



# ON *this* MONTH

AT HIGHLAND GROVE

'Twilight Christmas Evenings' -----Mon.8<sup>th</sup> & Wed. 10<sup>th</sup>  
Week of Chn's Christmas Party Lunches--15<sup>th</sup> until 19<sup>th</sup>  
Final day of HGP for 2025 -----Fri. 19<sup>th</sup> Dec  
First day Back for 2026 ----- Wed 14<sup>th</sup> 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 the morning of Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> of December. Thank you for helping us support families a little less fortunate.***



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 having 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 and send clothes for your child to change into. It will be fun!





### IDPWD - DECEMBER 3

Every day, people of all abilities bring energy, ideas and heart to our families, schools and communities. On December 3, we mark the **International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD)**, we reflect on the 2025 theme: "Fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress." That means truly recognising

that inclusion isn't a luxury, but a foundation for everyone's growth and wellbeing. From the playground through to home, work and community spaces, when people with disability are welcomed, heard and valued, our society becomes richer, stronger and more connected. [Find out more here](#)

### KMART WISHING TREE APPEAL – DECEMBER

For 38 years, the Wishing Tree Appeal has helped bring joy and practical gifts to children and families in need. This Christmas season, by donating a wish-listed item at your local store, you'll help light up someone's Christmas and reinforce our community's spirit of care and generosity. [Learn more here](#)

## CHRISTMAS BROWNIES

PREP 15 min | COOK 30 min | SERVES 16



### INGREDIENTS

85 g dark chocolate  
1/2 cup butter  
1 1/3 cup caster sugar  
2 eggs  
1 tbs vanilla extract  
1/2 tsp sea salt flakes  
2/3 cup plain flour

### To Decorate:

50 g dark chocolate, melted  
3 candy canes, crushed

**1. Preheat** oven to 175 C and line a 20 cm x 20 cm square tin with baking paper. Grease the baking paper with a little butter. Set aside.

**2. Place** chocolate and butter into a heat-proof bowl and place over a saucepan of simmering water. Do not let the bottom of the bowl touch the water. Stir the mixture until melted. Take off heat and allow to cool for 5 minutes.

**3. Add** the sugar, eggs and vanilla to the melted chocolate and whisk to combine.

**4. Add** the salt and plain flour and whisk to combine.

**5. Pour** the batter into the prepared tin. **Bake** for 25-30 minutes or until a skewer inserted removes cleanly. Allow to cool in the tin.

**To Decorate:** Drizzle melted dark chocolate over brownies and top with crushed candy canes. Cut into 16 pieces.

Enjoy x

## Podcast Reviews

*Whether you're hitting the road for Christmas or just popping to the supermarket, don't forget to add these to your playlist.*



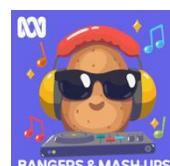
### Road Trip | ABC Kids

Join us on a ride with ABC Kids listen's Road Trip podcast, the ultimate car companion packed with stories, songs and games designed to keep children engaged and entertained. Wherever your journey takes you this school holiday, let the fun begin!



### Ears On | ABC Kids

Tune into the Play School **Ears On** podcast from ABC Kids Listen. A delightful audio adventure where familiar Play School friends spark curiosity, invite imaginative play and create joyful moments for young children. Perfect for listening at home, in the car or during quiet time, it's an engaging way to help your little ones explore together while having fun.



### Bangers & Mashups | ABC Kids

Turn up the volume with **Bangers & Mash-Ups**, the high-energy ABC Kids Listen show that gets everyone moving. DJ Bangers mixes kid-friendly beats with familiar tunes to create a fun, dance-ready soundtrack for your day. Children will love the playful mash-ups, and grown-ups might just find themselves dancing along too. Add it to your playlist for guaranteed smiles and wiggles.



# HEALTH AND SAFETY: Snack Time Savvy for Pre-schoolers

As the holiday break sets in and regular routines fall away, many families find themselves spending far more time in the kitchen trying to keep up with “snacky” children. Without school or preschool structure, little ones often ask for food simply because the day feels different and being asked for a snack six times before 9:30 am can test even the calmest household.

Here are some simple tips and tricks to help keep everyone satisfied, steady and far from “hangry” this holiday season!

## Why the snack kitchen seems busier:

When children are out of their usual daycare or preschool routine, their sense of hunger can easily get tangled with thirst or perceived boredom. Without the structure they’re used to, they may wander to the kitchen more often even if they’re not truly hungry. Having healthy, ready-to-go snacks on hand can help reduce the constant “What can I have?” and ease the pressure on parents during the holiday break.

