



Dear Parents

13 September, 2004

The main purpose for this newsletter at this particular time is to invite **all families** to the:

Parent & Staff Night on Monday, 20 September, commencing 7.00 pm in Harmony

- **Children's Developmental Reports for children attending 3 days**
Please bring with you the report which is being placed in message pockets this week.
(other children's parent/s may talk privately with the qualified Educator if time permits)
- **Appointment with qualified Educator** (see list in age groups for times)
 - Melissa in Joeys playroom
 - Kelly in Possums playroom
 - Laavanya in Koalas playroom
 - Abbie in Koalas quiet room
- **7.15 pm – special speaker on children's development & parenting** (bring your questions)
Jenny from the state Department for Community Development will run the first of two very valuable evening workshops about the **10 Principles of Parenting** (no charge) –
 - Communication
 - Discipline
 - Self-Esteem
 - Routines
 - Consistency
 - Family Belonging
 - Taking Care of Yourself
 - Linking into the Community
 - Ages & Stages
 - Keeping the Changes Going

This interactive course was introduced to those families who came to the Parent & Staff Night in July, and they asked that Harmony organise the two workshops, each of which runs for two hours (the next one is Monday, 11 October, and is independent of the first).

A few DCD brochures (blue) are at the centre's entrance, to provide background to the service.

All staff will be at Harmony to socialise and to share refreshments with you. It is especially important that families make an appointment as soon as possible with the educators above, to discuss their child's progress so far this year. Please see qualified Educator for the list of available appointment times. Parents of children attending for 3 days/week will have first priority.

Remember, you are all welcome and warmly invited to the Parent & Staff Night.

Have a relaxing night out with like-minded families and learn more about the most important job you can do in your lifetime, that is, be the best parent of your child/ren that you can be.

Staffing

Abbie, the diploma-qualified Educator in the Preschool group, and Yvonne are encouraging absolutely marvellous experiences for the Bilbies, including exploring all kinds of bugs and natural materials which Abbie brings from her home in the Hills. Abbie's one year old daughter in our Joeys group is also a great explorer and definitely takes after her mother!!

We were fortunate to have François from the French-speaking Reunion Islands to teach French with the Bilbies for several weeks while he was visiting his nephew (a Bilby). We are still looking for a permanent French Specialist (since Nyulla has been too ill to return to Harmony) but they are not easy to find.

Most staff have had some of their annual leave during the year, to refresh themselves and gain energy to work enthusiastically to the end of year. Robin will take two weeks' leave from 20/9 to 1/10 (to visit school friends in Sydney from grade one and high school days!!). Brooke will work in the office and will be available to help staff and families at any time.

Kelly, the qualified Educator for the Possums, is the centre's new Occupational Health & Safety Officer. She will evaluate accidents that occur during the day in Harmony and is available to take note of any concerns that families may have about health and the safety of building and equipment.

Kahli has commenced her traineeship for the Certificate III in Children's Services and is already putting her new knowledge to good use in the Joeys group. Kelly and Laavanya are continuing their uni studies, and Kirsty will commence the Diploma in Children's Services early next year. Erin and Teresa are to be congratulated on successful completion of their Certificate III and, hopefully, after a breather both will take up studies next year to become a Diploma-qualified Educator.

Staff who have completed short professional training sessions recently are:

Teresa	Autism Association Early Intervention Centre <i>Stress in Child Care</i> <i>Responding to Quality or Standard of Care Concerns</i>
Kelly	<i>Occupational Safety & Health</i> <i>Stress in Child Care</i>
Erin	<i>Responding to Quality or Standard of Care Concerns</i>
Brooke	<i>QIAS – Completing Self-Study & Preparing for Validation</i> <i>Cashflow Today</i> <i>Stress in Child Care</i> <i>Employment Today</i> <i>Choosing Staff with Care</i> <i>Responding to Quality or Standard of Care Concerns</i>
Robin	<i>QIAS – Bringing It All Together</i> <i>Financial Dynamics</i> <i>Employment Today</i> <i>Stress in Child Care</i> <i>Spread the Referral Virus!</i> <i>Perth City Farm, Tracing Connections – Where Art Meets Environment</i>

During July Kelly, Sabina, and Kahli completed a St Johns First Aid Certificate (and some parents graduated too).

Harmony continues to support the education of early childhood workers by providing practicums for students, in order to apply theory to real life situations:

Letitia, from Edith Cowan University, part & full time 15/3-31/5 & 13-24/9

Kelly, from TAFE part time 20/8 to 3/12

and also work experience for high school students:

Jacinta, full time 5-9/7 (she used to be a Harmony student herself from babyhood to school age!!)

