



APRIL
2026

ON *this* MONTH

AT HIGHLAND GROVE

Good Friday (No charge for this day) ----- 3rd
 Easter Monday (No charge for this day) ----- 6th
 Anzac Day (No charge for this day) ----- 27th
 Karen is away on hols ----- 8th until 29th
 Child Profiles will be sent home----- mid-April

NOTE- Highland Grove is closed Public Holidays and open the school holiday break. Please let us know, if possible, any days that your child will be away. Thank you.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

World Autism Day ----- 2
 ANZAC Day ----- 25
 Pay It Forward Day ----- 28

HIGHLAND GROVE HAPPENINGS:



Our year has flown by so quickly, and Easter is fast approaching.

For over 35 years, Highland Grove has established some lovely traditions at this special time of year, including visual art and craft experiences, songs, rhymes, stories, and circle dances.

Included in our routines and rituals is an ‘Easter Egg Hunt’ each day. These occur daily during the week leading up to Easter in both of our garden spaces. Once the children find just the one egg, they come and sit on a rug with their teachers and friends and eat their egg treat.

As always, we would like your comments and collaboration. We would love to hear anything special that your family does at this time of year.





ANZAC DAY – APRIL 25

ANZAC Day is observed each year on **25 April** and is a time for Australians to remember the men and women who have served in wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping missions. The day marks the anniversary of the landing of Australian

and New Zealand soldiers at Gallipoli during World War I in 1915. It is a time to reflect on the values of courage, mateship, and sacrifice shown by those who served. Many people attend dawn services, marches, or moments of silence to pay their respects. Go to your local council website for services happening near you.

PAY IT FORWARD DAY – APRIL 28

Pay It Forward Day encourages people around the world to spread kindness through simple acts for others. The idea is that one small act of kindness can inspire someone else to do the same, creating a ripple effect in the community. **It may be something as simple as smiling at someone else. What are you going to do?**



PUMPKIN MAC AND CHEESE

PREP 25 mins | COOK 20 -25 mins | SERVES 12

INGREDIENTS

Pasta: 500 grams orecchiette pasta (any small, shaped pasta)	grating of fresh nutmeg 125 g mozzarella , <i>grated</i> 100 g parmesan , <i>grated</i>
Pumpkin cheese sauce: 4 tbs butter 4 tbs plain flour 2 cups milk 1 can (400 g) pumpkin puree 1 tsp garlic powder 1 tsp dry mustard 1/4 tsp cayenne white pepper , <i>to season</i>	Panko topping: 1 1/4 cups panko style breadcrumbs 100 grams mozzarella , <i>grated</i>

METHOD

Preheat oven to 200 C. To cook the pasta: **Bring** a large pot of water to the boil. **Add** salt and pasta and cook according to packet instructions. **Drain** and set aside.

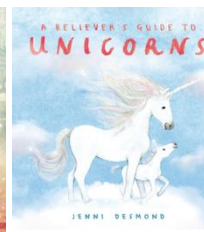
To make the pumpkin cheese sauce: **Place** the butter into a large saucepan over medium heat and melt. **Add** flour and **whisk** to create a smooth paste. **Slowly add** milk, whisking continuously. Continue to **whisk** until slightly thickened, approx. 3 minutes or until the mixture coats the back of a spoon. **Reduce** the heat to low and whisk in the pumpkin puree, garlic, mustard, cayenne and pepper. **Add** the cheeses and stir until melted. **Take** off the heat. **Add** cooked pasta to the pumpkin mac and cheese sauce and mix thoroughly to combine. **Pour** the pasta mixture into a large baking dish

To make the panko topping: Sprinkle the panko breadcrumbs and mozzarella cheese evenly over the pasta. **Bake** for 20-25 minutes or until the cheese is melted and breadcrumbs are golden.

Source: Image & recipe '[My lovely lunchbox](#)'

Book reviews

Dinosaurs, unicorns and aliens. Stories full of magic for young children.



THE DINOSAUR NEXT DOOR | DAVID LITCHFIELD

The Dinosaur Next Door tells the story of Liz, who believes her neighbour Mr Wilson is hiding a very unusual secret ... he might actually be a dinosaur. With his long neck, clumsy feet and love of green leaves, Liz is convinced something extraordinary is going on next door. This heartwarming story celebrates acceptance and embracing what makes each of us unique.