## Smart snack strategies for younger children:

- Make water bottles assessable:** Choose an easy to access spot in your home and make this a water bottle station just like your child has at preschool. Encourage them to return their bottle they have finished.
- Pre-portion favourite items:** For example, small tubs of yoghurt, little pots of cottage cheese, or sliced fruit and vegetables already washed and ready. This makes choice quick and reduces the time you spend chopping while little ones wait impatiently.
- Keep it colourful and fun:** Offer a mix of carrot sticks, cucumber slices, red capsicum strips and cherry tomatoes. The “rainbow” concept helps children feel excited about snack time.
- Balance indulgence with nourishment:** It’s fine to include a small treat, but pair it with something wholesome e.g., a small biscuit with a tub of yoghurt or a natural-fruit muffin with fresh fruit.
- Exploring new foods:** Introduce variety but avoid pressure. Encouraging curiosity, “Would you like to smell



it?” or “What colour is it?”, is more effective than insisting children eat

- Use the downtime wisely:** While the kitchen is busy, invite your child to help place snack containers in the fridge or help you wash the fruit. This keeps them engaged, builds confidence and turns snack prep into a shared-time activity.
- Designate snack-zones:** Create a low shelf in the fridge or pantry labelled “for snack time” so children can occasionally choose their own pre-prepared snack (under supervision). This promotes autonomy and cuts down on constant kitchen visits.
- Cook together:** The QR code below includes 3 great batching recipes that your child can help cook with you while adding to the family snacks. Or cook this month’s *Kids in the kitchen* recipe and enjoy some Christmas brownies together.

By planning ahead and making snack preparation simple and fun, you’ll spend less time scrambling when hunger strikes and more time enjoying those long, warm holiday days with your little one in tow.



Find recipes and more information on this article via the QR code.

Source: [goodforkids.nsw.gov.au \(2025\). Everyday Snacks](https://goodforkids.nsw.gov.au/2025/Everyday-Snacks) Retrieved from [Good For Kids](https://goodforkids.nsw.gov.au)

## KICK THE CUP

You will need: Plastic cups, marker or letter stickers

This pre-K activity combines letters with sports. Write a single letter on a few plastic cups. (You could use white board markers, so it is easy to change letters.) Spread the cups with letters on them out a bit. Give your child a small soccer ball (or any soft ball), instruct them to kick the ball toward the letter cups. Once they knock a cup down, ask them to say the name of the letter on the cup. For a more advanced version, say a letter first, and see if they can aim for the corresponding cup. Have Fun. For more preschool literacy activities head to ‘[Fun learning for kids](#)’.



# FOCUS ARTICLE: Making the Most of the Holidays Together

As the end of the year draws near, we're reminded of how precious those long, warm summer days are, especially when shared with our little ones. Life slows down, routines pause, and families come together for the all-too-brief holiday break. While the festive period often carries a bustle of celebrations and to-do lists, it's also a rare window in our children's lives full of innocence, wonder and unhurried time. This season offers a chance to shift our focus and intentionally savour the moments. Here's how we can do just that:

## 1. Embrace the slower pace

With schools and centres closed, the rhythm of the day changes. Instead of rushing from activity to activity, allow for pockets of unstructured time where children can wander, imagine and simply be. A lazy afternoon in the backyard, watching the sunlight drift, or a spontaneous nature walk down the street can create rich memories.

## 2. Make every day feel festive

The décor, songs and smells of the season are exciting for children, but it doesn't need to be over-the-top. Involve kids in simple traditions: turning on the fairy lights at dusk, decorating craft stockings, or making a "holiday tree" from found branches and nature's treasures. These small rituals become the stories your children will remember.

## 3. Create together-time, not just events

It's tempting to pack holidays full of outings, visits and celebrations. While those are special, the most meaningful moments often happen in the ordinary. Set aside time for baking together, board-games in the afternoon sun, or building a fort in the lounge. These slower moments deepen connection not because they're perfect, but because they're shared.

## 4. Let children lead the wonder

When children are still young, their sense of awe is at its them,

height. Encourage their questions, explore what fascinates and allow plenty of room for slow moments. Time to find a shiny leaf, a curious bug, watch the way the sunset glows through the window. Their wonder is contagious and reminds us to slow down too.

