Christmas Lights displays.