

DON'T LET WHAT YOU CAN'T DO, STOP YOU FROM DOING WHAT YOU CAN DO – JOHN WOODEN

The Ranges Early Learning and Care Centres



ON *this* MONTH

AT THE RANGES ITC AND ELC

ITC Transition to ELC----- 24

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Ramadan -----April 23-May 23
 Play Outside Day ----- 2
 International Star Wars Day----- 4
 International Compost Awareness Week ----- 3-9
 World Migratory Bird Day----- 9
 Mother's Day ----- 10
 National Families Week ----- 15-21
 National Sorry Day ----- 26

DIRECTOR NEWS

What a busy and strange month we have had with the impact of COVID-19 making us change the ways the service operates both short term and the medium term. We look forward to when things return back to more certainly and clarity for everyone.

At the moment we are still under the government Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package, resulting in free education and care for you all until 28 June. While this is a great outcome for our families please remember as a service we are receiving only half of our income during this period while we choose to continue to support all our families, both current and new, and support our staff as well. I would like to thank our amazing team of Educators at both centres that have continued to provide our high standard of education and care during these very challenging times with things changing almost daily. They have appreciated all the kind words, gifts and offers for assistance they have received over this time from our parent group.

As restrictions start to ease we will now complete the Term 2 transitions that had been delayed due to the COVID-19 restrictions, in mid-late May. Those families that have children moving in this group will have received communication from the toddler team with these details. The ELC is looking forward to meeting the families that will be moving this time.

Once these transitions have taken place the capacity at both centres will be nearing 100% for the remainder of the year which will mean limited capacity for additional days both on a casual and permanent basis. If you wish to make any changes to your bookings either in the near future or later in the year please contact me so we can discuss the options that may be available. Once again thank you all for your support over the past month and we look forward to more a settled time ahead.

Carman Wilson Director





NATIONAL FAMILIES WEEK – MAY 15-21

The aim of National Families Week is to celebrate the vital role that families play in Australian society. The enduring theme '*Stronger families, stronger communities*', highlights the important role that families play as the central building block of our communities and

that community wellbeing is enhanced by family wellbeing. Celebrate families week this year by focusing on the wellbeing of your family. The following link will provide you with helpful tips and ideas to support you. **Find our more here.**

NATIONAL SORRY DAY – MAY 26

National Sorry Day is an Australia-wide observance held on May 26 each year. This day gives people the chance to come together and share the steps towards healing for the Stolen Generations, their families and communities. The first National Sorry Day was held on 26 May 1998 – one year after the tabling of the report *Bringing them Home, May 1997*. **Find out more here**

BANANA CAKE



PREP 20 min | COOK 30 min | SERVES 16

INGREDIENTS

3 overripe **bananas**, *mashed*
 2 **eggs**
 3/4 cup **olive oil** (or vegetable oil)
 1 cup Greek or natural **yoghurt** (or sour cream or buttermilk)
 1/2 cup **brown sugar** (or coconut sugar)
 1/3 cup **pure maple syrup** (or brown sugar)
 1 tablespoon **vanilla bean paste** (or extract)
 1 cup **buckwheat flour** (or plain flour)
 1 cup **plain flour**
 1 1/2 teaspoons **baking powder**
 1 teaspoon **cinnamon**, *ground*
 1/2 teaspoon **nutmeg**, *ground*
 1/4 teaspoon **ginger**, *ground*
 pinch of **salt**

ICING

2 cups **fresh ricotta** (deli-style) **cheese**
 1/2 cup **pure maple syrup**
 2 teaspoons **vanilla bean paste** (or extract)
 1/2 cup **cocoa powder**

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 180 C and line a 20 cm x 20 cm brownie pan with baking paper. Set aside. **Place** the mashed bananas, eggs, olive oil, yoghurt, sugar, syrup and vanilla and whisk to combine. **Sift** the buckwheat flour, plain flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and salt into the bowl and stir using a wooden spoon until just combined. **Pour** the batter into the prepared tin. **Bake** for 30-40 minutes or until a skewer inserted removes cleanly. **Allow** the cake to cool completely.