Katie, full time 27/9-1/10

Programming

The Saga of the Harmony pets

Even though for all the years we've had chickens, none has been hurt by passers-by, unfortunately last Easter the Chinese Langshans (sp?) were stolen. Because the unusual breed is difficult to find, we brought in two Isa Browns which laid eggs regularly. But one of them flew the coop (in spite of cutting one wing) just once too often, so we donated it elsewhere and then found the young Chinese Silkies. However, one of these eventually turned into a rooster (which is pretty useless for eggs!), so we returned it and are waiting for a replacement Silky. The name of the grey Silky is Jola (named by Alex P-W) and the Isa Brown is Charley (by Kennedy).

The crabs are Sibby (named by Trent) and Myo (by Sarah S) – great names for crabs! The guinea pig is only a temporary resident in Harmony, but the children are quite fond of it and have named it Guinea.

Bilbies

Abbie and her fabulous Assistant, Yvonne, are programming activities and discussions around *Out Pets* over the next fortnight and ask that families bring in a photo of your pet at home or even bring in your pet for a visit if it is small enough and well behaved. You haven't got a pet? Well, how about your child brings in a book of an animal story or a favorite soft animal toy. The children will be developing awareness of caring, health (food, shelter, love, etc.), and self-esteem (sharing with the group and speaking to the group).

Those of you with email addresses will already know about *Our Pets*, because the info has been sent with the Weekly Program of Activities & Weekly Menu this week.

We ask that parents, who wish to help their preschooler recognise and write words, please use all lower case for words other than names of people or places. For people and places use upper case for only the first letter and then lower case for the rest of the name. Teachers have a hard time trying to get year one children out of the incorrect habit of using all capitals. A list of correct lettering used in WA schools since 1992 is in your child's message pocket.

Letterland is used in Harmony as an introduction to letters for preschoolers. "It is a pictogram alphabet which gives children clues to determine letter sounds and distinguish between letter shapes. It is based on characters who "live" inside letter shapes, and who make plain black print come to life. Once children have met the characters through stories, *Letterland* encourages young children to dance and sing along to songs about the sound each letter makes in words. Young children also participate in *Letterland* drama and craft activities, helping them to easily recognise letters in an exciting and fun way, and children as young as three start to demonstrate early literacy skills."

The Virtues Project is "an award-winning, non-sectarian program that teaches the simple elements of good character honored by all cultures [Harmony chooses 20 of the thousands of universal virtues] such as kindness, gentleness, helpfulness, responsibility. *The Virtues Project* helps communities all around the world to raise morally conscious children, stop bullying, create peaceful schools", and enhance people's humanity towards to one another. Yvonne has completed the full-day training, runs the short session at mat time, and makes sure that the Virtue of the Fortnight is reinforced throughout the day by

recognising, and commenting to children, when a particular virtue has occurred naturally by a child or children.

Donations

We love the way parents think of things to bring to Harmony for recycling (rather than tossing them into the bin). We are really grateful to the following families: Holly H's mum for videos and puzzles; Stefan's mum for a box of puzzles, toys, and books and for yummy walnut & carrot cake for staff's enjoyment; Jade T's mum for two goldfish; Ali P's mum for colored paper & card, disposable nappies, bag of packing wool, and stationery; Imogen M's mum for all sorts of hospital nursing aids (kidney dishes, syringes etc); mums of Ronan & Lily, of Matthew B, of Stefan, and of Sophie and Kathleen for huge amounts of recycled paper; Aaron's dad for biodegradable packing "peanuts"; Sophie's & Kathleen's mum for boxes of recycled envelopes which are being put to good use as Fees Payment envelopes; our own Toni (cook) for stationery protectors, our Janet (office) for goldfish & aquarium, and Teresa's special man for making & repairing equipment for children's enjoyment. We also thank Brendan's grandfather, visiting from the USA, for helping Robin fix the playground fence.

Thank you so very very much for being so clever and thinking of recycling all this great stuff.

Internet and emails

Please note that the Harmony account 39802 is now closed and, as advised over the past two months, all payments of fees should be made to ANZ account, BSB 016350, account no. 499193947 (no spaces if paying by internet). Please print out receipt for payment and post directly into the Harmony Payment Box in the entry. If families do not have access to a printer, emailed advice of payments can be made to Janet, payments@harmony.com.au. General correspondence can also be emailed to Janet and Brooke at the same email address.

Please keep us up to date with any changes in your email address so that we can continue keeping you informed quickly and with little impact on the environment (we don't have to use ink, paper, and power to print).

Photos of your child/ren

Two women from Kin Photography have offered special rates to families who would like professional portraits in natural poses, taken in the Harmony Centre. Their specialities are babies, children, pregnant women, and families. Three 6"x4" photos (2 individual and one age group) cost \$25 per child, with a 20% discount for families with two or more children to be photographed.

Please complete the Kin Photography register of interest in the front entry as soon as possible, so that we can plan appointments for the end of October.

The Harmony Bees

Who/what could they be!?!? Okay, we'll tell you. They are the quite newly formed Harmony Netballers who play at Warwick Recreation Centre every Tuesday night. The players in their yellow & black tops are Brooke, Erin, Kelly, Kahli, Melissa, Kirsty, Teresa, and Laavanya. Any spectator can see that they have fun, keep fit, and perform admirably, in spite of not doing any practice in between games! Goodonya, Harmony Bees!!