## 5. Balance togetherness and rest

While it's wonderful to be "all home" and present, holiday togetherness doesn't mean constant high energy. For younger children especially, innovation, noise and novelty can sometimes overwhelm. Build in intervals of calm: a quiet book under a tree branch, a nap or simply lying on the grass and watching clouds drift. Those pauses help keep everyone's spirits high.

## A Few Tips to Remember

- Fewer rushed outings, more time to breathe.
- Keep bedtime rituals familiar, consistency grounds children even when routines change
- Let go of perfection: messy crafts, snack disasters and spontaneous outings can become the funniest stories.
- Make one thing "just for fun" each day: a backyard ball game, a shared drawing, an unplanned ice-cream.
- Capture the little moments: a quick photo of giggles over spilled paint, a leaf found on the walk, these become the real keepsakes.

**As you gather for this festive season, remember:** the holidays feel long to us, but in the years children are small and full of wonder, they pass far too quickly. The everyday magic, the lazy mornings, the shared crafts, the backyard adventures make up the heart of childhood memories.

*From all of us to your family, here's to quiet joy, unexpected laughter and a holiday season woven with presence, playful connection and love.*



## A "New-to-You" Way to Celebrate

This Christmas, consider embracing the joy of *toy swapping*, a simple, sustainable way to refresh your child's playtime without the constant cycle of buying new. Children are naturally drawn to toys that feel different, exciting or "new-to-them," which makes swapping with friends, cousins or neighbours a fun and meaningful alternative.

A toy swap encourages children to explore new interests, practise sharing, and appreciate the value of re-using rather than replacing. Gently used books, puzzles, figurines, blocks, and dress-ups can feel brand new in the hands of another child. It's also a great way to clear out items your family no longer needs while giving them a second life.

By choosing "new-to-you" toys this Christmas, families can reduce waste, save money, and model thoughtful, environmentally friendly habits. It's a small change that brings big joy—and reminds children that the magic of Christmas doesn't have to come wrapped in plastic.





This cheerful holiday activity invites children to create their own Christmas tree using painted cardboard triangles and fun collage materials. It's simple, hands-on, and gives children plenty of freedom to explore colour, texture and design.

#### How it works:

Start by cutting triangles from recycled cardboard, these will become the first layer of the tree. Children then paint their triangle in festive colours such as green, pink, red or teal. You can also collage the trees using crepe paper in Christmas colours.

Once dry, tape a piece of string to the top of your child's tree. Children then thread a range of items: buttons, sequins, cut-up straws and paper shapes onto the string. When your child has finished their threading, help them wrap the string around their tree and secure it with tape. Add a star and the tree is all done!

#### Why we love this activity:

- It supports fine motor skills through painting, gluing and threading.
- Children get to make choices, experiment and express themselves through colour and materials.
- Using recycled cardboard encourages conversations about reusing and repurposing everyday items.
- The finished trees make lovely seasonal displays and build excitement for the holidays.

This project celebrates creativity over perfection, giving children the chance to explore, assemble and make something joyful to share! Inspired by ART BAR

## STAFFING:

A reminder that our much-loved educators, Kim, Tina and Vicki are retiring at the end of this year.

These 3 wonderful women have been fundamental to the culture of kindness, relationships and quality early learning at HGP.

Vicki was the first educator Kylie employed when she and Chris bought the centre, Kim was on staff at this time and Tina has been part of the team for 18 years. They will be missed. I know that you join us in wishing them all the best.

Aline will complete her Certificate 3 in ECEC at the end of 2025 and remain at HGP in a fulltime role. (Well done, Aline!) Matilda will finish in early 2026 when her contract and certificate is completed. Jackie continues to work hard towards this same qualification.

We have employed a new trainee for 2026, her name is Heidi. Heidi was previously a student at Highland Grove, and she will 'float' across all 3 rooms as she completes her certificate 3, gets to know our centre and her role.



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

Head outside in the late afternoon and play a game of tag, but instead of tagging bodies, you tag each other's **shadows**. Kids love trying to stomp on a grown-up's shadow, and it turns into lots of running, jumping, twisting and quick dodging. It's simple, needs no equipment, and works for all ages.

You can add variations like:

- **Shadow Freeze:** If your shadow gets tagged, you freeze until someone "unfreezes" you by high fiving your real shadow.
- **Shadow Chase Relay:** Take turns being the "shadow chaser" while everyone else scatters.

It's silly, active, and full of giggles, just what family movement time should be!