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO UNICORNS | JENNI DESMOND

This delightful picture book invites readers to discover the magical world of unicorns who live high among the clouds. Through playful clues and imaginative scenes, children can spot the signs that unicorns are nearby. From bouncing on clouds to make snow to racing across the night sky like shooting stars, unicorns love leaving little surprises behind. With beautiful illustrations by award-winning author Jenni Desmond, this story celebrates imagination and wonder.

ALIENS LOVE UNDERPANTS | CLAIRE FREEDMAN & BEN CORT

Aliens Love Underpants is a hilarious story about aliens who travel to Earth for a very unusual reason — they love collecting underpants! When aliens zoom down in their spaceships, they search for the biggest, brightest and most colourful pairs they can find. Their silly adventures lead to plenty of giggles as they sneak around stealing underwear from washing lines everywhere. This playful picture book is full of rhymes, laughter and fun illustrations that children love.



FOCUS: Why Children Say “No” (and What They’re Really Trying to Tell Us)



If you spend time with young children, you’ve likely heard the word “no” more times than you can count. It can appear suddenly and often with great determination. “No!” to getting dressed, brushing teeth, leaving the park, or even something they asked for moments earlier. While it can feel frustrating for adults, this stage is actually an important and healthy part of development.

For young children, saying “no” is often their first way of expressing independence. As children grow, they begin to realise that they are separate individuals with their own ideas, preferences, and feelings. Saying “no” is one of the ways they practise this new sense of autonomy.

This doesn’t mean children are trying to be difficult. More often, they are learning how to communicate their needs, test boundaries, and understand how the world works.

Why “No” Happens So Often

Young children have strong feelings but are still developing the language and emotional skills to express them clearly. When a child says “no,” it may mean many different things. They might be tired, overwhelmed, unsure, or simply wanting a sense of control over what is happening around them.

Children also use “no” when they are practising decision-making. It’s a way of exploring choices and learning that their voice matters.

Supporting Children Through This Stage

Rather than seeing “no” as defiance, it can help to view it as communication. Taking a moment to pause and understand what your child might be feeling can often reduce power struggles.

Offering limited choices can be helpful. For example, instead of asking, “Do you want to get dressed?” you might ask, “Would you like the blue shirt or the green shirt today?” This allows children to feel a sense of control while still moving forward with the routine.

Acknowledging feelings can also make a difference. Saying something like, “You wish you could stay at the park longer” helps children feel heard, even when the answer still needs to be no.

Keeping Boundaries Clear

While independence is important, children also need consistent boundaries to feel safe and secure. Calmly holding limits while showing understanding helps children learn that their feelings are valid, but not every choice can change the situation.

Over time, children begin to develop stronger language skills and emotional regulation, and the constant “no” phase usually softens.

Growing Independence

Learning to say “no” is one of the first steps toward independence and self-confidence. It shows that children are beginning to understand their own thoughts and feelings.

With patience, empathy, and clear guidance, families can support children through this stage while helping them develop respectful communication and problem-solving skills.

In the end, that determined little “no” is often a sign that a child is growing, learning, and discovering their voice.



For more information or support check out this link

Link: pregnancybirthbaby.org.au When your child’s favourite word is ‘no’!

TELL A STORY

Storytelling is a wonderful way to support children’s early literacy, imagination, and language development. This simple activity encourages children to create their own stories using toys they already love.

You will need: A few favourite toys (soft toys, action figures, dolls, cars, or animals) and a comfortable space to sit together

What to do: Invite your child to choose a few toys to be the characters in your story. Begin by setting the scene, such as “Once upon a time, a little dinosaur went on an adventure...” Then take turns adding to the story. One person might describe where the characters go, while the other decides what happens next. Encourage your child to use their imagination by asking questions like “What happens next?” or “Who do they meet along the way?”

This activity helps build vocabulary, listening skills, creativity, and confidence while showing children that stories can come from their own ideas and experiences.



HEALTH & SAFETY: Healthy Sleep Habits for Preschoolers

Sleep is an essential part of children's health, growth, and development. Preschool-aged children typically need around 10–13 hours of sleep each day, including naps. During sleep, children's bodies and brains are busy growing, repairing, and processing everything they have learned throughout the day. Getting enough rest helps children feel ready to play, learn, and connect with others.

When children are well rested, they are more likely to have the energy and focus needed for everyday activities. Adequate sleep also supports emotional regulation, helping children manage their feelings and cope with challenges. In contrast, when children are overtired, they may become more irritable, have difficulty concentrating, or struggle with transitions and routines. Sleep also plays an important role in supporting the immune system, helping children stay healthy.

