

Doubleview, 18 June 2004

Dear Parents

It's been longer than usual between newsletters, but we hope the items we've included now will make up for the delay. There is some important information, so please at least scan the newsletter before thoroughly reading it later.

Staffing

Do have a look at the profiles in the front entry and get to know your child's carers by asking questions and by telling them about your child.

Following shows all permanent staffing in each Harmony area:

<u>Office</u>	<u>Joeys</u>	<u>Possums</u>	<u>Koalas</u>	<u>Bilbies</u>
Robin	Melissa	Kelly	Laavanya/Brooke	Maria
Janet	Sabina	Jeni	Teresa	Yvonne
Brooke	Kahli	Kirsty	Erin	Jean-Jacques (JJ)

Brooke is working with two hats for a while, as Assistant to Manager helping Janet and Robin in the office and also "on the floor" with the children of the Koalas group, to job share with Laavanya. Laavanya needs two days away as part of her studies for a Bachelor of Education. Ian has been working full time in the office recently, to complete the procedures and operational systems and to continue training all the office staff to take over his duties completely.

Melissa manages the **Joeys** programming with her two Assistants, Kahli and Sabina. Kahli has commenced a Certificate III in Children's Services traineeship in Harmony. Sabina is a mother of two grown children and was a qualified Primary School Teacher in Croatia before migrating to Perth nearly 7 years ago.

The **Possums** carers are well settled into daily routines, with Kelly as qualified Early Childhood Educator of many years' experience in child care centres in England and Perth. Some wonderful news is that Kelly is becoming a dinki-di citizen this coming week and is marrying an Aussie in November. Assisting Kelly is Jeni who moved from the Joeys and has recommenced her Diploma in Children's Services, and Kirsty who will commence her Diploma next month and whose family has recently emigrated from Zimbabwe.

The **Koalas** Early Childhood Educator position is being shared by Laavanya and Brooke. Laavanya, of Singaporean background, has lived in Australia most of her life and holds a Bachelor of Social Science degree from ECU. Laavanya works Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. She is being ably assisted by Brooke, who works with the Koalas on Mondays and Thursdays. Teresa, who is the mother of two and grandmother of one, has just completed the final stage of her Certificate III traineeship. Erin recently completed her traineeship and gained a Certificate III in Community Services (Children's Services).

The **Bilbies** team consists of Maria, a Preprimary Teacher qualified at ECU, and Yvonne who is mother of three grown children and is certainly the stalwart of the preschool group.

While on the subject of staffing, we are looking for enthusiastic and reliable casuals to relieve our permanents when they are on sick or annual leave. If parents know of a great worker who may be interested in joining the Harmony team, please talk with one of us in the office as soon as possible (especially because winter has arrived, along with colds and flu).

Staff education & training

The following staff have recently undertaken relevant workshops and we commend them for furthering their knowledge in a formal way, as well as through experience.

Yvonne	<i>The Virtues Project</i> (for teaching universal values) at Meerilinga College
Brooke	<i>Small Business</i> at Stirling Business Enterprise Centre & 5 workshops in the <i>New Coordinators of Child Care Centres</i> series
Teresa	<i>Including your Student with Autism into Your Classroom</i> at Autism Association
Erin	<i>Including Children with Autism in Child Care</i> at RUCSN
Janet	<i>Small Business</i> at Stirling Business Enterprise Centre

Donations

We really appreciate everything given to Harmony, and no junk is too good to throw out rather than offer to Harmony first. We sincerely thank every single person for their donation and hope that we haven't inadvertently missed acknowledging anyone.

Thanks to: mother of Nikiya & Zack for shredded paper for crafts & special fruit for staff; Bella's mum for fruit juices; mum of Riley & Billie for baby clothes for our dolls; Alexandra's mum for four fun sculptures for Possums garden; mother of Ronan & Lily for recycled office paper; and our own Teresa for toys and our Janet for towels, paper, toys & puzzles.