To make the whipped ricotta maple and chocolate frosting:

Place the ricotta into the bowl of a food processor and blitz for 1-2 minutes or until smooth. **Add** the maple syrup, vanilla and cocoa powder and blitz for 2-3 minutes (scraping down the sides of the bowl) or until the frosting is smooth and luscious. **Smother** the cooled cake with a thick layer of frosting. **Cut** into 9 or 16 squares. Enjoy x

Recipe and Image from '*mylovelylittlelunchbox.com*'

App reviews

Educational pre-schooler apps that will engage and challenge.



BEE-BOT

TTS Group | Ages: 4+

The Bee-Bot® App from TTS is based on the well-loved and award winning Bee-Bot® floor robot. The App makes use of Bee-Bot's key functionality and enables children to improve their skills in directional language, programming sequences of forwards, backwards, left and right 90 degree turns.

GOODNESS SHAPES

Little 10 Robot | Ages: 3+

Goodness Shapes is a playful, learning adventure for pre-schoolers and toddlers. Your kids will get familiar with shapes, colours and patterns through unique challenges that involve matching, sorting and other fun games. This is a relaxed experience with endless play that keeps children engaged, entertained and challenged.

MONTESSORIUM: INTRO TO COLOURS

HIGHER GROUND EDUCATION INC | Ages: 3+

Learn the foundations of colour, including primary colours, secondary colours and gradients. Inspired by the famous Montessori colour tablets! Your child will learn: The basic foundations of colour, Primary & Secondary Colours, Colour Shades & Gradients, to identify, match and name colours, to mix, paint and create colours, to seek, find and select colours and fine motor skills.



FOCUS: Continuing social connection for children during social-distancing

As social-distancing rules continue and confirmed cases and deaths rise, children's daily rhythms and routines have been obliterated. Some are struggling with this brave new world in which they must remain six feet apart from the people they love. So parents are loosening strict limits on screen time, hoping virtual playdates will spare their house-bound children the anxiety and trauma the pandemic is spreading from coast to coast and restore a sense of community when they need it most.

Screen time in the time of coronavirus

Is all this screen time OK? The American Academy of Paediatrics normally recommends no screens before 18 months, one hour a day of quality programming for 2- to 5-year-olds and limits for older kids. But, of course, these are not normal times.

Jenny Radesky, assistant professor of paediatrics at the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and author of the American Academy of Paediatrics' 2016 screen time recommendations, has been getting a lot of questions from parents about screen time during the coronavirus. Radesky, a developmental behavioural paediatrician, tweeted some new recommendations last week.

"These social connections are incredibly important. Schooling offers children not only time to interact and play with their peers but also a larger community that they belong to, with its own culture and norms. Children are constantly practicing their social skills with each other – testing what sort of behaviour is appropriate, what goes too far, and what gets reciprocated by other children – and this dynamic process is hard to replicate at home," Radesky told USA TODAY in an email. "Using video chat to play games, catch up with each other, talk about boredom, or even just be ridiculous will help kids cope."

Screen time should still have limits. Make sure time is set aside for going outdoors, playing board games, drawing, or giving kids unstructured time to figure out what they'd like to do, Radesky advises.

Virtual playdates bridge social distancing

Almost anything kids used to do offline before COVID-19 can now be done online with a few clicks or taps and a little creativity, says Sierra Filucci, editorial director of Common Sense Media, an advocacy group for kids. Dance and homework parties. Birthday celebrations. Movie and game nights. Storytime and circle time. Virtual lunch hours with classmates. Scavenger hunts and charades. No matter what age, activities abound that ease the solitude of sheltering in place while keeping kids at a safe physical distance, Filucci says.

Pre-school age children can draw together, Primary school-age kids can tackle marshmallow-and-toothpick building challenges with pals over video chat. Older kids can meet up in multiplayer online games.



"Any opportunity to keep up social contact between kids is good just overall for mental health," Filucci says. "For younger kids, social interaction can be a very important part of education, and for older kids, social interaction is an important part of their social development."