Parent communication

All staff welcome families input and feedback and we provide an anonymous Suggestion Box in the front entry, as well as opportunities at drop-off and pick-up time and at Parent & Staff Nights. The International Festival has also been a great source of two-way communication and involvement between families and staff.

Accreditation

We really appreciate families who have completed the several short questionnaires for the Accreditation process. However, it's become obvious that the answers "I don't know" are because we staff have not always communicated well enough to families about how we perform some duties during the day when parents are not around, i.e. at times outside drop-off and pick-up time. So, prior to the visit by the Quality Validator we'll "educate" families, ask for ways for continuous improvement, and then run another survey by you. Thank you so very much for your support and surveys so far.

Brooke has updated the Harmony Policy Manual and the Parent Handbook, both of which will be available in the front entry for all families to look at and give suggestions and feedback to the office.

International Festival

The cultural celebrations this year runs from April to October, to cover the 26 cultures that are represented by Harmony children, literally from A (Afghanistan) to U (USA) and back to A (All Australia). The interactions of families (providing recipes and artifacts/photos/stories/costumes etc. from home), and staff (borrowing books/posters/instruments/etc. from various resource libraries), and children (enthusiastically trying very different food tastes and enjoying new activities popular in other cultures) make the extra efforts very worthwhile.

The Festival is nearing its end and we thank all families and Toni our cook for their great recipes and especially those mothers who cooked some recipes at homes, who brought in special foods that are difficult for us to buy (e.g. lingonberries for Sweden, unusual spices for India). Our own Kirsty made lots of attractive and tasty Koeksisters (cookies) for South Africa, and our Janet made Irish Oven Scones.

With all these hands-on experiences it's easy to learn about each child's heritage, and certainly after each week everyone understands much more about the world around us which, in turn, eliminates prejudice.

Some important reminders

1. Please refrain from bringing in **your child's toys** to the Centre, as they cause sharing problems and may get broken or lost.
2. Please make sure your child has had a **good breakfast at home**, as the first food that Harmony serves is at 9.30am.
3. Staff do encourage families to bring in a **birthday cake** (or small cupcakes for each child in the age group) for your child's celebration but, because of possible medical/allergy reactions, parents need to give a list of all ingredients to the centre's cook. To help you, it's no surprise that chocolate with icing is the favorite of all children. Harmony provides candles, and staff are happy to take photos with your camera if you are unable to get off work at 2.30pm. If families bring in a **camera from home**, staff are very happy to take photos of your child throughout the day.
4. **Lost property** is still a problem, mainly because the iron-on labels are not being ironed on. Please check again the Lost Property crate in the front entry.
5. Please **park within the marked lanes in the carpark and behind the front line**, so that families can safely enter Harmony without having to walk behind reversing cars.
6. Remember a **suitable sunhat for all of the year**, including winter, to protect children and to become a habit for whenever they step outside.
7. Please pack **jumpers** because they are still needed during the change from winter to spring.

Remember, we are here for support of your needs and concerns, so please drop in or make an appointment to have a chat.

Robin Garbutt.....

Brooke Snow

A story that teaches --
from someone who understands

A shopkeeper was tacking a sign above his door that read “Puppies For Sale”. Signs like that have a way of attracting small children and, sure enough, a little boy appeared under the shopkeeper’s sign.

“How much are you going to sell the puppies for?” he asked.

The shopkeeper replied, “Anything from \$30 to \$50.”

The little boy reached into his pocket and pulled out some change.

“I have \$2.37,” he said. “Can I please look at them?”

The shopkeeper smiled and whistled and out of the kennel came Lady, who ran down the aisle of his shop followed by five teeny, tiny balls of fur. One puppy was lagging considerably behind.

Immediately the little boy singled out the lagging, limping puppy and said, “What’s wrong with that little dog?”

The shopkeeper explained that the vet had examined the little puppy and had discovered it didn’t have a hip socket. It would always limp. It would always be lame.

The little boy became excited. “That is the puppy that I want to buy.” The shopkeeper said, “No, you don’t want to buy that little dog. If you really want him, I’ll just give him to you.”

The little boy got quite upset. He looked straight into the shopkeeper’s eyes, pointing his finger, and said, “I don’t want you to give him to me. That little dog is worth every bit as much as all the other dogs and I’ll pay full price. In fact, I’ll give you \$2.37 now, and 50 cents a month until I’ve paid for him.”

The shopkeeper countered, “You really don’t want to buy this little dog. He is never going to be able to run and jump and play with you like the other puppies.”

To his surprise, the little boy reached down and rolled up his pants leg to reveal a badly twisted, crippled left leg supported by a big metal brace. He looked up at the shopkeeper and softly replied, “Well, I don’t run so well myself, and the little puppy will need someone who understands!”

We ALL need someone who understands.

Source: unknown