Programming

In all groups the program of activities for the week is displayed on a noticeboard. Please ask carers to explain what is happening on the day/s your child attends, because then you can talk about the day at dinnertime and also try similar activities at home.

In our next newsletter we will be giving you much more information about the exciting focus/themes that have been followed in the age groups, the amazing educational and creative activities the children do, and the concepts and skills learned behind the various activities.

International Festival

As indicated in our Policy Summary that is handed to families at first contact, we value the diversity that is brought to Harmony children and staff by families who have moved to Australia from another culture. This year there are 25 countries that form a significant influence in the Harmony children's lives, which is why our multicultural celebrations are running from April to September 2004.

Developmental Records and Parent & Staff Night

We will be scheduling a Parent & Staff Night soon, with a special speaker and with all staff available for parents. The families of all full-timers will be receiving Developmental Records of their child's skills during the next two weeks. Please keep the record handy so that you can discuss it with your child's Early Childhood Educator (an appointment list will be posted soon).

FoodSafe

Every permanent Harmony staff member has completed the FoodSafe training, which in turn permits us to display the 12-month FoodSafe Certification at the front entry.

Playground upgrades

The playgrounds are looking good and the softfall surfaces are proving worth the high expense, some of which was met by fundraising efforts over the past three years. Thank you so much, dear families!

CCB (subsidy) & Fees from 5 July 2004

The end of the financial year is almost here and unfortunately it marks the time many of our costs are set to increase. All child care workers in Australia will receive a pay rise of around 4% and associated wages costs will increase as well. To maintain high quality of care, the government CCB subsidy will increase Australia-wide from 5/7/04 and this will partially compensate for increased operating costs. This means the majority of families will be out of pocket by no more than \$2 a day. The new fees in the Harmony Centre without any subsidy are:

	Daily	Full time
Under 3 ½ years old	\$59	\$218
Over 3 ½ years old	\$53	\$188

Exciting news! – Weekly Email – an great new initiative

We're going on line with Weekly Programs and Weekly Menus, a first in any WA child care centre!

We have always planned our learning programs for each age group to provide care and stimulation appropriate to their developmental level whether they are Joeys, Possums, Koalas, or Bilbies. These programs are prepared by our qualified educators in each group and outline each week's planned activities for everyone to see. They have always been displayed on the wall in each group but we know that some of our busy parents may not have the time to read them during the hectic drop-off and pick-up times. (Programs are evaluated confidentially for their effectiveness at the end of each day.)

Weekly programs can be a great way to share the new activities that your child is doing during the day. These activities form the basis of learning and observations of children's development of skills, and most are able to be repeated at home on sick days or the weekends.

Commencing from July 2004 Harmony will scan the Weekly Programs and send them electronically to those parents on our email list. To see past examples, visit our website www.harmony.com.au and follow the newsletter link.

Harmony is also proud of the exciting and nutritious meals served by our cook and the special national dishes that are part of our multicultural festival. Each Weekly Menu is displayed on Monday in the foyer near the sign in/out book. Harmony will email this at the beginning of each week to help you plan your child's complementary dietary needs.

To join or make sure your email details are current, please tear off and complete the section below.

You'll see each week what we mean when we say "Fun and learning in Harmony"!!



Parent email address

Child (s) SURNAME _____ Child (s) First Name _____

Parent's SURNAME (1) _____ Parent's First Name (1) _____
Email Address _____@_____

Parent's SURNAME (2) _____ Parent's First Name (2) _____
Email Address _____@_____

Kitchen

Toni has made a stirring effort to follow special recipes for home countries. So far Toni has prepared menus for Afghanistan, Canada, China, England, France, Germany, Greece, India, and Ireland. We thank the following children's mothers who provided great recipes: Mursal (Afghanistan); Gabriel (Canada); Edric (China); Lucas H (Germany); Neil (India).

We really appreciate our own Sabina (Joeys group) and her daughter, who cooked the whole fabulous menu for Croatia, and our Maria (Bilbies group) who cooked a tasty afternoon snack at home and taught Toni the remainder for Greece.