Here are some ideas for online activities to connect with friends and family from Filucci at Common Sense Media:

Pre-school/Primary aged children

Apps

Caribu

Social games

Mario

Maker 2

Roblox

Activities on video chat with supervision

Board games (Chutes & Ladders, Candyland, Sorry, Battleship)

Play-doh

Scavenger hunts

Marshmallow/toothpick building challenges

Story time

Show and tell

Charades

Circle time

Legos, Beyblades, other toys

Share songs and videos on YouTube

Guynn, Jessica. (2020, March 27). USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2020/03/27/coronavirus-covid-19-social-distancing-screen-time-parents-children-zoom-facetime-fortnite-minecraft/5084998002/>

UP, DOWN AND AROUND

Supplies: Toy cars, boxes or furniture.

Watch 'Up, down and around' <https://youtu.be/yY4ZNV3BQCw> and talk to your child about the positional words in the story. Use toy cars to demonstrate the words: Up, down, around, under, over. Once your child understands the concept take turns directing each others cars. For example, say to your child; "drive your car up the box, over the box, down the box, around the box..." Extend this activity by adding new positional words or different settings.

Find out more at https://mathathome.org/lessons/up-down-around__trashed/



HEALTH & SAFETY: Managing main meals and snack times

If we can take a positive out of this social isolation (if you are at home), it's that this certainly is a brilliant time to start having more family mealtimes together and reconnect as a family over food.

All too often we are rushing between work, sport, getting homework done, and very little time is given to sharing quality time together around the table. We also have the opportunity (albeit a messy one!) to cook more with our children, which is another great way to get them involved with food.

Before we get started, it would be remiss of me not to mention the most important safety precaution of all which is handwashing regularly throughout the day. Certainly, enforce hand washing before any food prep or meal/snack.

PLANNING – Avoid aimlessly wandering the grocery store for large periods of time by planning all meals and snacks as much as possible in advance. When you return from the supermarket wipe over foods and ensure you wash all fresh fruit and veggies.

BREAKFAST – A nutrient dense breakfast will help children stay fuller for longer and hopefully ask for snacks less often between main mealtimes. As the weather cools down involve them in making egg dishes together or oats. If you're in need of a quick breakfast, veggie/fruit smoothies are always a great option. If possible, eat breakfast together and set your intentions for the day and ask your children theirs.

SNACKS – Here are two snack strategies worth trialling in your home if you feel like you're constantly being asked, or the pantry is now a free for all.

The **"just have it all right now"** strategy. This idea comes to us from *Random Thoughts Uncensored* on Facebook. Each child gets their own basket. Each basket contains the day's snacks for that child. Want to eat it all before 9 a.m.? Fine, but that's all the snacks you get for the day, so you might want to think about how hungry you really are.

For older children **"Turn snack time into a maths lesson"** I wish I could attribute this genius to its rightful owner, but it was posted in the COVID-19 and Keeping Kids Busy Facebook group



last week. Want a snack? You have to pay for it— with money (or tokens for younger children) you earned by doing some jobs, academic work etc. And junk food is pricier than healthy snacks: "I don't know if anyone's shared this but I thought it was a great way to incorporate a math lesson in all of this as well as make the kids think "do I really want this?" Or "Am I really hungry?" Posted by Heather Robinson on Friday, March 20, 2020. I like this because they have to do some work anyway, they don't have to do much of it to earn a healthy snack but if they really want that lollipop, they can dig in and ramp up the learning.

LUNCH / DINNER – Children love being involved in 'adult' activities, so have them help you cook whenever possible. It's an activity you can't avoid and an activity they will enjoy doing with you. If you are busy trying to work from home and feeling guilty you aren't interacting with your child on a meaningful level, this is a perfect time.