For many families, bedtime can sometimes feel like a challenge. Preschoolers are naturally curious and may resist going to bed when they feel there are still exciting things happening around them. Creating a predictable and calming bedtime routine can help children transition from the busy parts of the day into a restful night's sleep.

A bedtime routine does not need to be complicated. Simple, consistent steps such as having a bath, putting on pyjamas, brushing teeth, and reading a story together can help signal to children that bedtime is approaching. Doing these activities in the same order each evening helps children understand what to expect and can make the transition to sleep feel easier and more secure.

The sleep environment can also make a difference. A quiet, comfortable, and dimly lit bedroom helps children relax. Some children enjoy having a favourite soft toy, blanket, or night light nearby for comfort. Keeping bedrooms mainly for rest can also support healthy sleep habits.

Another helpful strategy is reducing stimulating activities before bedtime. Bright screens, energetic games, or



exciting play can make it harder for children to wind down. Instead, quiet activities such as reading books, drawing, or listening to gentle music can help children relax.

It is also important to keep regular sleep and wake times where possible. Consistency helps children's internal body clocks develop healthy rhythms, making it easier for them to fall asleep and wake up feeling refreshed.

Of course, every child is different. Some children fall asleep easily while others need a little more time and reassurance. Patience, gentle guidance, and consistency can help children gradually develop positive sleep habits.

Healthy sleep routines not only support children's physical health, but also their emotional wellbeing and ability to learn and explore. By prioritising rest and creating calm bedtime routines, families can help children feel safe, relaxed, and ready for each new day.



For additional sleep support try this link via the QR code.

Link: [RaisingChildren.net](https://www.raisingchildren.net)

Sustainability CORNER

PLANTING FOR THE SEASON

April is a wonderful time to start thinking about planting and caring for gardens as the weather begins to cool in many parts of Australia. Planting herbs, leafy greens, or winter vegetables is a simple way for families to grow fresh food at home while learning about sustainability.

Gardening helps children understand where food comes from and how plants grow. Even small spaces like balconies, windowsills, or pots in the backyard can be used to grow something useful. Herbs such as parsley, spinach, lettuce, and silver beet are great options for autumn planting.

Looking after plants teaches children responsibility while also encouraging patience and care for the environment. By growing even a small amount of food at home, families can reduce packaging waste and food miles while enjoying fresh, homegrown produce together.



Find out what grows well where you live via the QR code.

Link: [April in your patch](#)





Playdough Easter Eggs

It's that time of year when the **Easter Bunny** might be hopping by! Instead of chocolate, children can make their own colourful **play dough Easter eggs** to give as small, chocolate-free gifts for friends and family.

You will need:

- Play dough
- Egg-shaped containers. (You can get cheap plastic ones from Kmart or similar stores)

What to do:

Ball up your premade playdough into small handfuls that will fit in your eggs. If your eggs have holes, you will need to cover your playdough in plastic wrap before putting it into its egg.

Simple Play Dough Recipe

Ingredients:

- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1½ cups boiling water
- Food colouring (optional)

Method:

Mix the flour, salt and cream of tartar in a bowl. Add oil and boiling water, stirring until combined. Once cool enough to handle, knead until smooth. Add food colouring while kneading if desired. This activity supports **fine motor skills, creativity, and imaginative play**, while creating a fun Easter treat that lasts longer than chocolate.

Did you know?

- Highland Grove has a BeYou (Wellbeing) Committee, a R.A.P (Indigenous perspective) Team and a Sustainability Committee. Many of the staff are a member of one of these teams. We try to meet quarterly and plan actions to further improve our competencies in all these areas.
- The staff also have whole Team Meetings and Room Meetings every month, held after hours. (Communication is key!)
- Our Quality Improvement Plan (Q.I.P) is currently on display on the whiteboard in the foyer of the Main Centre. Please take a look.
- Each educator has a mentor with whom they reflect on their own practice, Highland Grove's expectations for their work and set goals. They meet a couple of times per year to guide practice.



MIRROR MOVES

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

This fun activity helps children build coordination, balance and focus. Pair up and stand facing each other. One person becomes the "leader" and begins making slow movements such as stretching arms, bending knees, hopping, or turning around. The other person must copy the movements exactly, like looking in a mirror.

After one minute, swap roles so everyone gets a turn leading.

Make it more fun:

Try adding silly movements like robot arms, slow-motion jumping, or pretending to swim through the air.

Mirror Moves encourages concentration, body awareness and lots of giggles while getting everyone moving.