Accreditation

Our Accreditation Committee of parents and staff has been meeting monthly for a long time now and is proceeding at a good pace through the 592 items (under 35 principles), in preparation for our accreditation process in July. Our very much valued parent representatives share a meal with all staff after hours, and learn much about child development and what is involved in high quality best practice child care and education. Parents also find out a lot about their own child's day and behavior in Harmony direct from the carers themselves. We sincerely thank Alex P-W's mum; mother of Lucas & Isabelle A; mother of Mia & Emily; and Harrison S's mother, for their willingness to represent parents and give their point of view on all 592 items under scrutiny.

Parent Survey

We urgently remind families to return the short survey, which is so important for our upcoming Accreditation process. We also have a Suggestion Box near the front entry noticeboard, which is cleared regularly, for general suggestions to help us operate at the highest possible standard

"Versatility awards"

This is a fun way to recognise staff who have performed beyond their normal duties. Our awards this time go to Janet for fixing vertical blinds, tightening some loose screws, and cleaning the photocopier, and to Yvonne for fixing the brown cupboard.

Iron-on name labels

These are available at \$13.50 for 25 (or \$17 for 50) through the office and are subsidised by Harmony to help make sure that families have all belongings returned to them.

Fundraising

Unfortunately we didn't make as much profit as expected from the Mars chocolate drive. However, all preceding fundraising drives, to a total of \$1700, have been well spent to help purchase the impact-absorbing softfall under the older children's swings adjoining the carpark. We are very grateful to all those wonderful families who have supported Harmony's fundraising efforts.

End of financial year

As 30 June is almost here, we urge families to get their fees up to date and to avoid overdue charges. This very much assists us in preparation of bookkeeping for our accountant, as well as giving families a fresh start to the new fiscal year. At the same time, we are very grateful to those families who are always on time with their payments. We certainly try to make it easier for parents, by offering facilities for payment by eftpos, internet, direct debit, as well as the usual cheques and cash. Please see office staff if you wish to know more about payments.

Kinda Dance

This is a weekly optional session as follows:

- Koalas & older Possums Wednesdays 9.30 am \$4.50 per session
- Bilbies Fridays 9.30 am \$5.50 per session

The first session is complimentary, to see if your child really enjoys it.

Web cameras (Kindercams)

This is currently an option in the Joeys and the Koalas groups (with the Possums in the near future). Each parent or grandparent with access to the internet, in Perth or anywhere else in the world, can get a user name and password for \$40 per year. The images are almost “real time”, depending on the speed of the receiver’s ISP. Please see office staff if interested.

Book Clubs

We have several book clubs that display some very good value books and other items near the front entry. Anyone can purchase the bargains, as long as payment is made to Jeni prior to delivery date.

Special promotion

One of our Harmony families is making a special Wizard Home Loans offer for those parents whose child/ren attend the Harmony Centre. For an excellent deal, please contact Melissa Edgar on 9444.7599 or email to northperth@wizard.com.au.

We remind families who are operating a small business that they are welcome to display some business cards at our front entry – please see one of the office staff.

Reminders & Requests

1. Lost Property – please check crate at front entry.
2. Please iron on the name labels as soon as you collect them.
3. Message pockets in each age group (including Possums next week) are in order according to your child’s surname.
4. Update your contact details – please email or tell Janet.
5. Immunisation record – bring in for photocopying.
6. Bilbies group – please bring in a large box of white tissues as per the Policy Summary.
7. If you have special, unusual, or colorful/sparkling clothing that is suitable for children’s dressups, we would love to have them, especially for boys, e.g. bright ties, waistcoats/vests, Hawaiian shirts, football scarves, etc.

Please remember that all staff are here for you and your children. Feel free to talk with us for queries, input, and feedback, so that Harmony becomes a better place for all concerned.

Robin Garbutt, Manager..... Brooke Snow, Assistant to Manager.....

Wise sayings (all anonymous)

- Everyone has 20/20 hindsight.
- Children need love, especially when they don’t deserve it.
- Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming... Wow... What a ride!!!