Savage, Karina. (2020, March 31). Kidspot.com.au. <https://www.kidspot.com.au/health/family-health/real-life/food-you-shouldnt-eat-during-isolation/news-story/a4620b0301dd59591f347342337e106b>

Moravcik Walbert, Meghan. (2020, March 28). MSN. <https://www.msn.com/en-au/lifestyle/foodanddrink/how-to-manage-snacks-while-the-kids-are-home-all-day/ar-BB11EJBC>

HOME COMPOSTING

Each year over half of our household garbage is made up of food and garden waste. Most of this organic waste can be recycled by composting it. By turning food scraps and organic garden waste into compost you are:

- Improving soil quality and garden vitality by releasing rich nutrients into the soil.
- Suppressing plant diseases and pests, this reduces or eliminates the need for chemical fertilisers and manures helping you save money.
- Reducing the amount of organic waste going to landfill therefore preventing greenhouse gas emissions and leachate.
- Helping soils retain moisture – you do not need to water that often.
- Helping absorb and filter runoff, protecting streams from erosion and pollution.

What to add in your compost bin:

Vegetable and fruit scraps, vegetable oil, pruning and lawn clippings, tea bags and coffee grounds, vacuum dust, shredded paper and cardboard, used potting mix, egg shells, flowers.

Setting up a compost bin:

The only resource you have to purchase is a compost bin of some kind. You can buy the traditional kind from your local hardware store or try a below ground version from companies like subpod.com or powerplanter.com.au/ Below ground composters boast a simpler and faster way to compost.

Image: Subpod compost.

Watch Costa's Guide to Home Composting here: <https://youtu.be/HngvowScx6g>





Filling the gaps

Currently your playgroups are cancelled, extra-curricular activities like Little Kickers, Gymnastics and Dance are suspended for now. You are not going on outings and staying away from friends and family where possible. So, what do you do with all that additional time?

PLAY IDEAS:

- Cooking with kids is one of those activities that is worth all the mess! Children love being involved and learn lifelong lessons simply taking part in cooking activities. mylovelylittlelunchbox.com has a huge library of recipes of varying difficulties, perfect for all ages.
- **Theme Day:** Take a leaf out of the Bluey playbook. Choose a theme and fully commit for the day (or an hour). Dress up and transfer your room into a hotel, create a movie together, turn the lounge room into a hospital or allow the kids to control your every move...if you're game! You can find everything you need here <https://www.bluey.tv>

ONLINE ACTIVITY LINKS:

BABY KARAOKE – Enjoy singing well know children's songs together.

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/baby-karaoke>

ACTIVEFORLIFE.COM – Find 200+ activities to do with your family.

<https://activeforlife.com/200-activities-you-can-do-with-kids-at-home>

TORONGA TV – Taronga are bringing their two beautiful zoos directly into your living room!

<https://taronga.org.au/taronga-tv>

PAYMENT of FEES

At this stage, your fees are being fully covered under the government relief package until 28 June and we are not expecting an extension to this. Unless extended, after this date fees will be required to be paid on our usual terms as per our previous arrangements either 7 or 14 days in arrears via direct debit.

If your financial situation has changed as a result of COVID-19 and you believe this will impact your ability to pay your fees, please contact Carman so we can discuss this prior to the fees being payable from July.

Assuming a return to the previous Child Care Subsidy model, from this date we will recommence our Rewards Program and process your Participation Incentive Payments of \$6 per attendance session to either your nominated bank account or to a clearing account. To assist with this, we ask that you return your Reward Payment Election Form to us if you have not done so already. A copy of this form is attached to this email newsletter and details around this payment can be found in the email sent from Carman on 31 March 2020.



Roll of the dice

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

You will need two die (different colours if possible). Assign each number on the die an exercise and write these down or draw a symbol for each one. Choose simple exercises everyone taking part can do. For example: Crab walk, squat, varied push ups, run, jumping jacks, leap, duck walk, skip...

One die will be your exercise dice and one your reps. Roll them together or if you only have one die, the first roll will choose the exercise, the second roll the reps.

How long you exercise for is completely up to you. Set a timer for 5 minutes or choose how many exercises you're going to do or simply go until you can't stop! Have fun.